

# SECOND AFRICA CONSULTATION ON CHILD THEOLOGY

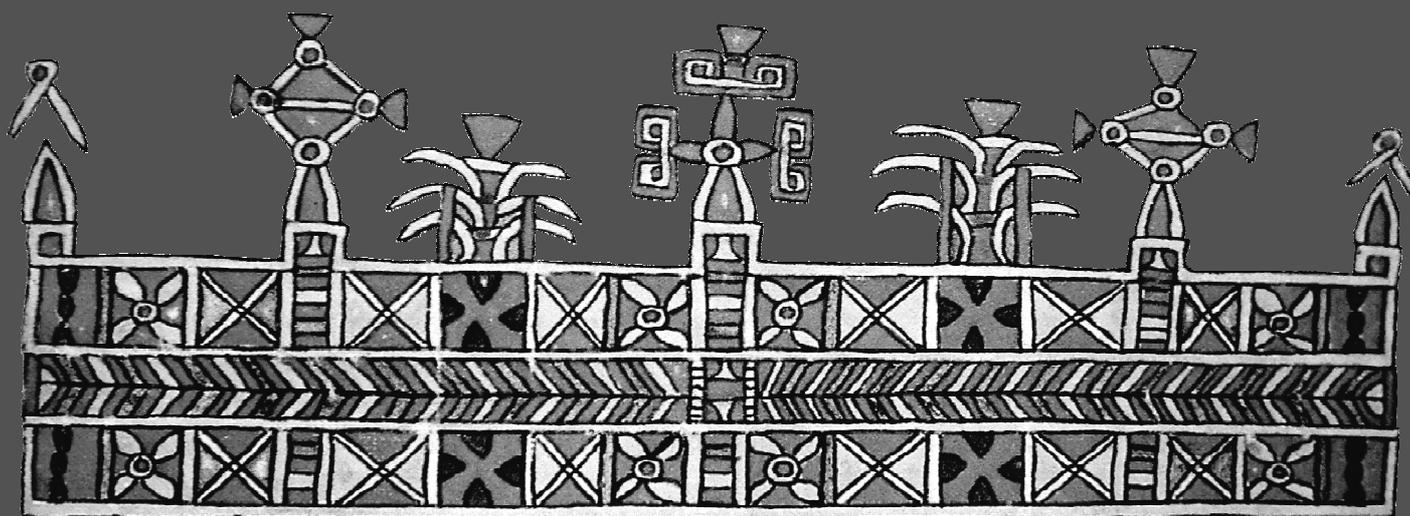
Addis Ababa Ethiopia  
21 — 24 November 2006



Child Theology Movement



*Jesus placed a little child among them.....*



# Child Theology MOVEMENT

The Child Theology Movement Ltd is a charitable company  
Registered in England, number: 494 3636  
Charity Registration number: 1106542  
Registered Office:  
10 Crescent Road  
South Woodford  
London  
E18 1JB  
United Kingdom

**Report of the  
Second Africa Child Theology Consultation**  
21st to 24th November 2006  
Debre Zeit Ethiopia

*"Children, Theology and Ministry in Africa today: finding the rightful place of children in theological training."*

**Editor: John Collier**

**Contents**

Preface.....	2
Wednesday 22 November.....	3
S1.1: Devotions.....	3
S1.2: Personal Introductions by participants.....	3
S1.3: Seminar: The child in the midst of the Biblical witness.....	6
S1.4: Compassion Africa's Contribution to sensitizing theological schools on ministry to children	11
S1.5: Equipping for Ministry in Holistic Child Development.....	13
S1.6: Workshop: Current programmes and courses summarised and critiqued.....	15
Thursday 23 November.....	17
S2.1: Devotions.....	17
S2.2: A Proposed course in Child Theology.....	17
S2.3: The Petra College approach to Training.....	19
S2.4: Group Work: Reflecting on inputs so far.....	21
S2.5: A time of worship, repentance and open sharing in the light of the challenges so far.....	22
Friday 24 November.....	22
S3.1: Devotions.....	22
S3.2: Seminar: What CT is and is not.....	23
S3.3: Visions of the future for theology, church and mission with a child in the midst.....	24
S3.4: Identifying practical steps for seminaries, organisations and CTM.....	26
S3.5: Plans, commitments and farewells.....	27
Appendix 1: Training Materials for Children at Risk.....	29
Appendix 2: NIST'S WORK ON CHILDREN.....	31

## Preface

The first consultation that the Child Theology Movement held in Africa was in Cape Town in 2004. Although a small meeting, the report it produced has been the most requested – evidence of the quality of the work done. So we were delighted to return to Africa. Indeed it was at Cape Town that our brother Shiferaw Michael both invited us to return and suggested that we focus our next meeting on theological training institutions.<sup>1</sup> This is what we have done and we are grateful to him and to Compassion International for making this meeting possible.

The Child Theology Movement has used the strap line: “*No child related activity without theological reflection; No theology without the child in the midst.*” We are told that 50% of the population of Africa are children and it is well known that many suffer greatly through the various scourges that afflict the continent. In response to this massive need there is much ‘child related activity’. Some Christians are sceptical of the value of theology but as we get involved with the problems, sooner or later words surface in a cry of pain to God: “Why?” Such questions from Christian workers at a conference in 2001 were part of the process that led to the discovery of Child Theology. (This is described more fully in earlier reports in this series.) It is vital to ponder these heart felt questions theologically even if there is no adequate “answer”.

As part of this theological reflection, we have become convinced that children are important not only and not particularly as the ‘church of tomorrow’ but as the church of today. So it pains us to see that the training of most ministers in Africa (and elsewhere) ignores children and their needs. This means that ministers are ill-equipped to care for 50% of their congregations! We heard that in one famous school in the continent out of three years’ ministerial training, one week is given to work with children – and until recently it was in fact only one day.

We came to the conclusion of the unique significance of children in the Kingdom of God when our eyes were opened to the importance of the child placed by Jesus in the midst of a theological argument in the event narrated in Matthew 18. Over and over again when there’s a spiritual crisis in the nation, God chose a child – Samuel,

David and many more. Perhaps Mary was a child by modern standards (under 18 years old) when Gabriel appeared to her. And it may be that God also chose a child to bring the Gospel to Ethiopia. According to one tradition, Christianity started in Ethiopia in the 4th century AD with a Syrian boy called Frumentius. In a story reminiscent of Joseph going into slavery in Egypt, Frumentius was shipwrecked, captured and sent to work at the court at Aksum. He grew to become the King’s secretary and after the King’s death, regent to the new king.

Converted to Christianity, he set about establishing churches in Ethiopia. At an opportune time, he visited Alexandria and asked the patriarch Athanasius to send a bishop. To which the great theologian is said to have replied: “What other man shall we find in whom the Spirit of God is, as in you, who can accomplish these things?” So he was appointed bishop and sent back to Aksum.

A few years ago, Unicef organised a special session of the United Nations for children. Their aim was to encourage countries to work together to build a ‘world fit for children’. A striking moment for me in seeing the video of the event was hearing a child say that a world fit for children would be a world fit for everyone. The evils that oppress children afflict all of us. Child Theology seeks, among other things, to build a *church* fit for children and we believe that all of us will be blessed by it.

John Collier (editor)



Our special thanks to Karissa Glanville who helped me immensely by taking comprehensive notes during the meeting.

<sup>1</sup> see page 20, *Cape Town Report*

## Wednesday 22 November

### S1.1: Devotions

(Dirk Coetsee)

A focus on Jesus, child and the Kingdom of God

Greet without words. Close eyes and imagine we are in Jerusalem 2000 years ago. Imagine the crowds, smells and sounds. We see a young couple going up to the Temple, a bit concerned because they were to do an important thing and they were country people. Reading: Circumcision and presentation of Jesus. Prophecies of Simeon and Anna. Imagine where you are in that scene. Who do you speak to? What do you say?

- “Mary it’s such a privilege to have a child to whom such prophecies were given and see how they will be fulfilled”
- “Simeon, you’ve said some important and scary things. Now go home and have a good sleep.”
- “Mary I’m scared about this kind of a child, I’ll be praying for you”
- “Joseph, where do you live? Can I come and visit you?”

Now take the baby in your arms. Who do you feel like? Joseph? Mary? Simeon? Feel the baby, his weight, his smell, feel his breath, hear the small sounds he makes. “Jesus, I’m scared of holding you in my arms. If I drop you you’ll die. If I don’t feed you, you won’t grow……. Thank you for coming as a child.”

Into my heart, into my heart  
Come into my heart Lord Jesus  
Come in today  
Come in to stay  
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus

### S1.2: Personal Introductions by participants

(Shiferaw; White)

Keith explained that in Child Theology consultations we always insist that there is no back row. We take time to get to know each other as God knows us – face to face.

	John Collier	I am part organiser of this meeting and I work for the Child Theology Movement. Home is an issue for me right now as I travel so much. I’m not sure where home is any more but I’m originally from the UK.	
	Karissa Glanville	California. Seminary student PhD on spiritual dev of adolescents. Single but works with many children. Also writes for children. Here to learn and to be a voice back to my mentor at Fuller seminary	
	Benzamin Yanogho	I’m from Burkina Faso. I have trained others how to reach school children and also involved in training pastors. This year my ministry changed and I now serve several Bible schools. I want to help them build a programme to train for children’s ministry and how to lead them into mission.	
	Solomon Nkesiga	I am the Principal of Kampala International School of Theology. I recently completed a PhD in ‘Virtuous Living’ and I want to know how to help children live virtuously. So can CT help with this?	

