

**Continuing the Search for an Understanding of what
Jesus meant when He set “a child in the midst”
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Mission

Mission: the primary realm of the actions and teaching of Jesus

A Christian View of Society and the Child’s Place in it.

Theological understanding of the nature and integrity of the individual; mental, physical and spiritual development through and beyond childhood. This requires a prophetic/sociological element that is critical of structural and institutional processes that cause poverty, injustice and the exclusion of children.

Commercialization and economic exploitation, individualization and commodification are threats to God’s intentions for children and childhood. To talk about childhood is to talk about relationships (the relational nature of childhood). Safe emotional and spiritual space is as important as safe physical space to play.

Childhood is often seen in relation to adulthood. Children are seen as future adults. Moltmann and Rahner find that theological reflection with children in the foreground inevitably challenges conventional ideas of adult and child. What if the child is representative of our future coming to meet us?

The relation between adult and child is demonstrated in a society and culture through the process of education, defined as trying to prepare children for adult life and roles, overlooking the place of play and imagination. Child theology may lead to very radical critiques of educational policies. Illich and Freire were deeply influenced by the Christian faith. We have a responsibility to reflect carefully on whether the contemporary schools and educational models do justice to a biblical view of childhood and society.