



April 2010

*Dear seminary friends,*

**GREETINGS FROM Taiwan.** I am here this week as a guest of OCI international meeting with the leaders of the 'diaspora' Chinese seminaries. My presentations on the importance of including HCD course and programs in the curricula of these seminaries were very warmly received. It is a privilege and a blessing to be able to work with OCI to help seminaries make their programs more relevant and strategic, and being more serious and intentional about programming in HCD is very much a part of that relevance.

I thank my colleague Mr Kok Chik Bu for compiling the very interesting proceedings of the 3rd Global Alliance meetings which were held in Bangalore, India in early March. This issue of the Communiqué largely summarizes the proceedings, planning and fellowship which took place at that important meeting.

I read with shock and grief the cover story of the March 2010 Economist Magazine on 'gendercide.' The article detailed the devastating effects of the *de-facto* 'one-child policy' that prevails in so many countries and societies today. And inevitably, where family size and population growth is limited, it is the girl children who are aborted and even killed. The resulting distorted gender ratio – too many males and not enough females – is becoming an enormous problem in many societies today. In my mind,

this is another manifestation of the neglect and abuse of children which must break the heart of God. I highly recommend that article and other reading on the subject.

### "Climate Change"

I also think that seeing such a topic is the cover story of the Economist Magazine is evidence of a growing awareness of issues related to children and youth which seminaries must be aware of and to which they must respond. I am a serious skeptic about all we are hearing about global 'climate change' with all its attendant scare-mongering. Don't get me started on that!

However, there is a 'climate change' I do believe in is the growing global awareness of the need to reach and empower the next generation. This growing awareness may be the new 'wind in the sails' for church ministry and mission in the 21st century. The emphasis on children and youth can be a cutting edge, re-energizing focus which can power and sharpen the ministry of the church, and of seminaries in many parts of the world.

And it is happening. There is only a barely noticeable breeze in some quarters, but everywhere the winds are gaining strength. The "climate change" is upon us – and its a climate change we can all believe in.

The *Communiqué* is an electronic publication of the HCD Global Alliance containing news and information about the development and promotion of HCD programming around the world. It is published four times per year in English. For information, contact:

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The *HCD Global Alliance* is a partnership between Compassion International and its member institutions. Dr Dan Brewster is the general secretary and also director of HCD International for Compassion International. He has studied and written extensively in the areas of child and community development, missions, and missions strategy.

Warmly,

*Dan*

## About Us

### ► Who We Are

A voluntary group of seminaries, Bible schools, and other Christian academic institutions working together with researchers, trainers, practitioners, and other Christian leaders to create a global movement of academic programs in holistic child development (HCD).

### ► Our Vision

In response to God's heart for children, programs in HCD will be an integral component of the ethos and programs of a majority of Christian educational institutions in every country and region around the world.

### ► Our Mission

Encourage and enable seminaries, Bible schools, and other Christian academic institutions to implement contextually sensitive, academically rigorous, and developmentally sound HCD programs which will motivate and train practitioners, and inspire and equip church leaders, advocates, and other Christians to increase and improve their ministry and advocacy on behalf of needy children.

### ► The Global Alliance Partners

- Encourage Christian institutions to implement HCD programs
- Contribute to the development of HCD resources
- Participate with like institutions to further HCD research
- Collaborate with like institutions to improve the quality of existing HCD programs
- Support the development of advocacy structures for advancing HCD programs
- Develop contextual curriculum for the training of trainers

## Growing and enriching the HCD movement



SAIACS CEO (Continuing Education Opportunity) Centre  
Kothanur, Bangalore, India

**F**ROM March 8-11, 2010, thirty five individuals from 19 countries convened at the 3rd HCD Global Alliance Consultation in Bangalore, India to work and plan together on *'Growing and Enriching the HCD Movement.'* This gathering was a follow up to the Pasadena consultation in March 2008 and other regional gatherings over the past year. The Bangalore consultation brought together seminaries, ministry networks and organizations having a stake in the HCD movement. Among them were Compassion International, Overseas Council, Asia Theological Association, 4/14 Window movement, Child Theology Movement, and Global Children Forum/ Lausanne Movement.