	Endrias Essay	I'm from one of the oldest theological seminaries in Ethiopia where I teach practical theology. The department is revising its curriculum and at the moment we have no focus on children. We want to change this.	
	Daniel Yilma	I'm a Christian Education instructor in an Ethiopian Pentecostal Theological college. We are developing a new curriculum and I feel this consultation will help with this. I am also involved in children's ministry in the church.	
	Enoch Thompson	I am from Maranatha University College in Ghana. In the past I was in a ministry with children and training Sunday School teachers. I found that as the college sought more academic accreditation, the room for children diminished. This meeting I hope will help me help my faculty to start a program/major in CT or holistic child development.	
	Damtew Eshete	I work for Compassion in Ethiopia. I have devoted my life to child advocacy. I hope this meeting will help me refine my vision for ministry.	
	Shiferaw Michael	I am here because of the respect I have for theological schools and the role they play in shaping the future of the church and therefore the future of Africa. If theological schools are challenged and encouraged re the importance of children in the kingdom, there will be significant change in our country/continent. I also want to learn and to be a blessing as one of you	
	Mukwiza Simeon	I am the dean of the faculty of theology in the Evangelical churches seminary for 22 churches in Rwanda. I am a pastor of one of the biggest churches in Kigale where we have over 500 children.	
	Isobel Booth-Clibborn	I live in Uganda and work for Viva Network Africa, aiming to connect people who work at grassroots level and Christian agencies that work with children. Many do so without a good theological under-pinning of the work. I'm interested to discover the theology of the African child.	
	Philile Mndzebele	I'm from Swaziland where I work with World Vision. My vision is to work with children, integrating children work into the development work. I help to train those who work with children. In my church I'm also a Sunday School teacher.	
	Amon Dlamini	I am the Christian Commitment co-ordinator for World Vision in Swaziland. I work to ensure that all activities have a Christian core, to ensure there is a focus on spiritual as well as the physical and social needs.	
	Karlien Grobelaar	I am from RSA and am just starting the Master's degree in theology. I grew up in Petra college. I love God and children and believe in caring and ministering to them. I want to be an advocate with children's rights. I also believe they can minister to us.	

	Gideon Coetsee	I'm also from Petra college. I start to study to become a teacher next year. I hope to learn a lot from being here. Children are our future and so I want to learn all I can to get a bigger and better perspective from Africa.	
	Dirk Coetsee	I'm the father of Gideon and also his spiritual brother and social playmate. We both have a child inside! I'm from Petra College and I'm interested in how to equip leaders in Africa to become really effective in children's issues.	
	Tilahun Masresha	I am currently the child protection co-ordinator for World Vision in Ethiopia. The more we invest in our children, the redemption of our nation will be very close. I want to discover the theological perspective on child protection.	
	Keith White	I'm from London UK. I've always wanted to come to Ethiopia. I come from a big family – I have 1,200 adopted brothers and sisters. I lectured for many years in a theological seminary in London but there is no room for children in the curriculum. It may be that the world will later look and learn from what Africa has done.	
	Bedru Hussain	I am from a theological school in Ethiopia. We are also revising our curriculum and I wasn't to see what CT has to offer. We have 120,000 children registered in the church. In society, there is abuse and neglect and we cannot do this in the church. How can we treat them well?	
	Alemseged Ketema	I am also from an Evangelical Theological College in Ethiopia. My father was Czech my mother Ethiopian and I am married to an Indian. So we have the world in our family! I tried living in Europe but was always under suspicion for being different. I realised that there was a need to educate children in Ethiopia so that there was no need for them to go abroad to work. So I returned to get involved in education here.	
	Lois Semenye	I teach in Nairobi International School of Theology. I came to know the Lord as a child and I immediately had the desire to reach other children. After my first degree I got involved in children's work. I took a master's degree and started to train teachers, developing materials for them to use. But I found I was only scratching the surface so I changed career to influence the pastors. I shall be organising a conference for pastors when I get back.	
	Zellelew Argaw	I have taught in a college in Ethiopia for 10 years but I've never worked with children. We don't have a course on children. I hope after this meeting this might change. My wife works with Compassion.	

	Jan Grobbelaar	I'm from Petra College in RSA. I attended the CTM meeting at Penang 3 which had a great impact and so I felt I had to be here to share something of what I learnt. It was life-changing. I want to go on this journey with you – to develop a theology liberating for us and the children of Africa. I pray the Lord will touch our heart in these days.	
	Daniel Legesse	I am from Compassion Ethiopia and Addis Ababa Bible College. The college is a strategic moment in making its plans for the next ten years. I am a communication and education specialist for Compassion. This opportunity will help my understanding so that children will be heard.	
	Tiruwork	I don't work directly with children, but whatever I do affects them. I used to work for World Vision but now I work for Compassion.	
	Tewabech Mengiste	I'm responsible for children's ministry. More than Here before servant of the Lord and the little ones.	
	Desere Kajabika	I work for World Vision in DRC. I'm in charge of activities for children. We have about 1,000 children coming to my church each Sunday. We need to increase our capacity.	
	Jean-Marie Nkonge	I work for World Vision in DRC. I am involved in a seminary training pastors but there is a lack of any focus on children. I need to learn more.	
	Marcia Bunge	(joined the consultation on the second day)	

Keith noted that recent statistics revealed that 30% of churches in UK don't have a single child in them. In contrast, we have heard of churches in Africa with 1,000 children. So we (from 'the West') have come here to learn as well as to share what we have learnt in other parts of the world.

We think of theological education as the source of a great river. What is done at the source can affect everything downstream. So it is clear why it is so strategic to bring the theological educators here to this meeting.

**S1.3: Seminar: The child in the midst of the Biblical witness**

(White)

**Introduction**

It is always a joy and encouragement when we come to the Bible with a particular group of people, or question in mind and find that God is ready and waiting to greet us. By His Holy Spirit has not left us without a witness.

In this unique collection of writings comprising 66 books compiled over 1,500 years God's purposes towards a huge number of groups and situations is revealed. Thus those in Latin America who sought to understand the place of the poor and oppressed in God's kingdom were able to trace his commitment to them from the earliest pages and stories, especially in the liberation of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt. So it has been with those enquiring about those seen as outsiders or others because of their culture, ethnicity, crimes, brokenness or gender. I personally remember the time when as a sociologist I read Jacques Ellul's great book *The Meaning of the City* which traced the place of cities in God's unfolding purposes from the very first chapters of Genesis to the last pages of Revelation.

One of the results of such a search is to see things more comprehensively and sensitively. Anyone who has tried to understand the place of women in God's mission for example cannot fail to read the Gospel of Luke differently to those who wrote commentaries a few decades ago.

In some ways the reading of the Bible that makes children the starting point for study can be compared to these other perspectives and movements. And there are striking similarities. But the emerging field of Child Theology has also found a significant point of departure: a uniqueness, if you like. And put simply it is the fact that Jesus took a little child (not a woman, poor man, gentile), placed him in the middle of his disciples and used the child as a key to understanding the Kingdom of Heaven and the very heart of his calling and mission.

But that is to go ahead of ourselves. Before looking at the place of the child and children in the Scriptures, we need to remind ourselves that at the very heart of the Bible we find God himself, revealed in different ways and at different times, but supremely and mostly fully in Jesus Christ. However precious any part of creation is (and children are very dear to God's heart) anything that displaces God will tend to become an idol, and in relating to this part we will tend to become guilty of idolatry however indirect and unconsciously. This point has been made carefully in *Introducing Child Theology* and so I do not need to labour it here and now. But I would like to stress that all of us must take good care never to think or act in a way that elevates children or childhood in such a way that God is relegated to the background. And needless to say I will try to make sure I do not do so in this paper!

## Children in the Biblical Witness

### *1 Children (and young people) as children*

I am delighted that you have given me this title: biblical witness. More often people tend to think of "children in the Bible". And there is a big difference. We can indeed look right through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation using a concordance and find lots of references to children and young people. You can do the same thing with plants, mountains, rivers, women, colours, cities and so on. You end up with an impressive list, and if you reflect on it you can work your way to some sort of biblical or even theological understanding of the category that you start with. At best you will work towards a theology of children, plants, mountains, rivers, women, colours or cities. And that has its place, because God who created all things delights in every part of creation and it is good to have our eyes opened to new aspects of his work of art we think of as the universe.

But biblical witness is about something more than this. It challenges us to see the meaning of each part of creation; its testimony if you like. What is it pointing to? What is the message it is designed to convey to us? And it doesn't take us long to realise that the Bible itself is crystal clear that everything in creation is designed to point to God in Jesus Christ. Everything is created to praise the Creator: whether trees clapping their hands, seas roaring, or babies crying. This means that in seeking to understand children as part of the biblical witness we are not merely trying to understand better how children are made, what they are like, how they develop (although there is so much that we can learn about these things), but to understand more fully what children reveal to us of God and his purposes and nature.

If you can make this distinction with me you will immediately grasp the difference between a "theology of childhood" and "child theology". This is not to say that they do not inform each other and overlap, but to point out the way in which Child Theology goes beyond the child as a child, in order to see the child in relation to God in Jesus Christ. It may be that a theology of childhood is a useful starting point. An excellent reference book if you are looking for an encyclopaedia of children in the Bible is the book: *Precious in His Sight*, by Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996). I always keep it beside me!

And if you want a summary of how Christian biblical scholars and theologians have interpreted all the references to children in the Bible I can commend to you the work of my friend and colleague, Professor Marcia Bunge in her paper "Historical Perspectives on Children and the Church" published in the Houston Consultation on Child Theology Report (London: CTM, 2005), pages 38-45. It may be useful to have a summary of her categories. She argues that they need to be held in tension if we are to strengthen our commitment to children. And I would argue that only if we hold on to them all can we begin to see deeper into the biblical witness to God and his faithfulness, justice and love.

Children in the Bible have been understood theologically as:

- *Gifts of God and Sources of Joy*
- *Sinful Creatures and Moral Agents*
- *Developing Beings who Need Instruction and Guidance*
- *Fully Human and Made in the Image of God*
- *Models of Faith and Sources of Revelation*
- *Orphans, Neighbours, Strangers in Need of Justice and Compassion*

I think you can see that rarely do we manage in church and ministry to hold all of these together. And it is not hard to see the problems that arise when we concentrate on only one of these perspectives. If for example we see children as simply gifts of God and sources of joy, we will not take seriously the challenges of motherhood, and will tend to have a sentimentalised and romantic idea of children that does not do justice to

the suffering and oppression of children worldwide. If on the other hand see them simply as sinful, parenting and teaching may not be open to what children have to teach as we seek to care for and teach them. There is work to do here for all of us, and these two resources are a real blessing as we set about this task.

