

Dear Colleague,

Here is the second newsletter of CTM to update the growing movement worldwide with some of the developments since September 2006. You are receiving this because we have your electronic contact details on our database. If for any reason you do not wish to receive further communications, please let us know.

Vision

In March 2007 the directors of CTM met at New Haven and agreed on their vision for the next fifteen years. This is a significant period because it is intended to wind CTM up as an organisation by this time, as part of its determination to make it clear that it seeks to function as yeast or a mustard seed rather than as an institution.

Fifteen Years' Aims

“In response to Jesus’ action and teaching when he put a child in the midst (Mt 18:3), the primary aims of CTM are to re-examine and explore Christian theology and practice as a whole in the light of the child and to ensure that this theology informs every aspect of the church’s life and mission, including that which relates to children.”

Five Years' Goals

“In the next five years we commit ourselves to focus on achieving:

- (1) A growing community of Christians engaged in rigorous theological reflection, using a CT process, with particular reference to seminaries, denominations, churches, NGOs, families and children;
- (2) A particular priority for Africa, Asia and Latin America;
- (3) CT informing and being informed by a significant part of Christian children’s ministry in these areas and elsewhere.”

Directors

CTM has extended its number of directors and its worldwide base. In addition to the directors in 2006: Sunny Tan, Haddon Willmer, Keith White and Marcia Bunge it has welcomed Shiferauw Michael (Ethiopia) and Wendy Strachan (Australia).

Publications

Reports

There are now nine consultation reports published by CTM and available from ChILD, Malaysia. Four further reports are being prepared at the moment. The intention of these reports is that each circle that is convened across the world should be able to learn from those who have met before in different cultures, and contribute their own footprint for those who will come after them. The *Cape Town Report* has sold out and we are considering whether to reprint it, or to make it available in a downloadable version on our website. We invite your comments on this.

Booklets

Marcia Bunge is the editor of the series of CTM booklets launched in 2004. Three have now been published:

An Introduction to Child Theology – Haddon Willmer and Keith J. White

One Way of Doing Child Theology – Haddon Willmer

Child Theology for the Churches in Asia: An Invitation – Sunny Tan

The intention is that these booklets should be accessible worldwide both because their price is cheap, but also because their style is simple and precise.

We invite proposals for future booklets.

Books and Articles

Haddon Willmer and Keith J. White are still working on their SPCK book under the working title, *Reception Class: an Essay in Child Theology*

Marcia Bunge's article, "The Child, Religion and the Academy: Developing Robust Theological and Religious Understandings of Children and Childhood" was published in the *Journal of Religion*, October 2006, Volume 86, Number 4, and is also available online.

The book that she has edited, *The Child in the Bible* is due to be published by Eerdmans in 2008.

John Collier has edited a compilation of highlights from the first five consultation reports and we are currently exploring whether there is a publisher that might become a partner of CTM.

A future book being discussed is a collection of papers presented by theologians from the five continents exploring their specialist subjects (for example doctrines, OT, NT, hermeneutics etc) with the child placed by Jesus in the midst. At present we are exploring the possibility of holding a conference in London in 2009 or 2010 at which the draft papers will be presented.

Consultations

In addition to the first seven consultations (Penang 1, 2 and 3), Cambridge, Prague, Houston, Cape Town, five further consultations have been held in Brasil (September 2006), Ethiopia (November 2006), Ecuador (February 2007), Nepal (June 2007) and Australia (July 2007). The one consultation planned for 2008 thus far is in Sweden (May 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.

We are reviewing the way we plan and conduct consultations in the light of our now extensive experience, and are considering the possibility of offering a form of consultancy to organisations, and ways of focussing more thoroughly on theological reflection.

Website

Not surprisingly for an international movement the directors of CTM have decided to focus energy and effort in the coming months on updating and developing the effectiveness of our website: www.childtheology.org

Among the resources we hope that it will provide are:

- Consultation reports
- Booklets
- Bibliography
- Book Reviews
- Updates on the movement
- Scope for discussion
- Links with other key sites
- Multi-language facilities

Process

We continue to be aware that there are two distinctive features of Child Theology. One is its focus on Jesus Christ with the child as a sign; the other is the way we go about the theological process. We hope that it is now becoming clear that we seek however imperfectly to model ourselves on the way that Jesus lived out the Kingdom of God among his disciples and the people that he encountered. Our consultations are open ended, culturally sensitive (those in Brasil and Ecuador were held in Portuguese and Spanish respectively), and seek to be inclusive.

The directors have decided against the idea of having a formal membership of CTM in favour of creating a movement of fellow travellers united by their desire to understand and follow their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as a learning community. For this reason we would welcome your thoughts and comments on our vision and news.

Please let us know of other colleagues and friends of yours that you believe would welcome a newsletter such as this and details of the CTM website.

On behalf of the trustees,

Shalom,

Keith J. White