

On behalf of the directors of CTM I wish you a new year in which the light of Christ shines on your path as you seek to follow Him. We hope that this digest of CTM news since May 2010 will be an encouragement in the months ahead.

CTM Australasia

In June 2010 I had the privilege of meeting members of CTM Australia in Melbourne (and then reporting to the board progress and ideas). Three of the papers given are available in the attachment, and there is also a statement produced by the group. One of the issues we explored was how the growing number of people in Australia interested in Child Theology might connect most effectively with each other. The hope is that this may provide a model both in the way it operates in this part of the world, but also in how it connects with others worldwide (network/federation/coalition etc). Networking is a subtle art, and requires openness and adaptability. Among the developments discussed were postgraduate research, linking with a seminary to explore what partnership in Child Theology might mean and how it could work, use of the CTM website, journal articles, and possible courses in CT.

Forthcoming Consultations and Conferences Convened, or Co-sponsored, by CTM

Second Indian CT Consultation

Bangalore: 3-5th February 2011

Finnish Lutheran Consultation

Hvitortorp, Helsinki: 15-18th March 2011

Now and Next: Nairobi Theological Conference on Children

Karen, Nairobi: 9-12th March 2011

Conference on Professor James Loder's pioneering work on the interface between theology and human development theory

Princeton: 7-9th September 2011

Directors

The most recent meetings of the directors were in June (face to face in the UK), and a Skype conference in October. As part of the network of CTM we invite you to raise any issues that you would like us to discuss.

The Board of Directors is drawn from around the world. The benefits of this, for a movement that seeks to operate with a model of networking that reflects in some measure the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, are self-evident. One who has been with us since very near the beginning is Shiferauw Michael from Ethiopia. He has just tendered his resignation, and as a board of

directors we would like to place on record our deep respect and appreciation for him, and all he has done, not only in Ethiopia and Africa, but worldwide to further the cause of Child Theology. He is a wonderfully wise, gracious and insightful Christian brother and friend who will be difficult to replace.

Refining our Vision and Mission

During 2011 CTM will be celebrating its tenth birthday: it is still a child! Everything we do, whether by way of content or process is pioneering, and this means we continue to seek to refine our vision, mission and values. You will see our latest attempt to clarify what we are about on our website. Please have a look and let us have your responses.

The core statement is this:

In obedience to Jesus' revolutionary action of placing a child in the midst of a key theological discussion (Matthew 18), CTM is committed to reform all theological reflection and enquiry 'with a child in the midst' and to ensure that theology of this kind informs every aspect of the church's life and mission, including that which relates to children.

Research

It has become very clear to us that one of the ways in which CT will develop is through high-quality theological research, supervised by a community of scholars. The good news is that, in addition to those who have completed PhDs in CT-related topics (Dr David Sims and Dr Bill Pevette) others have enrolled in doctoral programmes including D.J.Konz (Australia) and Raymond Kwong (Hong Kong). John McNeill (Leeds) is completing his doctorate in Child Theology. CTM does not have resources to establish its own institute or centre for theological research, so it is working in partnership with a range of academic bodies worldwide. Potential students are invited to contact CTM via the website for further information

Cliff College, Calver, Derbyshire UK

CTM is a new movement with implications for the content of biblical, systematic and applied theology, as well as for the way theology is done. For some time it has been looking for potential partners who are willing with us to explore what obedience to the action of Jesus when he placed a child in the midst of his disciples. An initial conversation has taken place with Tabor College, Victoria, Australia, and CTM and Cliff College have entered into an agreement as follows:

Cliff College and the Child Theology Movement are delighted to announce that we are working together to establish a Centre for Child Theology based in Calver, Derbyshire.

Cliff College is committed to theological study in and for mission, and is in particular a centre of excellence for children's and youth ministry. Child Theology builds on this experience by allowing 'the child placed by Jesus' to influence theological reflection. Together, we are keen to explore what Child Theology means in practice in terms of content, process and change. The

intention is that this will also help to pioneer a new model of theological education with global relevance.