## **2 Children as partners in God's mission**

Last week I had the privilege of talking with an antique dealer who came from a family that had nothing to do with church or Christianity. Two years ago he started to read the Bible systematically using a reading plan that I had commended to him. Having read the whole Bible for the first time (he used to do this each morning starting at 4.00 a.m. when he told me it was quiet so he could concentrate) I was intrigued to know what overall impressions he had gained. There isn't time to tell you all that he said, but one thing surprised him above everything else: how seriously the Bible took idolatry. He said it seemed to run through every book, and yet he had rarely heard Christians talk about it.

As one who has just completed a new edition of the Bible I am able to confirm that he is right on the ball: idolatry is a biblical way of seeing the whole of human and personal history unless our lives and communities are continually reformed, cleansed and renewed by the work of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

A few years ago I too read right through the Bible, but with a particular purpose in mind.

I was looking to see how, where and why children figured in the Bible. The result was a paper for a Cutting Edge Conference, "Rediscovering Children at the Heart of Mission", now published in *Celebrating Children* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), pages 189-199. It was a turning point in my whole ministry, and could be said to have given birth to what we now call Child Theology. As I re-read the paper I am struck by how many insights I gained that had been hidden until that moment, but one that turned my whole understanding of children around was that children "performed some of his most significant acts and revelations through these children. Their faith and actions are critically important in the unfolding and outworking of God's purposes." (Page 190) Until then I think I had tended to see children as precious objects of care, teaching and ministry. They remain that still, but what I had missed was the fact that again and again the Bible tells how, when things got really serious, God chose children. When there's no one else to choose, God chooses a Child-like Samuel, when he was a child, he spoke the *whole* truth to Eli. Calvin said if we have a problem with God choosing children, we should pause and think: does God need to choose the strong? No, he can choose the weak. It is God's nature to choose the weak things of this world, so no one can boast. So when we see children as partners, we also see we ourselves, though adults are always children to God, chosen in our weakness.

This insight helped me to see that it is necessary to ponder deeply the nature of God's mission. He takes the weak things of the world, and reveals his strength in and through weakness. And I see that children are largely unconscious of the way in which God is using them: they are not trained agents of the Kingdom. Perhaps God is using us as individuals and a church in ways that we are completely unaware of. Do we stress conscious mission, objectives and outcomes, systems and models, when He prefers to work as quietly as yeast in the dough and a mustard seed in the garden? So perhaps you can see how this discovery has led me both to see my relationship to children differently, and also to reflect deeply on what all this has to teach about God, Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven.

## **3 Child and childhood as God's way of seeing all humans**

Once you start reading the Bible with children in mind you quickly discover that many if not most of the references to children are not actually about children as young human beings at all, but ways of describing adults and adult communities. In the Jewish Scriptures there is continuous reference to "the children of Israel" for example and as we all know this phrase refers to the whole of the Jewish community, male and female, young and old. Likewise in the New Testament followers of Jesus are often referred to as "little children", for example in the letters of John.

This is not the place to develop this perspective, but we can note that it has some important implications. One is that we must be careful in making distinctions between adults and children, lest we obscure the fact that God sees us all as his children. What if childhood rather than being a temporary phase in human development before what we may think of as maturity or adulthood, is, from God's point of view a description of the whole of our lives? When you pray, say, "Our Father": not just while you are little children, but as adult believers and followers of Jesus.

Allied to this is the recognition that some of the most important descriptions of what it is to be a Christian relate to processes that we usually associate with children and childhood. Two obvious examples are Adoption and being Born Again. Whatever Paul and Jesus mean when they use these symbols they are not calling adults to cease to be responsible adults; but at the same time it is clear that unless we hold on to the child in the midst we, as adults, lose a vital sign of the Kingdom of God.

#### **4 The Messiah as child**

One of the umbilical links between the Old and New Testaments is the child foretold in the prophets notably, Isaiah, and the birth of Jesus, the promised one. I invite you to ponder afresh the passages in Isaiah which speak of this child (Isaiah 7: 14; 9: 1-7; 11: 1-11) to see what they reveal of God's nature and his Kingdom. And then to read afresh the two birth narratives of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. There is something distinctive and vital about the fact that God is revealing himself, coming among us, as a baby: "This will be a sign to you: you will the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

Jesus does not refer to his childhood in his adult ministry, and we must be careful not to build theology where he chooses not to do so. But he does draw attention to the importance of the cries of newborn babies in Psalm 8: 2. And although we know that salvation comes to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, rather than through his childhood, we should be careful not to overlook Jesus the promised child.

When thinking about this in Malaysia a year or two ago, I preached on the subject "child in the midst" arguing that God had chosen to place a child in the middle of human history, and that the immediate reaction was that this divine child was placed in a manger because there was no room for him in the inn. Still I wonder whether we make sufficient room in our theology, biblical studies, worship, and pastoral work for the baby Jesus.

In very practical terms I am suggesting that Christmas is rightly seen as a very special festival, and that it should not simply be seen as a prelude to the later ministry of Jesus. In this little baby God is revealing deep things about himself, and as we grasp them we will see both our Father God, and also little children differently. (I commend to you the book by David Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005) which takes this as one of its starting points.

#### **5 Child as Representative of Jesus and Kingdom**

As some of you know I have been working with my friend Professor Haddon Willmer for over three years on a book that expounds the encounter between Jesus and his disciples in Matthew 18 where Jesus places a child in their midst as a sign of the Kingdom of Heaven. This has led us both to realise that neither we, nor our theological and biblical colleagues have given sufficient attention to what this child in the midst teaches us about Jesus, the way of the Cross and the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is clear that there is a risk of his disciples missing out on the Kingdom all together if they do not heed the sign of the child, but subsequent church history does not suggest we have heeded his action, teaching or warnings seriously.

I do not intend to summarise our findings because if I try to do so we might never get out of this session! But let me give you a flavour of our exposition. We see the disciples engaged in an argument which is essentially theological. And it is about arguably the most important matter of all: what the Kingdom of Heaven means. That is what it really means to follow Jesus all the way with integrity and commitment. Jesus has tried to explain the nature of the Kingdom and the way of the Cross in a number of different ways: stories, signs, examples, actions, and specific teaching. But they have not even grasped the most basic idea of this Kingdom. So as he begins his final journey to Jerusalem and the Cross he places a child in their midst to provide a completely unexpected clue or key to the Kingdom.

As we have considered this deeply and at length we have come to believe that the passage has considerable insights for us all into the heart of God, the way of the Cross and how we are to relate to children and to Jesus.

One crucial discovery for us concerns the use of the term "representative". Others have talked about the way Jesus identifies with little children in this and a later incident when he took little children in his arms and blessed them. And clearly there is a close link between children and Jesus. We have come to see the word "representative" as crucially important here. And this has led us to see in a fresh way how Jesus represents us on the Cross. He holds the space open for us so that by his Spirit the time comes when we are really "in him in his death" and therefore raised with him to newness of life. The child and Jesus are not interchangeable, any more than Jesus and his followers are interchangeable, but they and we are representatives.

I think I will need to leave it at this point, but would of course be happy to discuss things with you, and hope it will not be too long before this book is available in print.

#### **6 The Child and Systematic Theology**

At this stage in a seminar you do not want me to introduce another huge topic, so I will be very brief. Our biblical reading depends on a framework of theological understanding that is often called systematic theology. However hard you try you can't get away from it. This was what Calvin the great biblical scholar meant when he penned his *Institutes*. Rather than keep on repeating himself in every commentary he tried to sum up some of the truths that underlay everything he was finding in the Scriptures.

Those of us who have studied systematic theology with a child in mind find that children are usually marginal if not completely invisible in all that has been written so far. (Others have noticed before that the poor,

women and black people have also been noticeably absent in what is written and have started to put that right.)

As we begin to re-read this theology we find that new insights are dawning and new questions arise about: Creation, the Fall and Sin, Redemption, Church, Christ, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Resurrection, the Last Days and so on. The most obvious example is the way in which a child helps us to understand the “now” and “not yet” of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is a big enterprise but we are making a start. We do not know what we will find, but taking our clue from Jesus we know that we can do no other, so help us God.

Marcia Bunge and I have been discussing the possibility of a book by theologians from around the world who are challenged to look afresh at a number of key theological issues with a child in the midst of their thinking. We are looking as I speak for those from South America who might be willing and able to join others from every continent in the enterprise.

## Our response to children

As we close let us draw out the meaning of Matthew 18 for us all, whether theologians, pastors or parents and children’s activists. Child Theology is not interested in part-theology: it is determined to facilitate practical/operative theology. So here is a summary of some of the practical implications of the journey so far:

- **A richer and fuller understanding of the nature of children and childhood**

So those working as teachers, advocates have a more theologically informed framework in which to work.

- **New understandings of church and mission**

Children are seen as nearer the heart of worship and ministry and not just as hearers and learners, but as those who teach and lead by their very presence. This is good news for those working alongside children because there could be a sea-change in the understanding of the people of God about children’s ministry.

- **A prophetic role for those engaged in children’s ministry**

Our engagement with children of all sorts leads us to discover truths that must be share with the wider Christian community. Children’s ministry must not be seen as a separate and discrete area of ministry.

- **Rethinking education and faith formation**

Those engaged in Child Theology have begun to look with critical eyes at some of the taken for granted assumptions we have about the nature and purpose of education, and how children learn whether about life or faith. The significance of the cries of babies and infants tends to be overlooked in church and school.

- **Parenting**

It takes a village, a church community to parent.

- **Adulthood**

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of Child Theology is that adulthood is seen differently!

## Conclusion

This is work in progress and I hope you will have much to add by your suggestions and critical observations. The process of discussion and conversation is vital to all that Child Theology is and does. That is how we believe it began when Jesus entered a theological discussion, and this consultation is part of the very same conversation that others have joined around the world.

## Questions and Comments

Q I’ve always thought we should remember the children in our planning. I can understand budgeting for children’s work and ministering to them but what do you mean by ‘partnering with them’?

A The critical thing is that they are God’s partners – how does that change what we do? As I showed my grandson the stars, I saw them in a new way too. If you take a human view of kingdom, the children are at the bottom. If you live according to the Kingdom of Heaven (where God has his way) , how are the children leading? It will not be in an imperial or tribal way. How might a child’s cry lead, for example?

Q Do we think we can learn from children? Do we believe they have the Holy Spirit?

