

INVOLVING CHILDREN IN THE MISSION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

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FOREWORD

Both children and missions have a very special place in my life. This study was born out of a deep desire to see children as part of the mission of the local church. I thank God for the amazing privilege of being part of his Kingdom work. I have benefited greatly from experiences on the mission field and back home. I also thank the Lord for opening my eyes to the fact that children can and should be part of the mission of the church.

Thank you also to all the children, who through the years taught me valuable lessons about childhood and how you fit into God's Kingdom.

Thank you to all the families, organisations and individuals who contributed to this study. Your valuable input made this study happen. Lastly I appreciate the prayers and support of my family and friends throughout this study.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. CHILDREN IN NEED

During my years as a missionary in Asia I came face to face with a harsh reality: **children in terrible need**. I vividly remember when I saw the frightened little eyes of a little girl clinging to her mother the moment she saw me walking into the room. On that December morning in 2000, with the temperature below -20 °C, a woman wanted to get rid of her one year old daughter. Extremely difficult circumstances drove her to a point of abandoning her children. We knew that without intervention this girl would be added to thousands of other children abandoned by parents who apparently had no more interest in them. Our organisation decided to offer the mother a work and a place to stay, and in return asked her to keep her child. Very early in the conversation I realised that two days earlier, in another town, she gave away her two year old son. That explained the little girl's reaction when she saw me the first time. After conversing unsuccessfully for more than three hours, I had no option but to literally tear the child away from her mother. Screams filled the room as she tried to get out of my arms... During my time in Asia, I was responsible for one of our organisation's kindergartens, helping in the foster home whenever possible and visiting the government orphanage some evenings when we provided food to the children. The state religion is Buddhism interwoven with Shamanism and Communism. In general locals are not very open to Christianity.

2. GETTING CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH EXCITED ABOUT MISSIONS

I also remember visiting a group of children at a weekly children's gathering of church in Mpumalanga. These children's hearts were moved when they learned about the needs of the children living in Asia. Not only were they motivated to pray for the Asian children, but they also wanted to

get involved. My observation was that the children were moved when they heard about the children in Asia, and immediately wanted to get involved. It became clear that this was fertile ground ready for sowing. They understood missions and were eager to do something to help, but unfortunately my visit was brief. I knew that children's enthusiasm can wane as rapidly as it rises. For their excitement to lead to something, they would need encouragement and support. I left with a deep desire that something sustainable could develop in all churches. My concern was that this church did not have it, which did not mean they were not involved in missions, but rather that their program did not include their children.

3. OBJECTIVES

My involvement in missions has a twofold objective. One is to see that churches become involved in missions, and the second is for children to become part of the mission of the local church. The church in Mpumalanga complies with my understanding of being involved in missions, in the sense that they are involved in their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and end of the earth (Acts 1:8). Their purpose is to bring God's Kingdom on earth, however what I experienced was that their children were left out. And although the children easily responded and were eager to be involved, I knew that most probably very little would come of it, because they lacked the necessary support. It was like seed sown on the rocks growing quickly (Matt. 13:5), but not being rooted within the mission program of the church would cause it to die.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate that children's involvement in missions should not be an exception, or as part of one special event. Instead they should rather be included on a sustainable basis in the mission of the church.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. Children

In this document the word children is used as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child as “every human being **below the age of 18 years** unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier” (Office, 1997-2003). The focus is on children who have not yet reached independent adulthood, and who in general are seen as spiritual juniors, not yet being valuable to the church. My aim is to illustrate that they are valuable to the mission program of the church and in fact form a fundamental part of the missional church.

4.2. Mission

I would like to express my understanding of mission in the statement that was endorsed at Lausanne: “that the **whole church** is taking the **whole gospel** to the **whole world**” (Vanhoozer, [n.d.]: 72). I would like to emphasise that children are part of the **whole church** just as much as they are part of the **whole world**. In this study the emphasis is on the former. I prefer to use the term in the singular (mission), emphasising the unity of God’s mission. The plural (missions) may refer to a diversity of mission initiatives or projects.

4.3. Missional church

The phrase “missional church” is used in the sense as described in the doctoral thesis and subsequent publication by Frans Hancke (2007). He emphasises that the church cannot exist in isolation because it is called to be God’s mission agent in the world. The church should be relevant in an ever changing environment. The term “missional” emphasises that the church has a specific purpose. He compares it with an army on a specific mission, possessing vigour that is transformed into action. In other words action needs to be taken proactively by living out God’s love in order to change the status quo

(2007: 27-30). In effect the missional church becomes a witnessing community where all are “called to demonstrate an alternative culture in every cultural context, irrespective of how violent or hostile it may be” (ibid: 120). In order for the missional church to live out her calling she should be “a community, a servant and a messenger of God’s Kingdom” (ibid).

4.4. Involve children in the mission of the church

The next paragraph will provide more detail about ways in which children can be involved in the ministry of the local church. Here we can simply state that the phrase “involving children in the mission of the church” emphasises that they are not only recipients or supporters of ministry and mission, but that they are **actively part** of the missional church.

Hancke affirms that children can experience ownership by being involved in the process of reflecting the purpose and character of their church (2007: 120, 122). The implication is that children should be included in mission. However looking at history it seems as if it took a long time before the church even started to grasp this concept, as the following section will indicate.

5. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

5.1. Children as part of the church

In the Catholic Church the spiritual care of children always received special attention. The argument of Thomas Aquinas, thirteenth century theologian who has exerted a deep influence on Catholic theology, was that, although the parents also play an important role in the spiritual formation of children, the church administers the sacraments to them. After baptism children should continuously be instructed from God’s word, so that they could advance in their spiritual formation (Triana, 2001: 114-120). During the Reformation

children were given the same attention within the church. Luther's theological focus with regard to children was on what they should become: "mature, seasoned confessors of the evangelical faith and responsible members of the family and community." (Strohl, 2001: 134). Luther believed that although spiritual growth is God's responsibility, the church and the parents in particular are responsible for the nourishment. Accordingly he made his catechisms available to help educate children (ibid: 142, 144). During the Industrial Revolution (IR) of the eighteenth century the church – both Catholic and Protestant – lost much of its influence over their children.