- Cliff College and CTM will be hosting conferences and seminars on Child Theology; in 2011 these will be held on 5th April and from 15th to 17th November;
- Professor Haddon Willmer and Dr Keith J. White are to supervise doctoral research in Child Theology at Cliff College;
- CTM commits to make available those who are part of the movement to contribute to the life and teaching of the College;
- There will be a stream in Child Theology as part of the Cliff College MA programme available from September 2012;
- Cliff College will be a base for the distribution of CTM resources.

For further details on Cliff College please see www.cliffcollege.ac.uk

Publications

We continue to sell and distribute copies of the Consultation Reports, the three booklets in our series, and *Toddlng to the Kingdom*. We try to adjust the prices so that they are accessible to ordinary people in different parts of the world. Two of the booklets have reached the end of their first print runs: one has been reprinted; the other is currently being reprinted. Jan Grobbelaar has completed a complete draft of his booklet on Child Theology in Africa, and there is a first draft of a booklet setting Child Theology in the context of Liberation, Feminist and Black Theologies.

The texts of the reports and booklets are also available on our website.

Haddon Willmer and I plan to introduce the content of our book, *Reception Class: an Essay in Child Theology* in full at a conference of leaders of the Lutheran Church in Finland in March 2011. The book is an exposition of Matthew 18: 1-14.

Marcia Bunge has been successful in applying for a grant towards the research and writing of her third book in the series that includes *The Child in Christian Thought*, and *The Child in the Bible*. The third collection is a look at systematic theology with the child in the midst, written by theologians from around the world.

Introducing Child Theology: Theological foundations for HCD

This course-book has been published by Compassion International and is available for downloading on the HCD/Global Alliance website. It has been taught and modified at the Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary, and tested worldwide.

Website

We continue to update the CTM website and would welcome any ideas on how to improve it, and any offers of help in so doing from those who are appropriately experienced and/or qualified. We would appreciate feedback and constructive criticism and ideas from all who log on. It is going to be a core feature of the emerging international network in years to come.

James E Loder: *The Logic of the Spirit*

As announced above CTM is in discussion with a number of people to plan a conference on this important work in Princeton, where Jim Loder taught. The book is one of the keenest attempts to explore how theology relates to human development (that includes child development) theory. Loder was well-versed in both fields, and so his contribution could well help lay foundations for movements such as Holistic Child Development. If you are interested in such a conference, please let us know. We will keep CTM members informed as the idea takes shape.

The conference committee is seeking papers that develop and critique the work of Professor Loder. It will be held at Princeton Theological Seminary's School of Christian Vocation and Mission from Wednesday 7th to Friday 9th September 2011.

Transform World (4-14); HCD Global Alliance; Global Children's Forum

CTM has sought to support these Christian movements, focused on children, to strengthen their theological thinking. Members of the board attended the 4-14 event in New York, in August 2010, and we are actively involved in the planning of the Nairobi Theological Conference in March 2011. While the ultimate focus of Child Theology is on Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven, there is an obvious point of connection with all such initiatives.

Resourcing of CTM

CTM seeks to "travel light" with very low overheads. And it has no intention of developing into a large institution: in fact we see our role as an organisation coming to an end within just over a decade. This is a demonstration of how keen we are to model a radically new way of doing theology worldwide. Our tenth birthday marks the half-way point of the charity. After that we trust to God's Spirit to nurture the growth of the seeds that have been sown.

In addition to this voluntary help there is a very modest income from our publications and teaching.

For the rest we have been dependent on grants, notably from Compassion International. And we wish to place on record our very warm appreciation of this support.

Keith J. White
Chair of CTM

Database

This newsletter has been sent to you because CTM has your electronic contact details on its database. If for any reason you do not wish to receive further newsletters please let us know. And if there are others known to you whom you feel should be included in the process, do encourage them to contact CTM via the website.