A Are children nearer to God’s heart? My brother-in-law heard a child praying and was so deeply moved he left saying he was not worthy to be in the same tent. *Participant:* In August I was in Burkina Faso, children came and sung and prayed for us, as they did last night. I was touched in a way that I hadn’t

been for a long time. We have seen many young ones so gifted by God, but because of age, they have been kept away. We need to partner with them in ministry. We should consciously give them room where they can have opportunity to enrich our lives. *Participant*: I have two children and they seriously watch Christian satellite TV programmes and have the ambition to be part of God's mission.

Q I was looking for a way in which I could equip those who work with children. I'm still thirsty. Children model themselves on adults. It is dangerous to simply say that children are partners. It would be dangerous to be preaching as a child who is simply acting like the adults they have seen. Would that still be saying they are partners? How do we partner with them, in practical ways?

A I hope by the end of the consultation we shall have several ideas. Partnership does not imply that the partners are equals. *Participant*: The church is behind the secular world in listening to children. *Participant*: There are many intelligent people in the church, why wasn't this seen before? We must have been blinded by the enemy. *Participant*: God sees us as deaf and blind. What else are we blind to? God hid things from the wise and learned. One reason we didn't go there is fear: the idea that seminaries might have been based on false premises, for example.

Q Who is the child this theology is talking about? Don't we value learning?

A We are starting with the little child in Mt 18. But we are exploring beyond that. Do we see child and adults as opposites?

#### **S1.4: Compassion Africa's Contribution to sensitizing theological schools on ministry to children**

(Shiferaw)

The mission of Compassion International reads like this: *In response to the Great Commission, Compassion International exists as an advocate to children to release from their spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty and enable them to become responsible and fulfilled Christian adults.*

When this is translated into action, there are many practical outcomes such as the following:

- Executing different child development models with local churches:
  - Child development through sponsorship (CDSP)
  - Child Survival Program (CSP)
  - Leadership development program (LDP)
- Challenging the worldwide Church on its Biblical mandate to minister to children

One means of executing Compassion's mission is through Advocacy. Compassion's advocacy intervention on behalf of children has two components:

- Internal advocacy- this focuses Compassion staff members and the partner churches
- External advocacy- this targets the members of the body of Christ with which there is no partnership for holistic child development

Compassion wants to achieve several objectives in its external advocacy efforts. The one more relevant for us reads:

*"That the Church will draw on our experience, research, and expertise in order to increase the effectiveness of its ministry to children in poverty."*

To this end, our strategic advocacy goals for 2005 - 2007 include:

- Sensitizing theological schools in Africa on the strategic importance of ministry to children for the Kingdom agenda
  - Consultation for theological school principals on the importance of children's ministerial training
- Networking with other Para church child focused organizations and associations of churches
  - Working with Africa-wide church organizations (e.g. AEA, AACC) to create increased awareness of child ministry

- Networking with child focused Africa-wide organizations for encouragement, sharing of experiences and resources
- Conducting child ministry awareness creation workshops on ministry to children- Malawi, Burundi
- Video film and poster production on ministry to children

As a result of this work, we expect that Theological schools will understand the profound importance of children as the mission of God and in the mission of God.

How will we know that we are achieving our objectives? We think the following outcomes will indicate positive change. Theological schools will:

- include child development and ministry to children in the courses they offer to their students
- offer workshops on ministry to children to church leaders and Para church organizations
- include on their staff persons knowledgeable on children's ministry
- include books on children in their libraries

To date, we have organized two consultations for principals of theological schools: one for Eastern Africa (in Nairobi) and one for selected West Africa countries - Benin, Togo, Ghana and Burkina Faso (17). The response has been very good, with great receptivity and no resistance to the idea. Many have started departments on ministry to children and almost all started workshops and short courses on children's ministry.

There are still challenges, which include:

- Lack of awareness on the Biblical mandate on ministry to children
- Lack of awareness on the importance of children for God's work
- Lack of trained manpower on children
- Lack of resource materials

We conclude that most theological schools in Africa offer little training in children's ministry. The main reason for this is a lack of awareness of the importance of children in and for God's mission. However, the willingness of theological schools to go into children ministerial training is very encouraging. Few theological schools can do this on their own so the situation lends itself to a long term well-designed partnership among the body of Christ worldwide.

### Questions and Comments

*Participant:* people are starting to teach, but libraries have no idea of what is available. Books are difficult to access as they come from UK or USA. Perhaps we could come up with a core package that some place could get these books into the colleges. We need to resource them. *Participant:* – even what is written in Africa is based on what is in Europe and US. *Participant:* we need to write from our own stories in Africa, not depending only on outsiders.

Q What is Compassion doing in regarding to inspiring writers? Is there a plan to finance or something to motivate and inspire African writers?

A A good question that no one can answer. Perhaps this meeting can find out what the Body of Christ can do. Compassion can chip in something, but cannot be depended on. And it doesn't need to be Africans, but could be by person with African heart as well.

Q What do we call African literature? Why not encourage Africans to produce literature?

A *Participant:* Can we start with what we have and where we're at? Writing requires particular skills. We can have African writers piggy backing on Western writers who have the style to bring a product.

*Participant:* it is true that we need to write from Africa. If you look at the philosophers, they built upon each other's works. No man is an island. *Participant:* we need to think of what kind of content we need in these resources and this must be part of our resolution. *Participant:* we should also investigate the paradigm before we get into the material. Most of the material is written in the wrong paradigm. (A table listing some source material is attached in Appendix 1, provided by Isobel.)

Q We are practical doers; we immediately ask 'what are we going to do?' We don't ask the questions that go in before that. It's not a criticism. We are looking for solutions. Schools now are setting up programmes that want to add something about children. Keith is saying: 'no we need to rethink everything' *Participant:*. I don't think Compassion should wait before teaching about children.

- A It's not an either or. We can do both. The networking and partnership means that from now on, we can talk! This is not saying wait for the paradigm, but recognize the shift that is coming.

### **S1.5: Equipping for Ministry in Holistic Child Development**

(Shiferaw)

Compassion is committed to helping the Church reach the next generation.

Why the Next Generation?

- Because all children and young people are at risk.
  - Some are at risk from poverty
  - Others are at risk from prosperity!
- Most people who will make a decision to follow Christ, will do so before the age of 15
  - Children and Young people are receptive because “the clay is still soft.”

*We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, His power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes and established the law which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Psalm 78:2-7*

The church needs to be serious about children and youth - because God surely is! We want to:

- Challenge the Church regarding its responsibility and unique role in caring for needy children and youth.
- Equip the Church with the vision and skills it needs to respond to this mandate.

The MA Program in Holistic Child Development, (HCD) begun at Malaysia Baptist Theology Seminary in Penang, Malaysia in 2001, was created in response to the biblical mandate to care for children.

Compassion's strategy envisions partnerships with a few key seminaries and other Christian training institutions to implement academic programs in HCD. The purpose of the partnerships will be to see the establishment of independent, on-going, seminary owned programmes in HCD as an integral part of what the seminary offers.

#### **Overall Objectives**

- Equip students with prior experience in child development with a wide range of competencies and understandings related to Holistic Child Development
- Develop analytical and critical skills to relate the Bible to current child development theories and practice and evaluate their own experience in the light of the interactions.

The goal is that participants will be equipped to become competent leaders in all aspects of Holistic Child Development. The HCD partnership provides graduate level training for Compassion Asia staff, for key Compassion Partner staff, and for strategic child development workers and practitioners from other non-Compassion countries in Asia.

#### **Why Do Theological Schools need programs in Holistic Child Development?**

- To equip the Church (that's what Seminaries do!) to do the right way – the Biblical way - of child development (Holistic Child Development – Luke 2:51-52).
- To respond in obedience to The Great Commission, and to aggressively address/ correct the “Great Omission.”
- To promote equipping in other mandates and passions of the Church – Leadership Development, Church Growth and Mission.

#### **Distinctives of the HCD Ministerial Training Programmes**

- The Scope: The needy inside and outside the Church.  
Many seminaries provide courses or degrees in teaching and nurturing children and young people already in the church.

However, there are still many seminaries who have not responded with programs to fulfill the Church's responsibility to care for needy children outside the Church, and to prepare students for such ministries

- **The Nature: Holism**  
The HCD program fosters a holistic view of ministry to children. The HCD Programs are different from the course offerings some seminaries offer to improve Christian Education or Sunday Schools in the churches. It influences and equips the church to minister holistically to needy children both inside and outside the church.
- **The Approach: The Centrality of children as objects of and agents for mission.**  
The HCD Program understands ministry to children as essential for growing the leadership for the next generation. HCD programs are at the forefront in understanding the centrality of children as both objects of, and agents for mission.
- **The Foundation: Centrality of children in our biblical theology**  
The intent of HCD programs is to produce a whole new layer of Christian leadership for the next generations. This leadership has a unique understanding of God's heart for children and the relevance of holistic child ministries to the Ministry and Mission of the Church.

### **HCD Program: Work in Progress**

To date, the Penang Programme has attracted 200 participants from 17 countries and the Child Theology Resource Centre (ChILD) is providing significant support.

New HCD programmes are planned or have started in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Books and resources are being developed and the growing Child Theology Movement is informing child ministries and theology, missiology, ecclesiology, etc.

### **Curriculum**

- **Module I: Core/Foundation: Certificate in HCD**
  - Child Theology
  - Theories and Processes of Holistic Child Development
  - Child, Church, and Mission
  - The Asian Context of Child Development
- **Module II: Ministry: Graduate diploma in HCD**
  - Trauma, Recovery, and Resilience in Child Development
  - Intervention Strategies for Holistic Development of Children at Risk
  - Caring for and Equipping Caregivers
  - HCD Curriculum Design
  - Health and Nutrition
  - Parenting/Family Issues
  - Networking and Partnership
- **Module III: Research and Leadership Development: Master's Degree in HCD**
  - Specialization in the response to various sectors of Children at Risk
  - Christian Leadership in HCD Ministries.
  - Program Management and Facilitation of HCD
  - Networking and Partnership
  - Advocacy
  - Servant Leadership
  - Strategic Planning and Organization
  - Research and Design
  - Field Practicum
  - Guided Research/Project/Seminars

### **Questions and Comments**

Keith commented that he had a copy of the syllabus material and the reader for the theological component of the HCD course, which he teaches, available for perusal. Although it was designed for HCD in Asia it could also be adapted and applied to Africa. There are strengths and weaknesses of everything – it can be improved with the input of those present. For example, even the secular notion of "Child Development" implies

incompleteness and the need to become more like an adult. We need to look at that in the light of Jesus' admonition to become as little children.

