

# Academic Project Proposal for M.Th (HCD)

New India Bible Seminary, Kerala

March 12, 2011

## Course Name: Master of Theology in Holistic Child Development

**Course description:** Master of Theology in Holistic Child Development is an innovative academic programme that aims at enhancing the knowledge on holistic child development, its application to ministry which is an integral part and foundation of any Christian mission. The number of children at risk is rising at an alarming rate all over the world. (Refer Statistics section below). Pressures of globalization and changing family patterns and social challenges contribute to the problems.

The children between 4 and 14 are 'wax to absorb and marble to retain'; they will be young adults in 10 years, moving on to family and parenting. Hence the influence on this age group will lead to an ongoing transformation of the local communities and the world at large. Churches and missions that have remained silent on this crucial mission for long need formal assistance to address this issue efficiently. This post graduate programme in Holistic Child Development is designed to serve the escalating needs in this vital dimension of mission in the church and the society.

Specific emphases are on child developmental theories and the biblical and theological foundations of holistic development to enable researchers to review the existing opinions and approaches in children's ministries. Field exposures and group discussions are included as an important component for the learners to enhance the correlation between theory and praxis and thus to achieve an impact of hidden curriculum on the learners to equip them for future. The course intends to provide opportunities for empirical research in relevant dimensions so that newer strategies may be developed to assist the Christian mission in South Asia.



“Equipping Christian workers to care for needy children may be the single greatest challenge and opportunity for seminaries and Bible Schools in the coming decade”, says Dam Brewster. According to Bambang Budijanto, church has to harness the “clean energy” of the children to transform the world. Young lives are challenged by violence, unhygienic life conditions, drought, various forms of discrimination, HIV/AIDS, ethnic conflicts, commercial sex trade, human trafficking, and many more. Despite the services of numerous child care agencies, many children in the 4/14 window still suffer lack of protection, care, guidance and hence, lack the essential strength to grow holistically.

Due to lack of awareness on children's rights and legal coverings, many of them suffer abuses physically, mentally and emotionally. It is the vital mission of the churches and theological schools across South Asia to enhance responsiveness to God's heart for children and thus facilitate proactive strategies to restore children to their God-designed status as active agents of God's mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

## **Pertinent Dimensions of Mission to Children in SOUTH ASIA**

- Education awareness & advancement
- Disaster Management, emergency supports to children (drought, floods, war, ethnic conflict, epidemic etc.)
- Children's Rights & advocacy
- Creative & Proactive response to control abuse and enhance holistic development
- Management of organizations for Children
- Children's vital participation in the mission of the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

### **Case Example- Children's Situation in India: General Statistics**

- 40% of India's population is below the age of 18 years which at 400 million is the world's largest child population
- over 3 million children living on the streets
- over 150 million children working as bonded laborers
- one out of every six girl child does not live to see her 15th birthday
- less than 50% of children have access to education
- 1 out of 4 girls is sexually abused before the age of 4
- Only 38% of India's children below the age of 2 years are immunized
- 25% of the victims of commercial sexual exploitation in India are below 18 years of age
- 19% of children employed work as domestic help
- 3% of India's children are mentally/physically challenged
- 500,000 children are forced into commercial sex trade every year
- 25% of the victims of commercial sexual exploitation in India are below 18 years of age

### **Why M Th in HCD at NIBS?**

- ✓ As NIBS advances in her contribution to the mission across South Asia, our contexts of mission calls for concrete focus on children
- ✓ Children hold great potential as agents for mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century



- ✓ Increasing problems faced by children in the social, political, religious, economic, relational, emotional, physical, political, cultural and psychological dimensions require advanced research
- ✓ Churches, Mission agencies and Christian NGOs working among children have very few people trained in the theology and skills essential to child development
- ✓ No theological training school in India offers post-graduate level course to major in child development
- ✓ Disproportionate emphasis between formal education and holistic child development in South Asian contexts