5.2. Care to children outside church and family

A desire for more wealth brought about the start of the IR. The positive aspect of it was that children had the opportunity to learn technical skills. At some places employers also sought to improve the home conditions of the working class by checking on cleanliness, hygiene and even the workers' conduct away from home. However the negative aspects outweighed the positive. During the IR children were exploited in very cruel ways, and with it they were removed from the protective environment of the family and church (Heywood, 2003: 21). In response to the harsh treatment of children, certain Christians started Sunday schools under the influence of Robert Raikes in 1780 and started orphanages soon thereafter (Kelly, 1970: 75). Lacquer said by 1851 three quarters of the working class children attended Sunday schools, which focused on literacy and religious education (1976: 44).

During the same period Christian leaders got involved in projects that provided care to children. John Wesley started his Orphans House in Newcastle, in 1743 (Telford, [n.d.]: 6). In the same manner, George Müller also known as "The Children's Champion" started his first orphan home in 1836 with 30 girls. By the completion of the fifth home his family had grown to more than 2,000 children. With God's help the

children received “hope, love and a family life with a sound Christian foundation”. The children also received a high standard of education. By the time they left the Müller homes, employment was found for them. One orphan said the following upon leaving: “My belongings were my Bible, my clothes and half a crown and, best of all, was the priceless blessing of George Müller’s prayers” (Netreach, 2001: 10, 11). Orphanages were also started by prominent Christian leaders such as; C.H. Spurgeon a Baptist minister of Stockwell, London in 1867 (Northrop, [n.d.]) and Dr Thomas Barnado in 1870 (Bade & Brown, 2003: 126). But orphanages were not the only way in which the Christians intervened. Edward Rudolf founded in 1881 the Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, which later changed to The Church of England Children’s Society in 1946. This was the first initiative to take care of the disabled and “crippled” who were discriminated against in particular (Children, 1881-1981: 1-3).

The preceding demonstrates that after the IR churches and their leaders got involved in providing care to children who were no longer directly connected to the church and its traditional forms of ministry.

5.3. Children as a focus point in mission

The nineteenth century brought about a revival in mission, and with it a rapid growth of the church in the Southern hemisphere. I will demonstrate this by focusing on Africa. Missionaries coming to Africa focused their attention on “education in their evangelising efforts” (Du Toit, 2007: 46). Mission organisations realised the only way to bring about sustainable change in Africa, was to focus their attention on the children and youth. Accordingly they all established schools from the onset (ibid: 46, 47). Rev. J. Butler who worked as a missionary in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), believed that education in schools was a good way to teach African boys and girls the Gospel. He said: “Win the children for Jesus and you win the world for Him” (ibid 1991:

86). Fr. Richard Sykes said the same about reaching children in Africa (1996: 150):

It is in their early plastic days that the lessons of our holy religion can best sink into the minds of the natives and influence their hearts and their actions before ingrained prejudices and vicious habits have acquired a permanent hold.

5.4. Children as partners in mission

In the discussion so far it has been pointed out that since the IR churches started to respond to the needs of children outside the church. It was also shown that, especially from the nineteenth century onwards, special attention was given to children as an entry point in foreign missions. However, Johnstone has observed that in most cases these initiatives were not an integral part of a general mission strategy. At the Global Consultation for World Evangelisation (GCOWE) 1997 he found hopeful signs that this was changing. At that consultation one out of ten tracts was specifically for ministry to children (1998: 252). Johnstone responded: “At last the children of the world are becoming a major focus of mission. This gives great hope for the church of today as well as the church of tomorrow.” (ibid: 253).

It seems as though Johnstone refers mainly to children as part of the unreached. However, we are convinced that we are also seeing exciting growth in involving children in the mission of the church. Here we are talking about children as participants, even partners in mission. The purpose of this study is to explore this movement. As I discovered in Mpumalanga, children can and want to become involved in mission. But I believe that we should go one step further – children must be involved, and we must do whatever is possible to help them get involved. I fully agree with Hancke in his definition of the missional church. I simply want to add the emphasis that children must be an

integral part of the missional church. It seems as if it had to wait till the twentieth century before the church discovered children as a meaningful asset within missions.

6. STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

This study has five chapters. The first deals mainly with introductory issues. After explaining the challenge and objectives of this study, key terms have been defined. This was followed by an historical overview of the place of children in the ministry and mission of the church. This section focuses on the structure of the document. A final section explains some technical aspects.

In the second chapter I evaluate examples of involving children in missions. History provides many examples from which we can learn. My aim is to discuss one example of how this was done in a wrong way. But, in history we do not only find negative examples, next I will show how the DRC had a sustainable mission program for children. Through it they left a rich legacy for the church today. The good news is that there is a growing desire in many parts of the church to involve children effectively in the mission of the church. My aim is to discuss briefly two organisations that involve the whole family in the mission of the church. Apart from the above mentioned we will look at how children can and should be part of a family in missions. I will conclude chapter two by briefly discussing the role of modern media, books and correspondence as useful resources for involving children in missions.

In the third chapter I would like to explore the Biblical basis for children in missions. I will look at a selection of passages from the Pentateuch, Historical books, Psalms, Prophetic books and lastly from the New Testament.

In chapter four I will provide guidelines for effectively involving children in the mission of the local church. I will try to give practical advice to people

who want to implement this in their own situations. The major findings of this study will be summarized in Chapter five.

At the beginning of each chapter some comments are included about the method that will be followed as well as about the structure of that chapter. Each chapter also concludes with a summary of the contents that was covered.

7. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

In this study unless otherwise noted I will make use of the New King James Version. Abbreviations used for Bible books in this study are according to *The new international dictionary of New Testament theology* (Brown, 1975: Vol 1, 31). A list of other abbreviations used appear at the end of this study (p. 74).

CHAPTER 2

EXAMPLES OF INVOLVING CHILDREN IN MISSIONS

Involving children in the mission of the church is an important part of the church's missionary task. It is not enough to see children as the objects of missions and to limit our efforts by merely evangelising them. They also need to be prepared and equipped to become participants in missions and so fulfil their part in the Great Commission. In this chapter I endeavour:

1. To provide a negative example of children being influenced to get involved in God's mission by playing on their feelings in the Children's Crusades (CC).
2. To show that mobilisation of children can take place within the local church by using the example of Children's Missions Guild (CMG).
3. To give an overview of the impact that a mission's organisation like Youth With A Mission (YWAM) can have on world missions by mobilising children.
4. To illustrate how the mobilising of children can be part of the church's long term mission strategy by using Kingfisher Mobilisation Centre (KMC) as an example.
5. To explain the possibilities for involving children in mission activities of a family.
6. To give other examples of how children could be involved in missions.