The consultation was hosted by the South Asia Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) at its CEO Centre. In welcoming the participants, SAIACS principal Dr Ian Payne commended them for "traveling together" to advance the HCD movement, and shared an Arabian proverb worth remembering: "Only a fool

travels alone in a desert, the wise man travels in a caravan."

### Children to save the day

The last one hundred years has seen a significant shift in the center of global Christianity from North to South and West to East. In his keynote address, Dr Bambang Budi-janto, Asia regional vice president for Compassion International and also director for Mission Commission of Asia Evangelical Alliance, pointed out the drastic implications of this shift for missions. In Europe, churches and seminaries are dying while new ways of doing church and missions are happening in places like China and Africa.

In this new kingdom landscape, he said that seminaries and theological schools must redefine their roles and find new ways to operate. Otherwise, their days are numbered, he warned.

"But it's not just adding new curricula," he said. "We need real transformation, recognizing that seminaries exist for the Church, and that half of those in the Church are children and young people."

Bambang stated that churches and seminaries should go back to the Bible and rethink the significance of children and young people.

"Children and young people are the most significant mission force in this last century," he said. "Like Daniel and Esther in the Bible, they could well be keys to save the Church, seminaries and societies today."

Bambang also spoke on the significance of the *ecclesia* as the kingdom master plan. More than just a gathering of believers, the *ecclesia* is a dynamic community, "an unstoppable force against the power of evil."

"The end goal of disciple-making is the kingdom of God," he said. "But we have often excluded the key stakeholders, the poor and children."

The Church must go to all people of all ages, even to those outside the church building, and help "people far from Christ, close to Christ, become like Christ."

"God has only one entity, through which He works – the *ecclesia*. There is no 'plan B'."

## 5-Year Regional Plan of the HCD Movement (2010-2015)

### LATIN AMERICA & THE CARRIBEAN

- **Identify and secure the commitment of at least 20 most influential theological schools** in the region to implement HCD programs by July 2011.
- **Train at least 2 persons for each institution** to deliver quality master level programs by Jan 2012.
- **That seminaries and churches work together** to provide certificate-level training for 2000 pastors and lay people in the local churches by 2015.

### SOUTH ASIA

- **Prepare churches, missions agencies and NGOs** to mobilize and send students for HCD education in seminaries.
- **Increase the number of HCD programs** in India (10 MA, 2 MTh, 1 PhD) and graduate at least 52 graduates (40 MA, 10 MTh, 2 PhD) by 2015.
- **That 50 seminaries in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh teach key HCD subjects** to at least 1000 students by 2015.

### AFRICA

- **Raise awareness** among *theological institutions* of the importance of HCD integration in theological formation; among *church leaders* of the importance of HCD in their ministries; among *other Christian learning institutions* to professionalize child care using HCD; and among *key national and regional governing bodies* to support the HCD movement.
- **Strengthen and expand HCD programs** through curriculum development, establishment of new programs; resource development, faculty development, accreditation, and distance and online training.
- **Establish a working team** to motivate, guide and mobilize different stakeholders, as well as lobby for financial resources by Dec 2010.

### SOUTH EAST ASIA

- **Identify at least 2 "torchbearers" in each country** to be champions for the HCD movement by 2011.
- **Train a pool of HCD trainers** at all levels to sustain HCD programs in each country.
- **Develop more resources** (peer reviewed materials, course guides, study texts) including compilation and translation of materials.
- **Relate HCD with non-Christian communities** that also see children as important beginning 2011.

### Change or it's downhill quickly

Working with over 100 non-Western theological schools, Overseas Council International (OCI) exists to help seminaries produce quality Christian leaders. Its representative Dr Manfred Kohl noted that most seminaries fail to equip leaders and churches for the real world.

"We talk a lot about the past, but we forget about the future," he said. "Theological education has to change for the future."

