

THE STORY OF CHILD THEOLOGY

At an international conference ("Cutting Edge III") of Christians involved with children at risk in 2000, the participants responded to one of the papers by asking over 200 heartfelt theological questions. The conference asked for further theological reflection on these questions, which eventually led to what is now called Child Theology.

In Penang in 2002, a group met with participants from every continent, male and female, practitioners and theologians/academics. It proved to be a seminal event both for those who gathered and for the process of Child Theology. The report of the consultation was presented to and endorsed by the 2002 Cutting Edge IV conference. Meanwhile contact was established with the many groups, institutions and movements who had already been engaging in Christian child-related activity and some degree of theological reflection.

At consultations in South Africa, USA and England, similar mixed groups of people gathered around a table to explore what it meant to put a child in the midst of theological issues in particular cultures and contexts. Reports of these consultations have also been published in both electronic and



hard copy form. A charitable company has been established to facilitate the process with particular reference to ensuring that people from the two-thirds

world could be full participants in a truly global process. Consultations in Latin America and Eastern Europe are being prepared. In June 2004, a second international consultation in Penang reflected on the process thus far, took part in the opening of the CH.I.L.D. Resource Center, and considered strategic options and directions for the future.

WHAT IS "CHILD THEOLOGY" ?

Jesus put a child in the centre of the disciples when they were having a theological argument about greatness in the kingdom of God.



It is plain that Jesus thought the child's presence would give the disciples a clue to the essential truth they were missing.

Occasionally over the centuries, the child has disturbed theologians at work, but has not been in a position to shape theology consistently.

In Child Theology, we are invited to take good note of the child in the midst as we think about, for, to, from and with God in Christ. As we do that, we expect our theology to change for the better. In Child Theology, we embark afresh on the journey with Christ into the open secret of God in the world.

Child Theology serves God's Word in the Gospel by attending to the child as a sign of the Kingdom of God.

It serves theological enquiry by contributing new chapters on the child as a theological topic and developing the whole of theology in the light of the child.

It serves churches by exploring the grounding of their work with and for children and reminding them of the whole Gospel.

It serves children by exploring the theological ground for the rights of the child, the importance of all educational initiatives and caring ministries to children, and the transcending wholeness of the child in the mystery of God.



HOW CTM WORKS

The Child Theology Movement works primarily by consultation. This means facilitating open exploratory discussion, out of which will come refreshed and new networks and alliances, contextually aware, identifying and appreciating any child theology which is already being practised, and developing and enriching it.

CTM is not an ideology being disseminated from a central point. It is a servant of free responsible thinking disciples who are seeking for the Kingdom of God and want to work at theology with the child in the midst.

So CTM works as a movement in conversation with varied persons, groups, organisations and churches. Conversation can be theoretical and practical, critical and cooperative, down-to-earth and as open as the call to the kingdom of God.

CTM has a special partnership with the CHILD Resource Center, Penang, Malaysia through which a website is being constructed (www.childtheology.org). This should become operational during 2005 and will provide online access to relevant news and research materials.

CTM is encouraging relevant publications, such as books, booklets and articles. A book and booklets are in preparation to introduce Child Theology in general, to develop ideas on Child Theology in specifically Asian and African contexts, and to describe the method of child theology as currently practised.

In addition, CTM is cooperating with seminaries to develop curricula so that child theology becomes a regular strand in all theological and mission training.



GETTING INVOLVED IN CHILD THEOLOGY

If you would like to know more there are a number of ways that you can become involved.

We are proposing to form a membership to whom the directors report. Details of membership will be available on request. Members will be expected to give active rather than only passive support to the movement.

If you would like to be kept informed but do not wish the commitment of membership, you could apply to be included on our electronic mailing list, by writing to one of the addresses on this leaflet or sending an email to: info@childtheology.org. At present, CTM does not have the resources to offer a non-electronic information service.

Once it is activated in 2005, you will be able to stay informed by visiting our web site at www.childtheology.org.

Please contact us if you would like to host a Child Theology consultation in your continent or region.

Donations of money are welcome. CTM has low administrative costs as much of its work is done voluntarily. All the same, it needs substantial funds to ensure that participation in its consultations and other work is genuinely open to people from all countries and circumstances.



Jesus and the children



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**All theological reflection reformed
with a child in the midst.**

**All Christian child-related activity
informed by theological reflection.**

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PRESENTING

Child Theology MOVEMENT



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

Mark 9:36