Q What would a college look like where CT is totally integrated?

A Things are so young, it's hard to say. At MBTS, HCD was added on as an additional course and the other departments carried on as before. Then the word got out that something new was going on. Students on the other courses began to ask: 'can we join?' The faculty then changed the BA of Theology so that they could choose the CT module of HCD as part of their studies. Then members of the faculty came to do the course - a paradigm shift! So I can't say where this will end, but it is beginning to change the whole college. As the graduates become faculty members it may change more.

*Participant:* Maybe Africa a good start for this. In Ethiopia, we are trying to start a centre for producing child leaders. I don't think we need to scare anyone that as we bring CT in, other things must go out.

### S1.6: Workshop: Current programmes and courses summarised and critiqued.

The participants divided into small groups to consider the following questions:

1. What teaching is currently available in your area (churches, colleges, seminaries) that refers to children?
2. Critique: where are the gaps? Is what is available relevant?

#### Teaching Available

Lois provided a detailed example of what is currently available. It is attached as Appendix 2 and describes courses on offer at Nairobi International School of Theology.

- Degree in Child Development - *Daystar, Kenya*
- Diploma in Christian Ministry (includes course on Children's ministry) – *NIST*
- Degree in Children's Ministry – *Uganda, Christian University*
- Part Time Diploma Sunday School Training – *Uganda, KEST*
- Child Counselling degree programme - *RSA*
- Youth Ministry degree programme - *RSA*
- Christian Education courses – *Rwanda; Ethiopia*
- Domestic violence – *Ethiopia*
- Pastoral care with young people – *Ethiopia*
- Teacher training – administration, curriculum development etc
- Teaching peace and reconciliation
- Working with wounded children – *Petra, RSA*
- Working with children at risk – *Uganda, KEST*
- Christian Family Life – *MK College, Ethiopia*
- MDiv, one week on Children's Ministry – *Stellenbosch Uni, RSA*
- Almost nothing for pastors as children are not their responsibility
- Educating handicapped and disadvantaged children
- Developmental psychology and counselling
- Life Skills Training – *World Vision*
- Biblical perspective on protecting children

#### Gaps and Relevance

Group	Output
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theological colleges and universities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The training is not detailed</li> <li>○ There is a lack of contextualized theology</li> <li>○ They are not creating good awareness</li> <li>○ Focus on urban ministers only</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Church Leaders and Ministers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some are not aware of the need children ministry</li> <li>○ Lack of trained ministers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The church is not addressing the growing need of children</li> <li>● Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The materials that we are using to train and teach children are not done well. Not designed by professionals. Not contextualized</li> <li>○ Not many are published but African teachers/writers</li> <li>○ Lack of teaching materials</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Accrediting agents are not flexible to give accreditation for holistic curriculum</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need for specific focus on Child development</li> <li>● Counselling traumatized children (war, domestic violence, etc)</li> <li>● Caring for children living with HIV and Aids</li> <li>● Integrating children who are ex-soldiers into the society (Congo)</li> <li>● Helping teenage mothers care for their children</li> <li>● Domestic violence and children</li> <li>● Pastoral care and discipleship for children and youth</li> <li>● Building relationships with children</li> <li>● Training youth to develop skills to sustain themselves (gardens etc)</li> <li>● Organizing effective and relevant Sunday Schools</li> <li>● Producing children educative materials</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Child at Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Time – 5 days (45 hrs) – needs more time</li> <li>○ Presentation – student focused – good approach</li> <li>○ Content – three years, need based</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Christian Education - lacks focus on children</li> <li>● Sunday School Material fails to address needs of children outside the church</li> <li>● Material used by Theological Schools is not contextualized</li> <li>● Church Bible Schools do not include the unchurched – where do we find these children, those outside the boundary of the church or para-church organization?</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of capacity for pastors to equip families</li> <li>● Family relating to church: church to equip families (mother, father, child). No integrative view, only separate</li> <li>● Low status for women: the most vital in teaching children have been the women and they are not equipped.</li> <li>● An ancient African word – Ubuntu (“humanity to others”, or “I am who I am because of who we all are”)</li> <li>● Story Telling – help parents to tell the good stories of Jesus to their families</li> <li>● Pastors challenge in balancing ministry of family</li> <li>● Church leader’s ignorance in ministry to children at their age level. The pastor may not be able to say things relating to children.</li> <li>● Sunday School used to keep children away from the main service.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Child Theology is missing</li> <li>● Resource Material shortage</li> <li>● Understanding Children’s Ministry in Biblical perspective (lacking among pastors which makes a vicious circle on children’s ministry)</li> <li>● The whole church is looking from an adult perspective (need to be interactive and relevant and not living an exemplar life before them)</li> <li>● Failure to consider the power of media for educating children.</li> </ul>

## General Reflection

*Participant:* there is a conflict between having the material and putting it into an institution. You have the drivers of the vision who say 'this must be here' and then there is the Dean who is trying to fill the required hours and wondering who will take responsibility for the teaching, etc. The vision has also to accommodate with curriculum accreditation requirements.

Keith expressed his sympathy with academic deans. If we could put the situational analysis with the academic deans, that would be good. How do we do that? We have all this but if ultimately it's all down to the deans, we have to find strategies to convince the academic deans.

## Thursday 23 November

### S2.1: Devotions

(Lois)

A focus on the content and process of theological training

Mt 21: 28-32: The Parable of the two sons

Who was Jesus addressing? – chief priests and elders

What does it say? That we should be doers

How does Jesus start this? He asks a question and tells a story to make them think. He starts with a disturbing dilemma then comes back with another question. He could have just given a couple of lines to teach but instead, he engaged his listeners.

### S2.2: A Proposed course in Child Theology

Theological Foundations of Holistic Child Development

(White)

How did Jesus teach? We don't seem to have listened well to the way he did things. I have a folder of *content* and we only have time to take a brief stroll through it. I also want to communicate *process* (how it is taught). It could provide the basis for a major in CT or as the theological component for training of children's workers.

### Course Description

The course is intended to provide biblical and theological foundations for the whole of the HCD programme, and therefore for the ministry and mission of the students. It contains much that is of practical and theological relevance for Christians working alongside children, young people and families, at whatever level of operation, but is also designed for pastors, church leaders and theological trainers. The purpose is not simply to focus on children and childhood, so much as to allow God's heart and purposes to be better understood with "a child in the midst". In most Christian activity, including churches, families and communities children are present, but even where they are not, holding a child in the midst provides vital clues to God's way of seeing and doing things. It enables students to engage coherently at a deeper and more appropriate way with the Bible in their ministry.

The way Jesus did things and related to people is as important as what he did and said, and the course seeks to model itself on the ministry of Jesus, in terms both of content and process. The group dynamics are integral to the course, creating experiences that can be built on and developed in a range of pastoral situations.

### Course Outline

The course is divided into five sections. This means that it can be taught conveniently over the period of a working week, or at greater intervals.

#### *Section One: Theological Reflection on Practice*

Resources: participants provide the raw material; also Cutting Edge 2001 questions (see below).

We begin with introductions. During this session students are encouraged to share and reflect on their lives and practice with particular reference to seeking to discover the operative theology underlying what they think and do. This includes individual and group work, an introduction to theology and the first encounter with biblical interpretation and exposition.

On the first day, we always have to deconstruct a classroom and then reconstruct it. We usually put them in groups around a table and call each one a church. We always have roles – one who cares for the lecturer (water), time keeper, facilitator, etc. We break out of the mould.

With the stories, I ask, how many of them were happy stories, how many were sad. Usually 80-90% are sad. How many were to do with school, inside, outside, mother, father, grandpa?

Most of the day we explore the meaning of 'theology' and try to break down apprehension that some may have with the discipline. "As followers of Jesus Christ, we are all theologians – would you please write that down." We also discuss where we get our theology from – hymns, stories, nature, literature, theological books, sermons, Sunday School, people, children, the Bible (very few say the Bible). Most comes from choruses and songs. The Bible seems almost marginal.

We go through a series of questions (from 'Cutting Edge' 2001<sup>2</sup>) that those working with children around the world ask: e.g. why do children suffer for the sins of their parents? Students go through the questions prayerfully and highlight the ones that are theirs also. Before lunch we pray over the questions and conclude the morning with the Lord's Prayer.

In the afternoon, each 'church' works on a mission statement, a logo, a vision for their 'church'. They begin to see what it's like to have a group working through issues theologically. We read the story from the anointing of David until Goliath is killed. Each group attempts to answer: What's the main point of the story? There is no right or wrong.

### ***Section Two: Historical Theology***

Textbook: M. Bunge (ed.) *The Child in Christian Thought*

We start with *Children's letters to God* each day. During this session, there is a description of the development of church history, with particular opportunity for the students to place themselves in context using a "tree of church history". The handling of Scripture (hermeneutics) is explored within this context. We work most of the morning, starting with the roots – Egyptian, Canaanite, Jewish, etc. I ask: where are children in this tree? Invisible! Clearly they are there, but they are not seen.

We 'walk' with Jesus through Matthew 16-21. The last thing that happens is that children are shouting 'Hosanna' in the Temple. Students are asked where they were in the walk with Jesus each day. And have 30 minutes for reflection in silence. All afternoons are Fun Times – story telling, making things, Bible Reading.

A primary issue is how emerging Asian theologies relate to Western theologies, traditions and denominations. Students may have their first exposure to Asian theologians, male and female at this point, including Pandita Ramabai.

### ***Section Three: Biblical Theology***

Forthcoming textbook: M Bunge (Ed.): *Biblical Perspectives on Childhood*

Students are engaged in exploring the Bible throughout this day, with overviews of the Old and New Testaments, the paper "A little Child Will Lead Them", and individual and group exegesis. For example, we may study Ps 23 or Ps 8 After one hour of exegesis, each group is asked to draw one line that represents the Psalm: a shape, like a swirl or wave, etc.