1. CHILDREN'S CRUSADES

Religious revival broke out in Europe during the eleventh century, resulting in many pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The pilgrims brought word back that the Holy Land with its sacred shrines was in the hands of Muslims. Emotions must have been soaring high. Christians felt it was God's will for them to go and take it back by force. As a result eight recorded crusades took place during the period from 1095 until 1270 (Britannica, 1981: 840, 841).

Of special relevance to our topic is a specific type of crusade that involved mainly or only children. In the year 1212, children felt compelled to go and capture the Holy Land by “love”. This is in contrast to the adult crusades, which were characterised by bloodshed. In France a young shepherd boy named Stephen from Cloyes-sur-le-Loir claimed Jesus appeared to him and gave him a letter to give to the King. En-route to deliver the letter his feverish zeal attracted hundreds of youngsters, who became his followers and wanted to go to the Holy Land. The parents might have seen it as a pipedream, because in the preceding crusades grownup men fully geared for battle failed in achieving the goal of taking back the Holy Land. Despite fears the parents might have had, they were unable to keep their children back. Approximately 30 000 children made it to Marseille where they were deceived by merchants who sold them as slaves in the North African markets (ibid).

As if this was not horrible enough, a second CC was led in the same year by a 10 year old German boy named Nicholas from Cologne. His fervent preaching attracted about 20 000 children. En-route many were dispersed in different towns while others continued to Genoa. These children believed that in some miraculous way they would get over or through the Mediterranean Sea. However, they were refused transportation. In the end only a few made it to Rome where Pope Innocent III freed them from their ridiculous undertaking. As with the French crusade many children also ended up in slavery (ibid).

The CC can be considered as a very bad model for involving children in missions because:

- Mixing political and military passion with a Christian witness is a recipe for disaster.
- The foundation of it was not within the local church.
- Children are not the ideal leaders, for they do not have the experience and knowledge required for such an outreach.
- Through these crusades families were broken up.

- There was no consideration for the needs and vulnerability of children.

2. CHILDREN'S MISSIONS GUILD

Inspired by a missions revival within the denomination, the CMG was the DRC's ministry with a focus not only to teach children but to also help them get involved in practically supporting missions. Its slogan was "The world for Jesus" (*Grondreëls*, [n.d.]: 1).

Objectives of this ministry in the DRC were (ibid):

- To create an interest and love amongst children of the DRC for missions,
- Getting the children involved in the mission work of the church through prayer, individual gifts and practical service, and
- To edify children in their Christian walk and their knowledge of the Bible, keeping in mind the Christian's mission mandate.

The first gathering was in Wellington  Cape Town  in 1890, led by Miss Spyker, a God fearing woman from the Hugonote Seminary (*Kinderkrans*, 1954: 15). CMG was then known as *Lettie-sendingkrans* (ibid). One year earlier, in 1889 with the founding of the Women's Missions Guild (WVG), a resolution was adopted that children should be taught about missions. The meetings with the children were to be called CMG. The main purpose of it was missions (ibid).

At the first congress for the Free State, held at Senekal, 28-29 September 1954, recognition was given to a steady growth, which was compared to that of a tree. Its branches would spread all over South Africa and the fruit would be seen at home, in Middle and far North Africa (ibid: 15, 16).

The leaders of CMG emphasised two Bible verses, Jn. 21:15 (b) : "... He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" and Prov. 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (NKJV: 2002), as expressing the call of the ministry (ibid: 16).

Once a week children would be part of a small group with the focus on mission (ibid: 15). It was not the same as the Sunday school gatherings, although their desire was to work together. At Sunday school children learned God's word, whilst at CMG during the week they learned how to practically apply what they learned from God's word. Another difference was that these meetings were optional, with a stronger focus on missions. The church made a decision not to be complacent and to turn a deaf ear to the God's calling. Instead they wanted to get children involved in the mission of the church to unreached people in the rest of Africa. The Bible was the foundation of everything they did. The understanding was that these weekly meetings could ultimately be a breeding place for future workers (ibid: 16, 17).

It later appeared that some missionaries acquired their desire to be missionaries within the KSK (ibid: 8).

The weekly meetings were led by women, preferably the minister's wife, or otherwise by any other lady in the congregation with a passionate heart for missions (ibid: 20). Whenever ladies were not available, men were allowed to lead (*Grondreëls*, [n.d.]: 1). The leaders realized God was the builder of his Kingdom and they were only his co-workers. They had to remember three important building stones (*Kinderkrans*, 1954: 18): the forming of the child's spiritual life, preparing the child for the position they would take up in God's Kingdom and developing a passion and love for missions.

The aim of the meetings was for the children to participate. This could be done through **little** dramas, the learning of a poem etc.

It is important to note that the work of the CMG was motivated by a **mission's** revival which started within the denomination itself. Another very special aspect of the work of the CMG is that the implementation of the gatherings took place within the local church, utilising small group

dynamics in the weekly meetings. The fact that the children were involved in practical support of missions must have contributed greatly, considering that by 1954, an estimate of 44 000 children were reached in this manner in only two provinces of South Africa (Cape and Transvaal) (*Kinderkrans*, 1954: 11, 12).

It is sad that after many years it lost its missions focus, and eventually disappeared.

3. KING'S KIDS INTERNATIONAL

King's Kids International (KKI) is one of the global ministries of YWAM's global ministries. Their aim is to give "children and teenagers of all nations the opportunity to be established in a proven knowledge of God, through participation in fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ" (Preparation, [n.d.]: 1). In other words they want to help children cultivate a living relationship with God, of which the natural outflow would be, to serve Him in whatever He asks of them. Practically this means the forming of partnerships between **families** and local churches. Wherever possible they prefer that the parents would accompany the children on outreaches.

Networking with local churches enables KKI to provide teaching materials, organizational help and training possibilities. This in turn helps churches develop their own outreach programs for children (ibid).

Outreaches usually take the form of a one week training camp, followed by a three week outreach, either locally or abroad (ibid). Connor said the length of these outreaches may vary depending on the holiday period. KKI believes children should be **recognized** within the family setting. Outreaches take place during school holidays. According to Connor KKI recognizes the value of linking children from different age groups and backgrounds, resulting in intergenerational outreaches (Connor 2007: interview). Teams also incorporate people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Preparation, [n.d.]: 1).