Kohl, who had visited over 375 seminaries in his capacity as the OCI special ambassador, made a very honest presentation about the needs and priorities of seminaries around the world. He also called on the Global Alliance to develop a clear theology of their mission, as well as to make use of the media to communicate their message to the world.

"It is important that we reach the 90% of people outside the church," he said.



Compassion International vice president for the Asia region Dr Bambang Budijanto (left) and former vice president of Overseas Council Dr Manfred Kohl (right).

### HCD as the Gold Standard

Under the theme '*Growing and Enriching the HCD Movement*,' participants reviewed the current progress of HCD work in each region, considered different models of programming and collaboration, as well as identified areas of strategic collaboration for improving and growing the HCD movement in each region. Overall, the consultation was a success marked by a commitment to further the cause of HCD around the world.

Global Alliance general secretary Dr Dan Brewster expressed hope that HCD would be the *gold standard* for holistic ministry to children. He noted again the fact of the "4/18 Window of Opportunity," coupled with the fact of peer influence being the most critical factor in people coming to Christ, means that children and young people are not only "the strategic *mission field* but also the most important *mission force* in the world. "It's Time" he said, for seminaries and other theological institutions to grasp the *kairos* moment and help churches "harness the clean energy of children and youths to transform their generation."

"God has empowers the Church to accomplish His purpose," he said. "My prayer is that we will be 'repairer of broken walls' and 'restorer of streets with dwellings'" (Isaiah 58:12).

## Biblical reflection

### The golden scepter extended to the body of Christ

**IN the story of Esther (5:1-2; 7:1-4), we read that King Ahasuerus extended the golden scepter to Esther.** The scepter here is an example of an opportunity given to the recipient to present his or her case before a person of authority. When the opportunity came her way, Esther requested in very clear terms that her life and the lives of her people be spared. Because Esther took advantage of the opportunity, she saved not only herself but also an entire Jewish nation from annihilation.

There is a striking parallel between the story of Esther and the precari-

ous situation of theological schools and churches today. What is happening to churches and seminaries in the West is not an isolated incident. The writing is on the wall for us to see. Unless drastic measures are taken to correct the way they minister or operate, many would become irrelevant and even cease to exist.

I believe that God has extended the HCD initiative as the scepter to save both theological schools and churches. As a movement that prioritizes children as both *objects of* and *agents for* mission, the HCD initiative can help churches to accomplish the Great Commission, raise up godly

By Shiferaw Michael



children who can turn the tide of evil, and respond effectively to burning issues in the society. If theological schools can reach churches directly with the HCD concept, this will greatly help to reverse the current weaknesses that we see in the work of churches today. Surely, the HCD initiative is the golden scepter offered to us by God for the future of theological schools and churches!

**Shiferaw Michael** is the founder and director of Child Development Training and Research Center that serves all the churches in Ethiopia. This reflection has been summarized for brevity's sake.

## Short and sweet

### Global low birthrates a new kind of child neglect

**“The problem of the future is not population explosion. The problem in the future for many societies will be too few children,”** missiologist and child advocate Dr Dan Brewster (*right*) told the group.

“The death and dearth of children is a global trend,” he said. “More than 100 countries now have a ‘less than replacement’ fertility rate. This is a problem as great as the neglect and abuse of children, for in many countries today, adults so devalue children that they are not even bearing the children.”

One implication is the almost inevitable Islamization of Europe within a generation for the birthrate amongst Muslims is so much

higher than that of Christians. Even more troubling is the rampant ‘gendercide’ taking place in many societies as the low birthrate, coupled with the preference for the boy child, is resulting in the abortion and killing of millions of baby girls.

Dr Oleksandr Geychenko, academic dean of the Odessa Theological School, provided an illustration of the problem, noting that the population of Ukraine has declined from 49 million to 45 million in the last 20 years. Historically, it is extremely difficult for nations or societies in this kind of societal ‘death spiral’ to emerge and recover.