In the afternoon, we look at Jesus and Children in the NT. Including the story in Jn 6:1-71 the feeding of the 5000, as seen through the eyes of the boy who gave his food.

### ***Section Four: Systematic Theology***

Textbook: S. Grenz *Theology for the Community of God*; forthcoming textbook with working title: *International Perspectives on Systematic Theology with a child in the midst*

Throughout the day students encounter the outline of systematic theology using the work of Stanley Grenz, including God, Creation, Anthropology, Sin, Christology, Redemption, updated and challenged by the insights of others, Asian and Western.

We start the day with Devotions, led by one of the groups. Each of the churches do a devotion during the week. As a teacher, I withdraw more and more.

Every day the students have to write about the day before. And I write back to them. Very often my views are changed. We are building a foundation of trust. I never share what is in there.

<sup>2</sup> These questions are given in some detail in the report of the Penang 1 consultation, available from Child Theology Movement

### ***Section Five: Practical Theology***

Resources: the materials and reflections of the week coupled with detailed exploration of the biblical visions of the community, and kingdom of God.

This day is the culmination of the whole process and is designed to help students clarify how their lives and work will be affected and transformed by what they have done and learnt during the rest of the course. Practical theology is concerned with what it means to do things God's way in our lives.

So we spend a whole day preparing to leave and go out renewed. One of the songs I sing regularly is 'Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.' The churches are given a task of writing an introductory book on CT. Could they explain to others what it is about? In the Jewish tradition, children are not just present in ceremonies, etc, but key players. How will our lives be different? We use letters as one of the main ways to prepare for sending out. It doesn't take long until one of the students says: wait a minute, isn't the NT made up of letters? There's beauty in what we do, letters coming from 7 churches.

The letters are written to the whole church and to a group. They read out their letters to everyone. On scrolls, singing, however they want to. They stand in front of the logo and mission statement and others gather around to hear their letter.

I ask for a Reaction Paper, but it's now addressed to our Heavenly Father and it's personal for each student. I ask them to think carefully, how they are going to start the letter and how they will end it. Then we have a celebration: dancing, games, etc.

### **S2.3: The Petra College approach to Training**

*(Dirk Coetsee)*

We started this session with a song based on 1 Jn 4 taught by Dirk which involved dancing together.

Then Dirk told us a story about a girl in Mazambique. In 2002 or 2003 a remarkable thing happened in Shakwe, Mozambique. A very bright girl of 12 failed her grade. This created shockwaves because she was so bright. She then repeated the year. This was even more unusual because, though it is common to fail it is unusual to retake the year. Teachers deliberately fail pupils and the parents then pay an amount to the teacher to re-evaluate the paper. The teacher finds reasons to raise the marks to a pass grade. But this girl said: "No. If the teacher said I failed, I failed and will repeat." The teacher said, "This is wrong, you should have paid and you would have passed." The principal said to the parents, "I can't force the teacher to change, just pay." Where did the child get this courage? This child is one of 130,000 (July 2006) children that discovered there's a new life.

Sybil Baloyi trained with Petra and works in Mozambique. Through 72 villages, 164 clubs, 177 schools, 307 churches and with the help of 1064 volunteers and 64 full time staff, she has reached 130,517 children.

These children are changing the whole of Mozambique. During recent floods, the adults did not know what to do. But the children organized the evacuations because they were networked together.

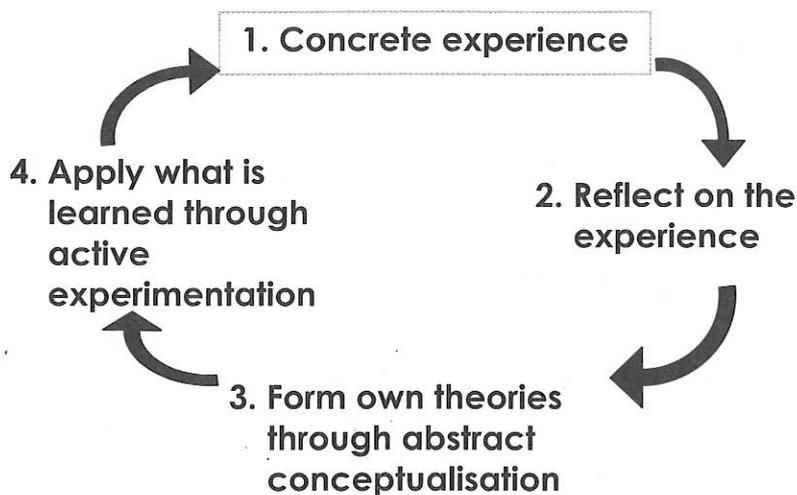
Sybil's secret is a holistic approach to children's needs: Physical, Spiritual, Intellectual, Emotional and Social. This reflects Petra College's Philosophy of Children's Ministry. It is:

- relational – if you think you can do children's ministry without going into deep relationships, you are misled.
- Christ-Centred.
- Contextual – not only a village in the middle of Ethiopia, but also the physical context the child is in at that moment, e.g. at home, in school, on the street, to one child as a servant in the house, church, community
- Participatory – the child and I are actually participating on an equal footing in ministry
- Holistic
- Integrated – not Sunday School and then sports and then, etc. It is all together. Sybil is one who does this.
- Reconciliatory – we sometimes find that children's ministers will move in between children and their families. A child may say, 'My mother hates me and is not a Christian and I like you, so can

I come and move in with you?’ This is flattering but destructive. It is better to respond: “You cannot come and move in, but you can visit.” The danger is to bring a deep division in the family and take over the role of the mother. We aim to be the reconciler between children and their parents.

- Experiential – you cannot be prepared for everything that will happen. Allow there to be experiential learning.

## An Experiential Learning Cycle



- Modelling – we should not only be the role model for the child, but also let them be a teacher to me
- Life Long (Mentorship) – not always able to have a long time available.
- Needs based – does not mean you only address the needs of the child. More in terms of understanding there are different facets that need addressing allowing space. We don’t want to say, ‘I must supply these needs.’ But in my interaction with the child will not be limited to one area.
- Outcomes based – we have a future in mind, we walk together toward a future.

At the basic level, students learn to:

- Build relationships with children
- Help children grow in Christian maturity
- Understand children's ministry
- Help families care for children
- Minister to children in their early childhood
- Involve children in the ministry of a faith community
- Help a community care for its children
- Help emotionally wounded children towards healing
- Equip others for children's ministry
- Serve as a leader in children's ministry
- Manage a children's ministry

At a higher level, students are taught how to involve children in the ministry of a faith community.

Having worked to develop the ministry skills of selected leaders, we aim to find a key core group who can be: role models in basic children’s ministry; facilitators of adult learning; managers of ministries and spiritually mature leaders of others. We work to develop the training, management and mentoring skills of this group.

## **S2.4: Group Work: Reflecting on inputs so far**

Participants divided into small groups to take time to digest and reflect on the various inputs. Four resources to use as a source of reflection:

- a. The Child in Biblical Witness
- b. Introducing CT – booklet
- c. HCD Course: Theological foundations
- d. The Petra Programme

Groups were invited to consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and any other issues of concern. From these, they were to select three things they would like to explore further.

### **1 The HCD course**

Strengths:

- there is already a model people can follow
- Change is granted. Logically it seems to bring the desired outcomes because it uses other people's experience. There comes a change with the HCD because you go through an experience.
- It is contextualized and thus can use it with possible similar results. If you have a module that can be transferred from one setting to another with the same results, it is scientific
- Motivation in creating surprise

Weaknesses:

- time consuming
- not principle centred in sense of modern teaching

### **2 The Petra Programme**

Strengths:

- Christ-Centred philosophy
- Facilitation is not dictatorship
- Natural, encouraging ministry where you are
- Presentation of philosophy

Weaknesses:

- don't often see the relation with the church or not clearly seen – but then the definition of the church comes up. Need to put 'partnership with church' in the philosophy.

Threat:

- why philosophy vs. theology – if we are looking for a theology as a foundation, why choose the word 'philosophy.' A philosophy is a way to go about it.

### **3 The Child in Biblical Witness**

Strengths:

- It starts with Jesus and ends with Jesus
- And eye opener, something new
- Based on the Bible
- Bring the Child in the Midst
- Children are participants in God's mission

Weaknesses:

- Risk of down playing maturity, not confusing childlikeness with childishness
- It's a new concept so not many have resources or materials
- Implications need to be explored

Opportunities:

- it provides opportunity to create materials
- to see children from a different perspectives

Threat:

- danger of extremism

## 4 Introducing CT Booklet

### Strength:

- offers a new foundation to Christian doctrine
- breaks the status quo (threat also)
- breathes new life to our theology
- Well developed, organized, thought through
- all disciplines included, historical, systematic, practical

### Weaknesses:

- doesn't take into consideration the African context – how does their culture become the barrier, or asset. It doesn't tackle the cultural issues.
- Danger of idolizing the child
- Theology is not yet known or publicized.

### Opportunity:

- creates a lot of opportunity for creativity
- to put the child in the right place, where Christ puts him or her
- new way of thinking theologically

### Threat:

- danger of putting the child in the centre vs. in the midst.

### Issues raised for further consideration included:

- Further time for reflection and feedback needed
- taking CT further because an understanding of it will bring about the development of curriculum
- Explore CT in an African context and culture
- how CT would see different aspects of theology

## S2.5: A time of worship, repentance and open sharing in the light of the challenges so far

*Alem*

Sing

Mt 19 the children brought to Jesus but the disciples turning them away; just like the lepers

Quietness and Prayer

Share what God has said to me personally.

Pray for those leaving tomorrow

Sing and closing prayer

## Friday 24 November

### S3.1: Devotions

*Jean-Marie*

A focus on visions of church and society where children have their rightful place

To be the good leader that God wants us to be. The 7 Bs

1. Jm 3:13 – be understanding
2. Pp 3:13 – be sincere
3. Mt 15:37 – be a sower
4. 2Tm 2:24 – be patient
5. 1Jn 4:11 – be loving
6. Ac 20:35 – be supportive
7. 2Cr 9:10 – be a multiplier

### S3.2: Seminar: What CT is and is not

(Bunge)

When I had my own children I was teaching in Sunday School and I realised how poor the resources were. There were a few good materials for religious education but they were hard to find. I began to wonder why theologians spent so little time thinking about children – they were thinking about reproductive technology, abortion and homosexuality etc. This led me with some colleagues to put together the book 'The Child in Christian Thought'. It turned out that many famous Christian leaders and thinkers in the past had written much about children. Now another book is in preparation – Biblical perspectives on children, and it should come out in a year. A third book will look at Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives on children.