Each team is unique and their ministry might include one or more of the following possibilities: Helping a Neighbour Develop and Serve (H.A.N.D.S), Sports, Performing arts or intercession. The outreaches are bathed in intercession, praise and worship and the study of God's Word (Connor, 2007: interview).

They believe children should desire a closer walk with Jesus, resulting in being witnesses in their schools and other contexts, all year round. KKI emphasises the importance of children developing a lifestyle of following Jesus, and they also want children to realize their dependency on God (Preparation, [n.d.]: 21). They affirm the fact that children should continually be encouraged to grow in their own relationships with the Lord (ibid: 5).

The positive values of the KKI approach are:

- it is a voluntary interdenominational model which is flexible;
- it is inspired by a missions mobilisation movement;
- it is an intergenerational model with the focus on family relationships;
- their focus is the youth and how they can be equipped for the Kingdom program;
- the teams are multi-cultural which makes it easier for children to cross boundaries;
- it is outreach and project orientated which makes it easier for children to participate during holiday seasons and
- its goal is to expose the children to missions at an early age which often challenges them for a commitment to missions later in their lives.

A possible weakness in this approach is that it might be difficult for churches to take ownership of such a program.

4. KINGFISHER MOBILISING CENTRE

KMC was founded in 2001 by Johan Theron and two others and is based in Cape Town. According to Barkhuizen Kingfisher's goal are mobilising churches to be involved in missions. She said churches are taught to adopt a lifestyle of being senders. During this process churches learn how to hear from God, about their identity, potential and responsibilities (2007: interview). Roberts and Malan (2005: 16) assert that ultimately the Christian community should be following God wherever He goes, which only comes from a focused lifestyle in line with God's will. According to them it includes three basic principles namely: God being the primary reason for the believer's existence (Phil. 3:7-11); all believers are seeing themselves as disciple makers (2 Tim. 2:1-2) and all believers inherit God's heart for this world (Jn. 3:16-21).

KMC noticed the division in communities almost everywhere. They found different generational groups practically functioned on their own, resulting in a collapse of essential social and spiritual dynamics, with no unity between different generations. The aim of the kids department of KMC is to bring this under the attention of local churches in order to integrate them like in the Old Testament (Barkhuizen, 2005: 46). Barkhuizen said that creating this awareness is an integral part of the mobilising process, which involves the whole church. She emphasized that the mobilisation of children cannot function on its own and that it should not be ignored (2007: interview).

KMC agree with the child-to-child approach, which was developed in 1978 by the London University Institute of Child Health and Education (Arab, [n.d.]). This idea initially focused on empowering children to bring about a change in the lives of other children. According to Kingfisher the focus has broadened to empowering children to reach everyone in their communities (Barkhuizen, 2005: 28). In essence KMC's child-to-child approach considers children as agents of change, and not mere megaphones broadcasting the message of adults (Barkhuizen, 2005: 29).

Their strategy is the combination of different generations which involves the following principles: the core is an intergenerational approach where the children form part of everything that happens; the church has a shared vision and as part of the church the children are taught how to hear God's voice and through it discover their own identity in God, their potential and responsibility in God's Kingdom (Barkhuizen, 2005: 47).

Barkhuizen asserted that the kids department forms a part of the general approach to change whole communities. Their focus first of all is to involve the child within the family context. The family as a whole would then reach out to specific target groups. In some cases this might be children in need (Barkhuizen, 2007: interview).

In short it appeared that KMC's model is part of a long-term strategy to mobilise local churches for missions. Although this program is not yet fully developed, there is a clear commitment to involve children in programs that focus on the local church.

5. CHILDREN AS PART OF A FAMILY IN MISSIONS

In order to explore the options of involving children in missions with in the context of the family I conducted interviews with three families. I will now discuss my finding by referring to the role of information, the role of involvement and finally the role of practical commitment.

5.1 The role of information

Jeanette and Leticia, respectively eight and six years old, are the daughters of Schalk and Lida van As. Both of the girls were born during a time when the parents were serving in foreign missions. The girls were still quite young when the family returned. Yet they are still very much aware of missions and frequently involved in cross-cultural experiences. Their exposure to missions, involve testimonies of their parents' experiences on the missions field, learning about other

cultures and their belief systems in Home schooling, reading biographies about missionaries and in meeting visiting missionaries. Being exposed to missions in these ways, stimulates both Jeanette and Leticia to think about questions e.g., “What can they do to help others?” or “How can they tell them about Jesus?”.

Jeanette and Leticia’s involvement in missions comes through information based on their parent’s firsthand experiences of missions. As a result all the material used to expose them to missions motivates them to become involved. Jeanette and Leticia support missions through prayer, communicating with missionaries in the field and in giving (Van As, 2007: interview).

5.2 The role of involvement

Rachel and Jenny, respectively being 17 and 16 years old, spent most of their childhood on the mission field with their parents Alastair and Rebecca. The parents believe including children in missions should not be out of an obligation but rather as a result of a value system and belief.

Both Rachel and Jenny were included in the whole process of missionary life, from hearing where to go, to how they can serve on the field and even when feedback was given to home churches. In contrast to Jeanette and Leticia, Rachel and Jenny experienced the need firsthand and realised as children they can make a difference. Their involvement reached further than prayer and giving. Instead Rachel and Jenny were inspired to love and support orphans in desperate need.

Alistair believes Kingdom living is essentially about “being” and “becoming” instead of “doing”. The essence of being missional lies in their relationship with the Lord. Through their parent’s example the children were motivated to become involved themselves. According to

him the Western mindset focuses on who we are as individuals, what we can accomplish, achieve or create and how successful we are in it. However he believes couples and families with children can greatly contribute to the redeeming of all of creation. For them it is in living a life of hope, which, is not super spiritual but rather a hope that focuses on practical issues. Ultimately this meant staying together as a healthy family, doing things together and in this way representing Christ in the lives of those around them.

Their belief system is lived out in being a missional family, in contrast to seeing missions as just something they do (Lander, 2007: email).

5.3 The role of commitment

Shawn, Jed and Trina are missionary children who served with their parents Dave and Joy as missionaries in various countries. Their grandparents were missionaries too.