### Become like little children to enter the kingdom of God

**Theologian Dr Brian Wintle (*right*) said that Christians need to have “an attitude that sees value in little children” in order to receive Jesus and the kingdom of God.**

Wintle, who is the general secretary of the Asia Theological Association, was sharing a reflection from Mark 9:33-37 in the Bible. He pointed out that the kingdom of God is a completely different one from the world, and that Jesus was using little children as an illustration to teach his disciples the true meaning of discipleship.

Wintle also talked about a new attitude of seeing value in children, pointing out that Jesus equated the attitude of receiving children with a willingness to receive him: “Becoming like little children is to become vul-

nerable and needy, and recognize that our greatest need can only be met by Jesus.”

In his next reflection, Wintle compared the necessity to be born again (Jn 3:57) with the need to make a fresh beginning, to “go back to the innocence and vulnerability of children.” Reflecting on the childhoods of Samuel, David and Joseph in the Bible, Wintle pointed out that believers ought to emulate their examples of trust and obedience in God. Samuel was only a boy but he knew how to obey implicitly. Though David was overlooked for being the youngest, yet his absolute confidence in God led him to save Israel from a humiliating defeat. Meanwhile, Joseph showed a deep sense of personal integrity as well as trust in God’s sovereignty even in the most trying situation.



## Here and there



Compassion India advocacy director Thomas Swaroop (*fourth from left*) and his stalwart band of volunteers helped to ensure the smooth running of the consultation as well as a memorable stay for participants at the classy CEO Centre. Thank you!



Dr David Ramirez from Argentina believes that it is possible to influence denominations to give more emphasis on children. “The Church is ready to hear from us but we must be bold to introduce HCD to them,” he said. Ramirez is the bishop of the Church of God South Western Hispanic Region.



What in the world are they doing? During the meeting, participants took a timeout to showcase their creativity. Here, one group is trying to enact the scene of putting out a fire. But it looks like Eva Ching (*middle*) was saying “Hi” to everyone. “Hi, Eva!”



Dr Oleksandr Geychenko noted that some Christians who work with children only focus on the spiritual aspect. In Ukraine, the population of children is 20%, and some 2.5 millions adults work abroad, leaving their children in the care of their grandparents or one of the parents.



### Child Theology *is* theology, says Asian theologian

**In the presentation on *HCD & Child Theology: Clarifying the Connection*, theologian Dr Sunny Tan (*left*) maintained that Child Theology is a legitimate area of study for theologians.** “Child Theology *is* theology,” he stated emphatically. “It is not about idolizing children, but about thinking and speaking about God and His ways.”

Tan, who is a director of Child Theology Movement (CTM), also explained CTM’s position that there should be no children ministry or childhood practices without theological reflection, and no theological reflection without children. As a concept that prioritizes children, he pointed out that HCD needs to be defined by the Bible, and especially the truths that come through Jesus. With Child Theology serving as a “corrective” to doing theology, HCD would be better understood and practiced.

For centuries, theology has been done without recognizing the place and presence of children. The academic dean of Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary made clear that Child Theology is a “theological method” that calls for the reality or fact childhood and children to impact all reflections about God: “The child is like a lens through which some aspects of God and his revelation can be seen more clearly.”

Indeed, Tan affirmed that both HCD and Child Theology are partners in moving children from the margin to the center for the reforming of theology, church and mission, and also the liberating of children for their holistic growth.



### CGST serves Caribbean students through online education

**FROM its inception since 2007, the Diploma in Holistic Child Development offered at the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST) in Kingston, Jamaica has been taught through online and distance education format.** According to the academic dean Dr Anthony Oliver (*middle left*), this approach has enabled students to take coursework from anywhere in the Caribbean archipelago.

ibbean, Josué Fernandez, (*bottom left*) recommended caution, as many online programs failed because schools did not consider the need for a “pedagogical renewal.”



At the same time, it was acknowledged that teaching methods are very different in the online environment. Overseas Council regional director for Latin America and the Car-

To ensure success in the CGST program, they are already training a team of instructors and staff to help facilitate a meaningful exchange of online learning for their students. As part of the effort to build community in a learning environment, students are required to come for a week of face-to-face meetings for every three weeks of online studies. To date, sixteen people have been trained via this approach.

