

As Christmas nears once again, it is my pleasure to bring you the next installment of news sent to those who have subscribed on the CTM website. Please continue to let us have comments, further information and ideas. CTM is a global network or movement connecting people committed to doing theology by taking the child placed by Jesus in our midst as a vital clue. On behalf of the directors of CTM I wish you a joyful Christmas, as you ponder afresh the wonder and mystery of God in Christ lying in a manger as a baby.

Christian Theology and Human Development: a retrospective on the work of Professor James E. Loder

The Child Theology Movement is arranging a symposium to review, assess and develop the work of James Loder on the interface of Christian Theology and Human Development Theory. It will be held from 10th to 14th March 2012 at the School of Christian Vocation and Mission at Princeton Theological Seminary. Contributions have been confirmed from: Jerome Berryman; Beth Barnett; Mark Koonz; Lasse Halme; Thomas J Hastings; Don Ratcliff; Keith White; Haddon Willmer; Dana R. Wright.

There are still places available for this historic event, and the Child Theology Movement encourages all who are engaged in the relationship between Biblical Theology and Development Theory to participate.

Papers will cover topics including: the life and work of James Loder; the theology of James Loder; Loder and Godly Play; Loder and Pauline theology; challenges to human spirituality in the 21st century; the relevance of Loder's theology to age-specific Christian ministry; Tillich, Loder and Child Development; Loder and the wounded child placed in the midst; human development theory, including child and adolescent, and theology; whether recent advances in human development theory require a revision of Loder's ideas; Loder and forgiveness. There will also be an extended discussion of Loder's final book that has been assembled posthumously: *Educational Ministry in the Logic of the Spirit*.

Bookings should be made online at: <http://www.childtheology.org/new/events.php>

The conference will cost \$400 (for single room with shared bathroom) or \$450 (for single en suite room) including accommodation and meals. Dinner Saturday not included. Arrival is expected on Saturday evening and departure on Wednesday morning. For further information contact:

Conference venue:

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Director of Conferences and Hospitality
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(P) 609-688-1935
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Conference programme:

John Collier
Secretary, Child Theology Movement
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Now and Next: Nairobi Theological Conference on Children Nairobi March 2011

A compendium of the papers presented to the conference, and a summary of group discussions was published in September 2011. Among the CTM directors whose plenary papers or responses are in this report are: Marcia Bunge, Bill Prevette, Sunny Tan, Keith White and Victor Nakah. It was, as far as the organizers were aware, the first international conference concerned with

children that had theology at its heart. The World Council of Churches was one of the groups represented.

Since *Now and Next* there have been two meetings with Corneliu Constantineanu, and colleagues in Eastern Europe. Corneliu is director of the *Theological Pentecostal Institute, Bucharest*. The idea is to hold a conference for leaders of theological seminaries in Eastern Europe in September 2012. The provisional title is “Reimagining the Seminary: exploring the nature, culture and praxis of theological education as modelled by Jesus”.

The ABC of Child Theology

This introduction to Child Theology has begun, and can be found on the websites of the South African Theological Seminary and the Child Theology Movement. The first issue focuses on the subject, or Alpha, of Child Theology.

CTM Booklet Series

Two of the first three booklets have recently been reprinted, and a fourth has just been accepted for publication. The latest in the series is by Jan Grobbelaar and brings an African perspective on Child Theology. Other subjects in the pipeline include a consideration of Child Theology in relation to Liberation, Black and Feminist Theologies, and reflection on the relation of missiology and theology with Child Theology as a hermeneutic.

Research in Child Theology

It is encouraging to see an increase in graduates enquiring about research using the insights of Child Theology. CTM seeks to connect such students with appropriate academic supervisors and institutions worldwide.

Toddling Forward

This booklet published by CTM Australia is available in pdf format via the CTM website. It consists of three papers on Child Theology, and a summary of the aims and intentions of CTM Australia.

CTM Publication Depots

We are in the process of establishing depots of CTM publications around the world. These include: Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Canada, Romania, India, Australia and the UK. Further details will be available via the CTM website. Our policy of making as much material as possible available for download free on the website is continuing.

Directors

Unusually for a charity CTM has always had it in mind to wind up as a formal organisation after twenty years. In this way we make it clear that we have no intention to develop in size, to become an institution, or go beyond the role of seed-sowing. In March 2012 the directors will be meeting in London, UK to plan a strategy that draws from the experience of the first decade, in order to plot a course for much of the final ten years of our existence. If there is anything you would like us to discuss, please let me know.

Meanwhile we would like to thank Wendy Strachan for her work on behalf of CTM as a director for several years. She has brought her considerable experience of working alongside children in Australia and Africa to our board, and a gracious and humble spirit. We know that she will continue to be part of the CTM movement worldwide, although no longer in a formal role.

Website and electronic communication

We are seeking to develop the CTM website and would welcome comments and offers of help. If you have not already done so, do visit the Facebook Child Theology Group via the website. We are also experimenting with a blog.

Community of Scholars

One of the challenges of CTM has been to find an identity as a movement, and this includes a description of what we aim to be. A term that is gaining currency is that of a “community of scholars”. Although it is not without its problems, it represents a genuine attempt to facilitate a worldwide network of Christians who are committed to conversations and studies that take seriously the actions and words of Jesus when he place a child in the midst of a theological discussion. This community is deliberately inclusive, and the term “scholar” denotes the serious intent of each participant, not their academic status.

Keith J. White
Chair of CTM
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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.