Both Dave and Joy were mobilised through the lives of their parents, life stories of missionaries, prayer for missionaries, learning about the persecuted church and listening to colourful stories of other missionaries. As children they were involved with the ministries of their parents, which seemingly later led them to commit their lives to missions. Although at first both individuals decided not to go the same route as their parents a very deep foundation was laid. The same seems to be true for their children. The Skinner parents believe their children should realize that although they are children, they play a crucial part in God's Kingdom. They are not only motivated to partake in their parents' ministry, but also to find the place where they as individuals can make a difference.

The Skinner family is an example of children getting information, becoming involved and then committing themselves to a life of missions. Through safe exposure, which includes informing and

involvement, different generations in this family committed to missions (Skinner, 2007: email).

I will now give a brief summary of how I believe children should be part of a family in missions.

In the first case study Jeanette and Leticia's exposure to missions is mostly second-hand, in that what they know of missions comes through information given by their parents. However this did not compromise their ability to become involved in their own way. It is important to realise that for children information often leads to involvement.

The term missional as found in the literature by Hancke, describes the missional church. According to him being missional is to have a specific purpose in mind (Hancke, 2007: 28, 29). I would like to apply the same concept to what can be called missional families. My understanding of a missional family is a family in which the family dynamics incorporate a deep and practical commitment to missions. In other words it is a family actively living in such a way that they positively impact the community they live in.

A missional church should have missional families. The three case studies provide good examples of missional families. All of them were directly involved in cross-cultural mission. Other examples could be included of missional families that are involved in local witness or that merely support the mission of their church.

My focus for this study was to illustrate that the family is an excellent platform for involving children in missions. This is done through information and through involvement, which then leads to a commitment in response to God's calling. But the call rests on information and exposure.

6. OTHER EXAMPLES FOR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN MISSIONS

Helpful recourses are available for families and churches who want to have children included in fulfilling the task of the Great Commission. What follows are examples of what is available. A variety of electronic media is available some of which can also be found on the internet. In this section I will discuss the work of Trans World Radio, Caleb Project, a special book as well as correspondence – in each case highlighting its value for involving children in missions.

6.1 Trans World Radio

What follows is information that I obtained from Trans World Radio's (TWR) website (Trans, [n.d.]). TWR's aim is to broadcast Christian radio programs all around the world. They make it possible for people in non-Christian environments to hear about Jesus. A sad reality is that places exist without any Christian witness. Through Christian radio programs, TWR is fulfilling their part in spreading the Good News (Matt. 28:19-20) across the globe. They also teach their listeners how to live in ways that would be pleasing in God's sight. Programs are broadcasted in 190 different languages.

One of TWR's programs focuses on involving children for missions. It is called Go Kids, an abbreviation for Global Outreach Kids. Through this new perspective on missions, TWR challenges children to become agents of change.

They make use of two fun characters called Marconi the Microphone or better known as, Marco to his friends, and Stanley the Stand. These characters take children on fun filled journeys, learning about peoples living in countries like Cambodia, China and Venezuela. In this way children around the world learn about foreign countries and people groups who have no Christian witness. They also learn how to love

these people, pray for them and even to help support mission work to them.

Go Kids also offers a curriculum consisting of five custom-made lessons designed to teach missions-related ideas. It includes memory verses, drama, discussions, prayer, games and crafts. This enables children to learn through doing fun things without even realising they are learning. TWR keep on developing its current curriculum to include new countries and people groups. Their desire is to release enhanced editions on the original curriculum on an annual basis, and for it to focus on the children in different countries and regions.

The radio and internet are valuable tools in the new communication era which should be utilized to inform and involve children in missions.

6.2 Children's club – Caleb project

The vision of Caleb Project (CP) started with four young men of Pennsylvania State University in 1980. They were so inspired by a vision to win the world for Christ that they actually went to Libya, "the most militant Muslim country". Soon twenty-four other students signed a pledge wherein they declared to commit their entire lives to make disciples of all nations, depending on where God leads them. The four pioneers returned after a year and challenged others to get involved. Their role model was Caleb in Num. 13:30 and 14:9. Some of the initial twenty-eight students formed an organization that became CP. The main purpose was to mobilise students to get involved in world mission. Beginning 1986, it was a ministry that targeted campuses and churches across the United States. Through the years the ministry expanded and underwent many changes as other ministries joined hands with them (Caleb, 2007).

CP believes all children can be agents of change, by being strategic instruments in expanding God's Kingdom. In the article "Mobilising

kids in missions” posted on their website, Shane Bennett wrote: “While there are definite limitations on kids’ involvement in the world, they are not simply caterpillars sliming along until they’re old enough to get involved.” (Bennett, 2006).

CP’s programs teach children three strategic ways to get involved in missions. These are:

- Children can pray – Bennett says children are blessed with fresh faith and an enormous ability to believe in God. They have the ability to pray prayers that are very different from those of adult Christians. He said their understanding of serving a big God enables them to pray big prayers.
- Children can give – Bennett then reminds the reader of the widow’s mite (Mark 12:41-44).
- Children can go – Caleb Project says that even small children are able to reach friends within their own and other cultures. According to them childhood is preparation time for when children are actually able to go as missionaries themselves. They use the example of Olympic athletes not just waking up at the age of 18 deciding to commence their training. Instead, they invest every opportunity to prepare for their big dream. They say that, “maybe God’s purposes are worth a similar investment on the part of our young missionaries-to-be” (ibid).

The aim of CP is to introduce children in Sunday schools, kids clubs etc. to children living in far of countries (Kids, [n.d.]: 10/40 Window).

One of the ways CP does this is through a fun filled video series, which can be used to expand children’s understanding of the world they live in. This material focuses on things like the history, geography and religions of people in different countries. CP’s aim, with this valuable tool, is to give Christian children a passion for children of all the un-reached people groups of the world. Their target group is children

between the age's five and ten. The length of the videos is five to six minutes. Through this video, with a focus on the 10/40 window, children are taught how they can pray for the five major blocks of the un-reached world. They are taught to remember **THUMB**, one letter for each finger on one hand. Each letter represents a group in the 10/40 window (ibid). The 10/40 window represents a rectangular-shaped window, 10 degrees by 40 degrees north of the equator, spanning the globe from West Africa to Asia. Most of the unreached peoples of the world live within this window (Love, 2000:938). The major groups living in this window are: **T**ribals, **H**indus, **U**nreligious, **M**uslims and **B**uddhists. Each group is discussed briefly, challenging children to pray (Kids, [n.d.]: 10/40 Window).