As Christian theology approaches children and childhood in a number of ways, each with particular emphases and interests, we need to be clear what we mean by 'Child Theology' and to ask ourselves how it is distinct from other more familiar considerations of children, such as:

- Theologies of Childhood
- Children's theology
- Children's spirituality
- Theologies for children
- Children and religious education

For example, to compare and contrast CT with other theologies concerned with children

#### Theologies of Childhood:

- Provide sophisticated theological understandings of children and childhood and our obligations to children – not just of the parents but also church, state, etc.;
- Should take into account various perspectives on children and childhood from the Bible and the Christian tradition;
- Should honour the dignity and complexity of children – both fully human and also developing, that they are sinful moral agents but also models of faith. This full view is essential if children are to be treated well – neither oppressed nor sentimentally idolised.

#### Child Theologies:

- Build on theologies of childhood but with a broader task, looking at doctrine and practice as a whole;
- Re-examine fundamental doctrines and practices of the church using the "lens" of the child;
- Provide new insights into central themes of the Christian faith, e.g. how would we redefine the doctrine of the church if we took children seriously?.

They both:

- Put children at the centre of serious theological reflection;
- Prompt action on behalf of children;
- Have implications for the church and children themselves, especially in the areas of
  - Children and family ministry
  - Religious education and faith formation
  - Child advocacy

The approach adopted by CTM and reflected in this consultation has the following features:

- It involves an international network of professional theologians and practitioners
- It uses a distinctive approach for putting a child "in the midst"
- It recognizes that child theologies will be diverse, building on:
  - The Bible
  - Authoritative texts in particular traditions
  - Research in social and natural sciences
  - Experience in their own specific cultures and faith communities

### Questions and Comments

Q Can you give an example of how we should go about redefining or theology?

- A The most glaring need is theological anthropology, our understanding of human nature. It is often just about adults, and even just male adults. It takes no account of development and of children. *Participant:* Churches are scary places. Not even a square foot of space for play. No child sized chairs. *Participant:* The doctrine of sin is largely about adults and Augustine's thoughts on how he was as a child. In Cape Town, we did some preliminary work on this. *Participant:* The changes needed are so vast that there needs to be a partnership between East and West, North and South. *Participant:* The South reads less; but talks more. Maybe it's an effect of climate. A lot of religious education is watered-down psychology with Bible verses added. How can we translate this into an oral tradition. Erasmus thought that the best the best translation of 'logos' was c'onversation'. This gives a very different feeling, much more open-ended, than 'word'. We are offered to be part of a conversation.
- Q Critique of the western approach but what is the way forward? It's not enough to see the problems.
- A We need to sit down and talk about children. Some cultures have helpful elements but some aspects are often not compatible with a Biblical view. *Participant:* suggestion for practical strategies to enrich our commitment to children.
- Provide attention to children in present courses: ethics; systematic theology; history of Christianity;
  - Strengthen courses that already exist in relation to children e.g. Christian education courses
  - Take advantage of new courses that have been developed such as HCD
  - Provide compact seminars – 3-5 days e.g. in continuing education programmes
  - Invited speakers

### S3.3: Visions of the future for theology, church and mission with a child in the midst

*Read and listen to the following Biblical visions:*

Group: 1	Isaiah 11	About transformation of a society – peace, good relationships, good environment. The child is leading. We realised that our society today is not like this, and neither are children leading.
Group: 2	Zech 8	We envision in our churches children and adults working together to bring people into the Kingdom of God.
Group: 3	Rev 21	Vision of new heaven and new earth and the new Jerusalem. A society with no death or sickness. Our vision is to build a society with a child in the midst where God dwells with his people and there is no oppression.
Group: 4	Isaiah 65:17-25	A vision told in story of a city with life in all its fullness
Group: 5	Isaiah 9:1-7	The coming of Jesus gives hope for the reconstruction of African society as we place Jesus in the midst.
Group: 6	Is 66:1-16	Many of the sacrifices we have made may not be appreciated by God. But we have hope. God is already at work and our vision is to respond to his initiative.

How would we apply this vision to your community (village; city; church; family)

*In same groups: name the powers; what gets in the way of the vision being realised?*

Group: 1	Caregivers; community leaders; local NGOs; western theology; school environment; adults
Group: 2	Tradition; attitudes; financial constraints; ignorance; lack of teaching materials and training; lack motivation and recognition; bkinded to children's ministry; culture; lack of time; too many children without quality attention; wrong theology

Group: 3	Wrong theology; ignorance; poverty; traditional customs; systems and structures; social problems; poor leadership; division and conflict; poor communication; envy, lack of collaboration and selfishness.
Group: 4	Selfishness; tradition within the church; culture; passiveness; violence; discrimination; people being overwhelmed
Group: 5	Theological training institutions; resistance to change; marginalisation of children; an adult's world; wrong allocation of resources; exploitation due to globalisation; individualism; little social action by the church; lack of awareness of the need for change
Group: 6	Western theological process; school system; understanding of education; poverty of understanding and culture; armed political conflicts; institution of the church; world view or cultural aspects that will not allow the child to flourish; greed and oppression; policies in organisations; established curricula in seminaries; lack of appreciating cultural methods of communication

Unpacking some of these:

- Tradition – accepted patterns of working in the church
- Cultural practices – some are harmful e.g. in Ethiopia there is a problem of giving girls of 7 to 9 years old for marriage; circumcision of girls
- Western theology – very formal and analytic, propositional; dissects things to non-existence

**Next task: what tools have we got to challenge these issues? What resources?**

Group: 1	African story; the Bible; African games, traditions, performances, music
Group: 2	Theological institutions; consortium of organisations that work with children; history going back before Augustine; media; art; drama; literature etc; similarity of African and Biblical culture; African womanhood
Group: 3	Bible; books; theological institutions; NGOs working with children; church; professional practitioners; media (TV, Internet etc); African family and community
Group: 4	Listen to Christ with an open mind; use of story telling; working in groups or teams; focus on people – read people not books;
Group: 5	People with raised awareness; child focussed orgs; statements by the church on children; people open to issues concerning children; CRC and Millennium Dev Goals; goodwill for partnerships; children themselves; VN recent conference; people who are praying; literature by Christians
Group: 6	Commitment to theological institutions; Bible in own languages; churches full and vibrant; child awareness; this group; partnership between NGOs; Christian schools; culture

A way of doing child theology (by Solomon)

1. Moved by Christ to look at the plight of children
2. Acts of compassion
3. Rediscovering the beauty and wisdom of children
4. Re-reading the bible with/or child in mind
5. Re-visiting our cultural concepts with regard to children
6. Discovering the theological position of the child in kingdom vision
7. Looking at a child in a new way – as sign of kingdom character
8. Redefining Christian doctrine through redeeming the child
9. Protecting the child – engaging children rights and freedoms in a changing world.

## 10. Knowing Christ better and being kingdom people.

The process starts again as we receive new children

**S3.4: Identifying practical steps for seminaries, organisations and CTM**

Divide into groups: one group composed of those on the staff of seminaries; the other group were the others – those involved in Christian ministry with children. The groups have these tasks, respectively

1. identify practical steps that seminaries can take to develop African CT
2. identify practical steps we want seminaries, child care organisations and CTM to do to develop African CT

**Seminarians**

1. Seminaries should 'own' CT: incorporate it into the curriculum. Curricula are driven by what's within. If it is not already there, you don't talk about it!
2. Help the faculty to mainstream CTM as has been done by HIV/AIDS. Until curriculum is in place and deans convinced, we can sell whatever gleanings we have to other faculty members, sharing with them to open their minds so they will keep their eyes open for opportunities to bring in CT when they can. Eg – child in HIV setting. Eg – at a staff meeting arranged around my trip and experience here and encourage them to open their eyes.
3. Gather and publish in journals as articles. There is an African journal on Christian Education with a section on children's ministry. It is up to 12 volumes
4. Hold refresher courses for all stake holders (church leaders and practitioners) focusing on paradigms. Give the history of the movement to date and invite them to participate.
5. Find influential people to write – theologians. They don't have to be published, but written specifically for this movement. One could also gather them to edit them to publish. But would be more useful in English.
6. Develop faculty members to teach CT courses – might take 4 years from now. Encourage these people to do research – opportunities like sabbaticals. There needs to be an environment where people can do research. And then when time is created, the physical and material resources to be able to travel between colleges and get materials, they need resources
7. Ongoing engagement by faculty lectures and panel discussions
8. Organise regional and continental consultations

## Practical steps to develop CT in seminaries:

- Create awareness in faculty meeting with the faculty.
- Present what they have learned/share ideas.

**Practitioners**

1. Preparatory phase
  - Listen to African children
  - Reread the Bible with a focus on children
  - Explore traditional African rituals and art forms
  - Study what is already available on children
  - Hold a workshop with stakeholders to review the results of this research
2. Practical
  - Construct CT for African context
  - Design curricula
  - Consultation and pilot programmes
  - Feedback to stakeholders

### 3. Communication

- Share CT with stakeholders (workshops, media, classrooms)
- Revisit all other theologies and revise in the light of CT
- Look for a champion or champions to spread the word about CT

#### Seminaries:

- Material on CT
- Training on CT
- Provide courses/ MA etc; distance education
- Start HCD programmes
- Articles and publications

#### NGOs

- VN etc connecting people
- Providing key books and materials
- Build up capacity of local church
- Sponsor staff to go on courses

#### CTM

- Share publications
- Commission thinking and writing by African theologians
- Organise more consultations – regional and sub-regional

#### Church

- All church programmes to include CT
- Declarations and policies on children
- Send people for training and equipping

#### General

- Co-ordinating team for CT in Africa
- Mailing list and shared info
- Share and contextualise the Addis consultation report

### S3.5: Plans, commitments and farewells

#### *Shiferaw*

Gn 39:9 “No-one is greater than I in this house” spoken by a slave. God has given us immense responsibility in His house. We are his #1 choice to take this responsibility.