### **Salient Features of HCD program at NIBS**

- Advanced facilities for research in Holistic Child Development
- Outstanding learning designs in theories of child development and psychology
- Supervised field training with missions or NGOs working among children
- Special coaching in organizational management for children's ministries
- Skill-development programs in communication, evangelism, counseling & rescue
- Highly qualified and experienced faculty for full-time mentoring

**Anticipated Date of Starting:** 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2011

### **Pre-requisites for Admission:**

- A commitment to the vision of Holistic Child Development and
- 90 credits in M Div/MA in HCD

**Course Duration:** This is a two-year programme divided into four semesters; each semester consists of 16 weeks. Total credit required for 2 years is 50 spread out in 4 semesters.

**Course type:** Residential Course with 8 full-month taught modules, supervised practical ministry experience, field research and thesis in 25,000-30,000 words. Medium of instruction is English

**Number of seats in First Batch:** 4

### **Course Objectives: This course is designed to:**

- Create awareness and understanding of various developmental theories with special emphasis on holistic Child Development
- Educate men and women in the biblical, contextual and ecclesiastical foundations for HCD by interpreting the biblical texts, contextual data and critically evaluating the theological views prevalent in churches
- Develop the skill in identifying and analyzing various problems and issues related to HCD
- Inspire and enable the learners to apply the insights gained HCD for the reformulation of theologies and restructuring of ministries among children in churches and mission agencies.



### **Expected Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of the course, the learner will have:

1. In-depth knowledge of the theories of Holistic Child Development, the biblical foundation and the ecclesiastical bases of HCD
2. Developed his/her skills to identify the issues and interpret biblical texts and contextual data in the holistic child development perspective. (Field exposures and presentation of papers and reports and group discussions are designed to make great impact on student's personal skill development)
3. Ability and commitment to address the problems of children to give appropriate theological emphasis in teaching and preaching.
4. Advanced research skills to develop approaches for HCD in churches and mission fields. Student's first-hand participation in the ministry of a church or NGO involving children during the course of study is intended for ministry formation.

**Course Design:** Total required credits for M Th in HCD is 50. Each module will have the components of Academic formation (60%), Personal formation (20%) and Ministerial formation (20%).

### **First Year (Module choices may vary)**

#### **Semester 1: (Three core subjects 3x4=12 credits)**

- a) Orientation & Research Methodology
- b) Foundations for Holistic Child Development
- c) Understanding Children: Biblical, Contextual and Pastoral Perspectives

#### **Semester 2: (Four Core subjects 4x4=16 credits)**

- A) Marriage, Family & Parenting
- B) Emerging Child Theologies
- C) Management of Orphanages and Foster Homes
- D) Child Care Givers: Issues and Challenges

**Summer Field Exposure: (4 credits).** At the end of the second semester, researchers take on a field work with children in a specific context of their interest. Field reports with verbatim records of not less than 2500 words and theological and sociological reflections are to be produced. Field visits can be to a nearby Children Home/organization/NGO for a month (minimum 60-70 hours) the 4 semesters of residential study. Report has to have discussions on interactions with the children, and the staff in the respective contexts.

### **Second Year**

#### **Semester 3: (Two optional subjects 2x3=6)**

- a) Communication, Media and Children
- b) Contemporary Issues of Children (Sexual abuse, Orphans and adoption, girl children, HIV/AIDS, Polygamy, Devadasi System, Infanticide & Abortion, Children of commercial sex workers, children in tribal contexts)

#### **Semester 4: (Thesis 12 Credits)**

- A) Thesis Writing  
Students must submit their hard-bound theses at the end of the second year. Mentors with Ph D/ D Th/ Th D in a related field of study will be assigned to each researcher. Thesis (research report) has to be written in about 25,000-30,000 words (excluding footnotes and bibliography)

#### **Resources Needed:**

- Financial resources to launch the program and scholarships to deserving candidates
- Library resources including books, articles, seminar papers, and study reports on children
- Library, computer lab, class room and seminar hall facilities in 2012

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