But there is more to this project than just the videos. They encourage parental involvement by providing children with THUMB Prayer Cards, which are available from CP store and by reading them missionary stories. Youth-oriented biographies are available, for example on William Carey and prayer with and for the children. They say many people in missions today probably had someone praying for them, with them or even both (Bennett, 2006).

It is clear that CP provides practical and helpful tools, which families could use to expose their children within a safe environment, to missions. It even gives children the opportunity to get involved in their own unique way.

6.3 Book – Window on the world

Daphne Spraggett and Jill Johnstone wrote a book entitled Window on the World. The purpose of the book is to make the culture, history and traditions of other people groups real to children (2001: back cover).

Through this book children learn about the different people groups living in more than 230 countries. This valuable tool also exposes

children to missions in the broader sense. They are also introduced to Mission Kids (MK), street children and also refugees (Spraggett & Johnstone, 2001: 8).

Each chapter consists of stories, information and colourful pictures about a specific country or topic. At the same time children are challenged to do more research by reading other books and magazines, watching news and educational programs on TV and the Internet. The writers inform children of the advantage of being well informed, so that they can pray more specifically (ibid).

They encourage children to have an open mind when they pray so that they can hear what God is saying to them with regard to that particular people group etc. At the same time children are reminded that God changes countries, people groups, situations and individuals through their prayers. They are also encouraged to thank God for what He has already done (ibid).

They describe the importance of prayer and give guidelines on how the child can pray (ibid). Jeanette van As used this book when she was eight years old to pray for the nations of the world. According to her mother this is an amazing tool that exposes little ones to the rest of the world. She said this is one way through which Jeanette could be an agent of change (Van As, 2007: interview).

6.4 Correspondence

Communication is a powerful tool, which can be used in many ways. One way is to allow missionaries to share testimonies with children. This can happen either in a written or verbal form.

As a missionary I learned the value of communication. I highly treasured letters from my friends and their children whilst living in Asia.

At the same time I knew the importance of writing to them and in particular to the children.

On home visits, I made use of photos and all kinds of interesting materials, which could raise the curiosity of the little ones. They were particularly interested in the stories of the children with whom I worked. This motivated them to regularly pray for me and those children.

The first time I was asked to share with children was at the children's gathering at a church in Mpumalanga. I referred to this visit at the beginning of this study. I wondered if they really would understand what missions are about, but was pleasantly surprised that the opposite was true. Any story I shared about the children in Asia had an impact on them. The visual materials were very helpful. These children were touched and wanted to get involved. They started by praying for children in other parts of the world. As well as wrote to the children I worked with and wanted to be involved through giving.

Lida van As shared about her daughter's desire to communicate with other missionary children somewhere else in the world. Lida's suggestion to her was to "adopt" a missionary child. Jeanette would then communicate with that child through letters or e-mail. Finding the right child was not that easy, but by the time of our interview they felt they finally found someone Jeanette could communicate with (Van As, 2007: interview). Although Jeanette cannot physically reach out to children in a foreign country she can support those who can.

Through my research I learned that Trans World Radio created a program for children from different areas in the world to communicate with one another. There were letters with specific questions from children not being involved in missions, to missionary kids, on how they experienced life in another country (Trans, [n.d.]).

This shows how correspondence can be used as a good tool to inform and involve children in missions. Even in correspondence the parents play an important role.

7. SUMMARY

In this chapter various models of involving children in missions were discussed. Through an extreme negative example it was illustrated how devastating it can be if the family unit is not respected and the needs and abilities of children are ignored.

Research also revealed several positive examples of how children can be involved in missions. One such example was a large denomination, the DRC, who developed and implemented a model called the CMG that successfully involved thousands of children (*Kinderkrans*, 1954:11, 12) in the support of mission projects. As a result many of these children later served in long-term missions. Secondly we have learned that through the KKI model children become involved in missions through interdenominational and intergenerational groups that are doing short-term outreaches. Each outreach team operates as a family. As with the CMG many of these children also entered into fulltime missions. The third model, the KMC, have developed a strategy involving children in an integrated program that mobilises the whole church for missions. Although this model is not yet fully developed it has the potential to have a sustainable impact on churches with regard to involving children in the church's mission.

Next we looked at how children can be involved in missions within the family unit. Because missional churches (Hancke, 27-30) also have families, the term, missional families, was introduced. We have learned that the dynamics of a missional family should incorporate a deep and practical commitment to missions.

Through this study it also became clear that various resources like modern media (TWR), video's (CP) and books can be used to involve children in missions. In addition we have learned how important communication and correspondence is when children are included in missions. It came about through personal visits and written communication.

This was merely a selection from models and resources available. The success of these models clearly showed that children can be part of a sustainable mission program of the local church. We now move to the deeper question of whether this is Biblical. We have illustrated that it can succeed, but are there any examples in the Bible of children being involved in missions?

CHAPTER 3

CHILDREN AND THE ADVANCE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE

In the previous chapter we have seen that children can be effectively included in the mission of the church. In this chapter we will be looking at the Biblical basis of involving children in missions.

In the first chapter of this study I referred to the understanding of missions as “the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world”. Since “church” and “Gospel” are so central in this definition, it may be argued that one cannot really talk about mission before the revelation of the Gospel and the church in the New Testament. I would rather argue that the Old Testament has many clear indications of God using people in the process of extending his kingdom on earth. The Old Testament does know the concepts of being sent, of being a witness and of ministry that went beyond the cultural and national boundaries of ancient Israel. For that reason the Old Testament is included in the biblical survey of this chapter. My aim is to look at where children were involved in ministry and in the advance of God’s Kingdom.

The Bible is filled with many passages that can be connected to this topic. Therefore, this study will by no means be comprehensive; it will only consist of a selection of passages from major blocks in Scripture. The focus will be on passages where children are involved in ministry and God using them to the advancement of His Kingdom. To emphasize it, throughout the study we will be looking at three concepts: children are important to God, children are involved in ministry and children are used by God to advance His Kingdom.

It may be important to give at this stage a brief definition of key terms. To explain the meaning of ministry I would refer to Jesus’ definition that He “did not come to be served but to serve...” (Matt. 20:28). The model He portrayed in this passage was that of sacrificial serving. Ministry therefore is an act of service. With regard to the Kingdom of God, I agree with John Bright’s

understanding of the term. He said the theory of the Kingdom of God involves, in essence the total message of the Bible. By understanding the whole meaning of the Kingdom of God, one comes exceptionally close to the central message of the Bible's gospel of salvation (Bright, [n.d.]: 7).