#### Group Commitments

1. Share and popularise CT in our own organisations
2. Establish a co-ordinating team to work closely with CTM
3. Organise sub-regional consultations

#### Summary for seminaries:

1. Develop contextualised CT material
2. Develop an expert CT faculty to impact every course
3. To train people who work with children
4. Revisit the curricula
5. Share existing resources

#### Summary for churches:

1. Prepare a declaration on CT
2. All church programmes to include CT
3. Send people for training and equipping in CT

**Summary for CTM:**

1. Share publications
2. Commission thinking and writing by African theologians
3. Help to connect with seminaries worldwide
4. Organise more sub-regional consultations: eastern, western, southern, central

**Summary for NGOs:**

1. Sponsor national, sub-regional and continental CT consultations and training
2. Equip seminaries with resource materials
3. Build international partnerships for theological schools
4. Sponsor research students in Theological schools to develop African CT

*Keith*

On behalf of the participants Keith thanked all those who had made the consultation possible, including the staff of the management college, the organisations and seminaries that had allowed people to attend, the Goddard Memorial Trust and Compassion for funding, Shiferaw and his team, Marcia for her paper and input, John and Karissa for their work on the report. He also thanked the participants for the work done and the way they had done it. He promised that CTM would make the report of the consultation available to the participants, that the directors would be briefed on the African consultation and asked to support developments in Africa, that suggestions for African booklets in the CT series was welcomed, and that ChILD would be available with some materials and information.

He then read from Isaiah 55: 17-25, some *Children's Letters to God* (as a reminder that the child had been in the midst all through whether by the actual presence of children or by holding them in our imaginations). He closed with a blessing used at the graduation of the first HCD students in Penang from I Thessalonians 5: 12- 24. The participants held hands and said The Grace in their own languages. The final words were "Ite, Missa Est" - Go: where you are going is the real sacrifice, where in view of everything we have shared of God's mission, nature and purposes, we should offer our bodies as living sacrifices. This is our reasonable and logical service.

## Appendix1: Training Materials for Children at Risk

(provided by Isobel Booth-Clibborn; Viva Network Africa)

### 1 African context

Title	Description	Source
Children and Aids – Training for Frontline Caregivers in Africa	4 part video series: Introduction / Children and Aids in Africa; Community / Church based childcare; Peer to Peer methods Videos, facilitators guide and Learning Pack English and French	Kids Alive / Tearfund UK / Viva Network /ARCA Associates consortium. peterdawsonclark@cs.com jocelyn.muraya@tearfund.org
Choosing Hope The Christian Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic	Curriculum Modules (x8) for Theological and Pastoral training Institutions in Kenya (Paper based file) HIV Facts/ Biblical Foundation / mobilising Church / Changing attitudes / Pastoral Care / Counselling / Aids free living/ Home based care	MAP International
Child Development Syllabus	Diploma and Masters Course. Transformational Development/Child Development/ Theories of Child Development / Psychology of Learning/ Role and Context of Child and Adolescent Development / Psychopathology /Health Education/ Assessment and Interventions /Child Development Practicum /Management Perspectives /Programme Design and Implementation / Facilitation for Child Development/Counselling / Statistical and Research Methods	Daystar and Compassion partnership
Children and Social Justice	CD rom and internet learning community Distance learning course– Who is a child / children’s rights/ Struggle for social justice / right to participants / accountability and judiciary / non discrimination / children as social and cultural actors / Gender and sexuality / violence, war and peace building / forced immigration / economic rights	FAHAMU (with university of Oxford) christina@fahamu.org
Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa	HIV/ AIDS curriculum for Theological Institutions in Africa: socio-economic issues (poverty); gender (men and women relationships in the society); age (impact of HIV/AIDS on children, youth and the elderly); PLWHA (their involvement in prevention and care); stigma (examining its impact and planning for it); cultural perspectives (the advantages and disadvantages of culture); biblical and theological perspectives (to use the church's resources); liturgical approaches (to speak to the heart and change attitudes	WCC, MAP Intl, UNAIDS
Oasis	Streetwise – 1 week intensive course teaching working with street children basics Curriculum for trainers of those working with street children – 18 lessons – who are street children / understanding children and street children / approaches of working ‘ developing outreach programmes / drugs/ alcohol/ health / authority / discipline / project development / care for care giver/ key principles	Oasis / Crisis Care International Andy Sexton andysexton@oasisglobal.org

WEC International / Rainbows of Hope	Offering Healing and Hope for Children in Crisis. Curriculum developer – lesson resources; handouts; video	Phyllis Kilbourn Rainbows of Hope / WEC <a href="http://www.wec-int.org/rainbows/resources/training">www.wec-int.org/rainbows/resources/training</a>
Kids Alive Kenya	Run a certificate course in Child Development and Child care. (1- 3 week). They also do training on trauma counselling	Wendy Bovard <a href="mailto:bravodoc@yahoo.com">bravodoc@yahoo.com</a>
Petra College	Residential training in South Africa. The Children's Ministry Leadership (CML) Programme; Advanced Children's Ministry; Children's Ministry Management; etc.	Petra College
Commonwealth of Learning	Have 1 module of self instructional materials – Counselling for care Givers – 9 units Counselling; ethical and behavioural issues; child abuse; substance abuse; HIV; grief counselling; vocational guidance; coping with stress	Doing a pilot in Zambia 2005 and can send training materials in pdf. <a href="mailto:cwalker@col.org">cwalker@col.org</a> / <a href="http://www.col.org">www.col.org</a>

## 2 Worldwide context

Title	Description	Source
Celebrating Children Syllabus	Teaching curriculum following modules on Understanding the child in context / key issues in listening to children / risk and resilience / holistic mission to children / working with children / development , evaluation and monitoring of programme / development of staff and self	Viva Network partnership. 50+ contributors from around the world. Courses run in UK, Bangkok, Cambodia and USA.
An Introduction to Child Theology	White and Willmer	Produced by the Child Theology Movement <a href="http://www.childtheology.org">www.childtheology.org</a>
Understanding God's Heart for Children	Fuller Seminary. Looks at the 7 Biblical Principles on children	From Viva Network Africa
Church Child and Mission	Dan Brewster. Curriculum material used in the Holistic Child Development Course Baptist Seminary Malaysia	From Compassion
Biblical Mandate on Children	Compassion International: Guide for 4 practical workshops looking at the Bible and people's experiences and facilitators Guide.	From Compassion International or Viva Network Africa
The Church in an HIV+ World	Daniela Gennrich: Practical Handbook: Psychosocial / Health nutrition/ economic strengthening/ education / social inclusion	HIV/AIDS Alliance

## **Appendix 2: NIST'S WORK ON CHILDREN**

**Presented at CTM Consultation Ethiopia, November 21- 25**

NIST offers courses related to children ministry directly and indirectly at all levels.

The direct courses include:

### **Seminars**

The objective of the seminar courses are:

- To appreciate the importance of ministry to children.
- To understand the nature and characteristics of children.
- To identify the appropriate teaching methods of children.

### **Diploma Level**

#### **ES146 Sunday School Ministry**

This course examines the need for Sunday school programming for child, youth and adult education in the church. Consideration is given to needs of various age groups in developing, implementing and evaluating these programs.

#### **ES144 Ministry to Children**

The content of this course includes a study of the biblical basis of children's ministry, the nature and needs of children, (i.e. their behaviour at different stages of growth) as well as the principles, methods and materials for effective ministry in the local church, pre-schools and other children related organizations. The role of the pastor in this ministry, as well as recruiting and training of Sunday school teachers, organization of children's programmes e.g. Vocational Bible School, Sunday school and children's bible club will be taught. Preparing Sunday school lessons and teaching it will be covered.

#### **CS136 Counseling Children**

This course examines physiological, psychological, sociological and developmental issues in children and how they affect Counselling this group. Issues facing children which bring out the need for counseling and ways of effectively Counselling children are looked at.

### **Masters Level**

#### **PS585 Ministry to Children**

Biblical basis of children ministry will be taught in this course. Understanding children behaviour in their different stages will be looked at. Further, the role of the pastor in this ministry, recruiting of Sunday school teachers, understanding of how children learn, organization of children programmes e.g. VBS, Sunday school and children's Bible club will be taught. Preparing Sunday school lessons and teaching them will be covered.

Ministry to Children [required for Educational Studies and Pastoral Studies concentrations).

#### **CS746 Child and Adolescent Counseling**

This course examines developmental issues in children and adolescence and how they affect counselling these groups. Examination of how counselling theories that are developmental in approach may respond to the issues raised is done.

## **INDIRECT COURSES**

### **Diploma Level**

#### **ES244 Programming and Curriculum Development**

This course provides principles of curriculum formation and administration in an educational programme, curriculum innovation, design, development and evaluation as well as principles of effective programme change in the education ministry of the church.

**ES143 Lifespan Development**

This course provides a biblically based investigation of developmental psychology and how it relates to the educational ministry of the church. It also examines ways of setting lifespan developmental-based structures of the educational ministry in the local church.

**PS161 Marriage and Family Life**

The course covers the biblical basis, design and purpose of marriage; the role of family members; preparation of marriage; sex in marriage; family financial management, communication, separation, divorce and remarriage and sex in marriage.

**Master of Arts****PS581 Marriage and Family Life**

The course covers biblical basis, design and purpose of marriage; types of families and family members; role of family members and preparation of marriage, family financial management, communication, separation, divorce and remarriage and sexual ethics.

**ES555 Curriculum Development and Evaluation**

This course investigates educational theories of curriculum formation and biblical principles of curriculum design, development and evaluation. Principles of effective change strategies and curriculum innovation in the educational ministry of the church are also considered.

**ES550 Educational Ministry in the Church**

This course introduces the student to the educational ministry of the local church, considering the aims, principles, leadership, organization, and agencies of a biblical programme for all age groups.

**FM530 Evangelism and Discipleship**

The purpose of Evangelism and Discipleship is to provide the biblical basis, philosophy, strategies and methods in evangelism and discipleship and training in the use of related tools effectively. It is required for all FM courses.

