

Dear Colleague,

It has been such a full and creative period in the life of CTM that this newsletter to all those who have indicated a desire to keep in touch with CT developments worldwide is long overdue. (If for any reason you do not wish to receive further communications like this, please let us know.)

Publications

Reports

There are now six consultation reports published by CTM and available from either ChILD, Malaysia or Valparaiso, USA. Information about them including some content, is presented on the CT website. For any wanting to follow the story or journey of CTM these are an indispensable guide.

A seventh report, Penang 3, June 2006, is being prepared at the moment.

Booklets

At Penang 2, 2004 it was agreed that the movement worldwide would be facilitated by a series of booklets on aspects of CT. These would make information about CT widely available in an accessible and simply presented format. It has taken time to set up a proper editorial and publication process but we are delighted that the first booklet in what we hope will be an extensive series has just been published. It is called: *An Introduction to Child Theology* and is by Dr. Keith J. White and Professor Haddon Willmer. The series editor is Professor Marcia Bunge. We intend the second booklet to focus on some of the CT experiments that we have initiated in different parts of the world.

Books and Articles

Dr Keith J. White and Professor Haddon Willmer have been working for several years on a book on Child Theology based on the passage in Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 18) in which Jesus places a child in the midst of his disciples. The publisher is SPCK.

Professor Marcia Bunge has had a paper accepted for the *Journal of Religion*, "The Child, Religion and the Academy: Developing Robust Theological and Religious Understandings of Children and Childhood" which includes useful material on the nature and history of Child Theology". She has also prepared a sequel to *The Child in Christian Thought*, in which theologians explore books of the Bible with the child and children uppermost in their minds.

Consultations

In addition to the seven consultations thus far there are several more planned. These include Brasil (September 2006); Ethiopia (November 2006); Ecuador (February 2007); Australia (July 2007). Others that are being discussed at present include Canada/North America (June 2008); Sweden/Scandinavia (2008); Korea (2008). If you would like

more information on any of these, or would like to suggest additional venues then please let us know. CTM is committed to facilitating open discussions and reflections around the world wherever Christians (practitioners and theologians; male and female) are willing and ready to consider seriously the implications and imperatives of the action of Jesus in placing a child in the midst, and his accompanying teaching.

Trustees

The trustees met in the UK in September 2005 and in Penang in June 2006. We are delighted to announce that the board has been strengthened with the addition of Dr David Sims, who recently completed his PhD on the subject of the adverse effects of affluence on American Evangelical children. We are still hoping to extend the board to represent more adequately the international and multi-disciplinary nature of the movement.

Partnerships

CTM seeks to serve the church worldwide and to do so by forming effective and reciprocal partnerships with other groups and organisations. We are pleased that the Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary has been willing to host not only with the three international consultations in Penang, but also the Child Theology International Learning and Development Centre (ChILD) in the seminary itself. This is the administrative hub of CTM, and the current place for the distribution of publications.

Compassion International has been willing to support and fund consultations, and publications, and has seen the value in a sustained, systematic and fundamental reflection on the biblical and theological understandings of children. Child Theology has been a vital component in the development of the Holistic Child Development programme started by Compassion at MBTS in 2001.

The Goddard Memorial Trust has funded the places of several African delegates to the pan-African consultation in Ethiopia in November 2006.

Other groups that CTM has been connecting with include Godly Play, The Child Spirituality Conference, World Vision, VIVA, Petra College, Celebrating Children, the International Bible Society, and the Christian Child Care Forum of the UK.

Process

The way CT is done is of critical importance, and CTM is determined to seek to model in all its efforts the way Jesus lived out the Kingdom of God among his disciples and the people he encountered. CTM has indicated that far from wishing to create an organisation or empire that will gain a name for itself, it should be disbanded before 2025. Consultations are based around open discussions, and culturally sensitive; publications are in tune with what we have been asked to produce; we are seeking to

learn from other groups and movements. For this reason we welcome comments and ideas from the growing number of people who are interested in or committed to this process.

One of the requests we receive most often is for a definition of Child Theology: we would be most grateful for your thoughts and ideas on this. The Introductory leaflets of CTM (in English, Spanish and Portuguese at present) as well as the first booklet, address the question, but some people are looking for something more concrete. There is no formal way of agreeing and deciding on such a definition so we welcome your input as fellow-travellers!

We hope to keep you in touch with international developments relating to CT, and would welcome news and ideas from your own work, experience and reflections.

On behalf of the trustees,

Shalom,

Keith J. White