The structure of this chapter would be: children in the Pentateuch, children in the History books, and children in the Prophetic books, children in the writings and in conclusion children in the Gospels.

1. CHILDREN IN THE PENTATEUCH

In our study of children in the Pentateuch we will focus on Abram and his seed and Joseph as a young man.

1.1 Abram - Genesis 12:7

In this verse the LORD appears to Abram, telling him that through his seed He will bless the nations. In this context the concept seed translates the Hebrew word *zera*^c as the offspring or descendants of someone and more specifically a remnant (Kaiser 1980: 252-253, Strong, 1995: 82; Vine, [n.d.]: 1021). Gerhard von Rad says that the core element of God's promise is innumerable descendants. He says the significance in this covenantal blessing is much deeper than just profiting Abram. With this blessing both salvation and judgment make their entry into history. The way in which salvation and judgment would influence humankind depends solely on his attitude towards God's bigger plan (1972: 160).

It is true though that Abram's children (seed) grew-up, and that the text does not necessarily refer to young ones. However, although the text does not specifically speak about children, I believe that for Abram to have been a blessing to the nations, included children. Therefore it can be assumed that when God said to Abram in Gen. 12 that through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed, it included children. It

seems that from the very beginning, children played a strategic role in God's redemptive plan.

1.2 Joseph – Genesis 37:1-

In this passage the Hebrew word that gives some indication of Joseph's age is *na'ar*. It can be translated as a boy, youth or a servant. But primarily, it refers to a "youngster" between the age of weaning and "marriageable manhood" (Gæbelein, 1990: 226; Fisher, 1980: 586; Fuhs, 1998: 480)

The theological significance is that Joseph's aggressive removal from all that was known to him, not only brought about the salvation of his nation, but also ultimately that of God's church (Von Rad, 1981: 350; Walton, 2001: 662; Calvin, 1554: 260). Calvin said that the author clearly depicts how the "young boy" Joseph had been chosen by God for a very special task (1554: 260).

The passages mentioned above clearly indicate that children are important to God. In the first passage the covenant of God was passed on through generations. In this context children are part of this blessing, which will be passed on to the nations. In Joseph's case a young boy was chosen for the salvation of his people and with it also the salvation of the Egyptians. He was directly involved in ministry and in the advancing of the Kingdom of God.

2. CHILDREN IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

In the Historical books I will focus on a little slave girl working for Naaman's wife, Daniel and Ester. I will show that they were very young and that they were all involved in ministry and in so doing advanced God's Kingdom.

2.1 The Little Slave Girl Working For Naaman's Wife - 2 Kings 5

Naaman, the commander in the army of the king of Syria, was also a leper. A **little** captive **girl** from the land of Israel became the slave to his wife (2 Ki. 5:2). Then her master, Naaman, became sick. One may assume that from a young age this Jewish girl was taught from the Torah (Deut. 6:7-8) since she was very small. And she must have known about the miracles God did through Elisha. Therefore in faith she tells her mistress about the prophet in Israel who can heal her master.

"Little girl" translates the Hebrew *na^carâh qetenah*. The first word generally means "marriageable girl" (Fush, 1998: 483). In this passage it is qualified by the adjective *qetenah* that means "small" or, in this case "young". The same combination appears in Job 40:29. In both instances it means young daughters (Brown et al., 1907: 655).

The theological significance of this passage is that notwithstanding the circumstances, through childlike faith and witness, Naaman (a non-Jew) received physical healing and had an encounter with the living God. As a result he worshiped God (Wiseman, 1993: 206). The little girl did not do the ministry but she was a catalyst in helping that ministry could happen. In the process it helped the advance of the Kingdom, because it spread the knowledge of a saving and healing God beyond the borders of Israel.

2.2 Daniel – (Daniel 1)

Daniel and his friends were taken into exile along with thousands of other captives by the Babylonians. At Nebuchadnezzar's command, attractive Hebrew **young men** with the ability to learn were chosen to serve in his palace. Amongst them, were Daniel and his friends, whose outstanding character secured their positions in the King's service.

The Hebrew word *y^eladîm* used in this passage, can be translated as young boys, children or young men (Gilchrist, 1980: 379; Longman, 1999: 48; Wood, 1973: 33). Plato, the Greek philosopher 427 – 347 B.C., says in his *Alcibiades* 1:121, Persian youngsters commenced their education at the age of 14 years and Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* I, 2, says it was concluded at the age of 17 years (Wood 1973: 34). This may confirm that Daniel and his friends were still children at that time. ✓

The message of the early chapters of the book of Daniel is that God used these boys or young men to display his powerful presence in the Babylonian court. Even the most powerful ruler of that time had to acknowledge God as King (see Dan. 4). The significance of this is that God uses young children to show that He is in control of the destiny of all nations.

2.3 Esther – (Esther 2)

Ester is brought into the palace during a time when Haman, the king's second in command wants to destroy the Jews. Through Haman's manipulation the king gives a command that all Jews should be killed. God then uses Ester to save her people.

Ester is described as *na^carâ betûlâ*, which can be translated in this context as “virgin”, or a girl of “marriageable” age. Although the age is not mentioned, this concept and other details in the story clearly suggest that she must still have been a child by our standards (Fush, 1998: 483; Rödiger, [n.d.]: 188; Tsevat, 1975: 343; Bush, 1996: 361). In a time where girls married young, it seems very likely that “marriageable girls” would be rather young, probably still in their teens (Jastrow & Kohler, [n.d.]).

From today's perspective she would be considered a mere child, not of the right material to save a nation. However, Joyce Baldwin says

Esther's integrity becomes evident as she waits on God before she takes any action (1984: 67).

Esther's presence in the palace did not only change the fate of her own nation but inevitably the king's life was also touched (Est. 2:19-23). It is quite possible; even likely, that her conduct also had an impact on the rest of the palace's staff. It is important to note that this happened in the court of the powerful king of Persia, a superpower in that time. It is in that context that God used a young girl as a witness and an instrument to advance his kingdom.

In conclusion we have seen that all the children (the little slave girl, Daniel and his friends and Esther) in the above mentioned passages were important to God, involved in ministry though not necessarily out of choice, and used to advance the Kingdom of God.