## HCD programs around the world

More HCD programs at [www.hcd-alliance.org/hcdprograms](http://www.hcd-alliance.org/hcdprograms)

### Diploma in Holistic Child Development

*The Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST), Kingston, Jamaica in partnership with Compassion International*

This program is designed to be responsive to the society's need for workers equipped with knowledge and competencies related to Holistic Child Development with the added benefit of a biblically-integrated curriculum. The 42-credit hour program is offered predominantly through distance education format. The distance education package is delivered online with a focus on independent study backed by peer and instructor support through online conferences and face-to-face meetings with students from the same area. Prospective students will need to have access to high speed internet facilities.



CGST was established in 1986 to equip indigenously trained ministers to meet the area's unique needs. CGST's first priority is the local church. More info at <http://cgstonline.org>.

## Selected HCD resources

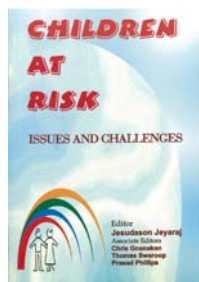
More at [www.hcd-alliance.org/resources](http://www.hcd-alliance.org/resources)



### Hush 2 – End the Silence

*Starring Sophia Thomas, Andrew Thornhill, Claudette Wadman, Sharon Griffith, Lesley Cumberbatch  
Written and directed by Marcia Weekes*

*Hush 2 – End the Silence* is a riveting Caribbean movie with a story that will make you sit up and think. Set entirely in Barbados, Jamaica, *Hush 2* depicts the reality of children in the Caribbeans, and deals with the issues of sexual abuse, drugs, violence in schools and parenting issues. It also looks at how youth deal with these issues and encourages them to end the silence and seek healing. *Hush 2* is the sequel to *Hush 1*, a film about teenage pregnancy and abortion. The movie premiered in Barbados in Feb 2010 and was shown in the cinema for eight consecutive weeks to more than 20,000 persons. View the trailer at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78wcM9IRW14>

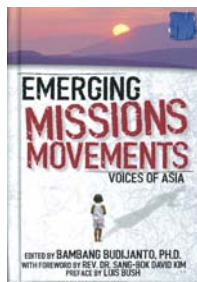


### Children at Risk: Issues & Challenges

*Edited by Jesudason Jeyaraj with Chris Gnanakan, Thomas Swaroop and Prasad Phillips*

(ISPCK / CFCD, 2009)

This is a collection of more than 40 essays by key scholars and practitioners, focusing on holistic child development in the South Asian context, and reflecting on the experience of engagement in advocacy for children. It is a basic reader for seminaries in South Asia and beyond.

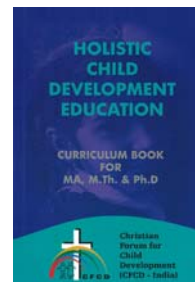


### Emerging Missions Movement: Voices of Asia

*Edited by Bambang Budijanto, PhD*

(Compassion International / Asia Evangelical Alliance, 2010)

This is a compilation of articles that explore the theme of emerging missions movement in Asia that could become important global movement of the 21st century. The articles are part of a study process undertaken by the Mission Commission of Asia Evangelical Alliance.



### HCD Education Curriculum Book for MA, MTh & PhD

*Written by HCD Global Alliance South Asia in cooperation with CFCD India*

(CFCD India, 2010)

This book has syllabus for more than 30 subjects focusing on children. The teacher is expected to develop the given framework of the syllabus to suit the standard of MA, MTh of PhD programs. The syllabus is approved by the Academic Program Committee of HCD Education.



The figure in the logo represents the child in our midst. The circle depicts God's image in the child at creation. Hence, spirituality is not a domain but the core 'being' of the child. The four colors symbolize the four domains of child development. Our mission is to motivate and inspire the Christian community to provide safe places where the continuing work of a creative God can be evident through the physical, mental, social and emotional domains of development.