3. CHILDREN IN THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

One may wrongly assume that God would only use adults to reveal his prophetic word. As a prophet Isaiah lived so close to God, He even spoke to him through visions. However, we find that God used other prophets, in order to advance his Kingdom, like Samuel and Jeremiah when they were still very young. In the following passage I will focus specifically on the child of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah's son, Shear-Jashub - Isaiah 7

According to Is. 7:3 God instructed the prophet Isaiah to deliver a message to the wicked king Ahaz. God clearly told Isaiah that his son Shear-Jashub meaning "A Remnant Shall Return" was to accompany him on this task (NKJV, 2002). Through the meaning of the child's name he becomes indirectly a witness and also a confirmation to the prophecy, which his father delivered. Calvin says there is reason to believe that the boy's name was not merely given to him unintentionally, but rather

suggests it was given through a divine inspiration of the Spirit or by a direct instruction from God. This boy carried with him an authoritative message from God (1981: 231). Although the boy probably did not say anything, God used him.

The use of giving a child a prophetic name is also used in Is. 8:3 and Hos. 1:6,9 (Watts, 1985: 90).

This shows that God can also include children in prophetic ministry. As in the previous examples Isaiah's child was important to God, involved in ministry and was indirectly through his name, part of advancing the Kingdom of God.

4. CHILDREN IN THE WRITINGS

Children are a very important focal point in some of the Writings. This is most obvious in the book of Proverbs, which is an instruction for youth to prepare them for living wisely as part of the nation of Israel. Children are also frequently mentioned in the Psalms. I have chosen a verse from the Psalms that is not easy to understand, but that clearly illustrates the amazing reality that children are involved from the earliest age in ministry.

Psalms 8:2

The "infants" and "babes" of the New King James translate the Hebrew concepts *ʿolēlîm* and *yonēkîm*, both of which means children in the youngest age still nursing from their mother (Livingston, 1980: 652).

The concept "strength" translates the Hebrew word *ʿōz*. In this context it is somewhat difficult to understand. It seems impossible that "out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants" strength or power can come forth to fend away enemies like a mighty bulwark (Koehler & Baumgartner, 1958: 692-693; Kraus, 1988: 181-182). How this can happen is a mystery. This might be the reason why the Septuagint translated *ʿōz* as *ainos* meaning

“praise” (Schultz, 1971:817). It may be easier to link the mouths (sounds) of babies with praise than with power!

For Calvin the significance of this is that God does not wait till children get to the age of understanding to reveal his divine intervention or will to them. He said God “has no need of the powerful eloquence of rhetoricians” or the linguistic abilities of adults to make Himself known. But instead through babies and suckling infants, who cannot use their intellectual faculty, He reveals Himself so evident to refute the ungodly whose sole aim is to not recognize God (1981: 95-96). Weiser agrees that David hears the voice of the living God speaking through the harmless utterances of children, which then in turn sets God’s power in motion (1959: 141).

In conclusion God’s power manifesting in the mouths of infants and babes is a big mystery, difficult to explain. Yet these children are important to God, involved in ministry without any knowledge and training and play a part in advancing God’s Kingdom in that the enemies are silenced.

5. CHILDREN IN THE GOSPELS

In children’s ministry much emphasis is given to the passage of Matt. 18:1-14. In this context, it is important because in this passage the Son of God gives clear instruction about the place of children in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 18:1-5

Much can be said about this chapter. However for the purpose of this study the focus would only be on verses 1-5.

In this passage the disciples asked Jesus a question about greatness in the Kingdom of God (18:1). In order to answer their question Jesus called upon a little child and places him in their midst (18:2). Usually children are

taught by adults but precisely the opposite is happening here, “the child becomes the lesson” (Weber, 1979: 46).

Jesus is using the child to teach the way into the kingdom of heaven, the meaning of being great in the kingdom and the kind of service that is expected of an ambassador of the kingdom (Davies & Allison, 1988: 754). Ironically “Jesus never talked to the children about what they could learn from adults, but he did tell adults some things to learn from children” (Zuck, 1996: 201).

This scene takes place in a time when children occupied the lowest rung in the social ladder; therefore caring for children was considered a low-status activity. In other words Jesus was saying “whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (Matt. 20:26, 27), (Gundry-Volf, 2001: 43). Jesus wants his followers to take a different approach to power altogether. In fact, through showing compassion to children, Jesus was challenging the traditional value system of power in Palestine (Mouton 2005: 7). According to Davies the disciples’ call was in fact not to imitate those in power but rather the powerless (1993: 127). The call to enter God’s Kingdom like little children did not only include a change in their thought patterns and relative powers, but also asked of them to commit to a different way in practicing the power of justice (Crosby, 2002: 24).

The concept “receiving” or “welcoming” translates the Greek word *dechomai*. The meaning is to be hospitable towards that person (Matthew 18:5). Gundry-Volf said it implies serving them and with it she refers to Lk. 10:8 and 16:4. She said Jesus’ action was not merely a display of affection (2001: 43). In fact Jesus is giving a practical demonstration of the important place of children in the midst of the disciples. ✓

Through Jesus’ action he is not only saying that children are important to God but he is also saying that they should be involved in ministry and that they play an important role in advancing God’s Kingdom.

6. SUMMARY

Children are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27, 5:3) and have an inherent theological value (Prest 1999:6). They should therefore be included in the ministry of the church. They are valued as a continuation of the family, carrying faith into the future (Prest 1995:24).

In this study we learned that in the Old Testament children were part of family and as such part of God's people. It also teaches that children were fully involved in worship and festivals and also displayed to the world outside the distinctive qualities of serving God. We have illustrated that in Scripture children were actively involved in ministry and the advance of God's Kingdom. The examples used were: Joseph, Naaman's little slave girl, Daniel and his friends, Ester and Isaiah's son. We have also learned through the mystery of Psalm 8, that even babies can fulfil the role of revealing God's presence and power.

In the New Testament children are also given special recognition. In Matthew 18 we saw how Jesus gave children a special place in the midst of his disciples. Jesus told his disciples to follow his example. We believe that this command applies to the church today.

This chapter clearly answered the question whether it is Biblical to involve children in the mission of the church. Many examples were given of situations recorded in the Bible where children were involved in the advance of God's Kingdom. Children can be and, we believe, must be practically involved in the mission of the church.

CHAPTER 4

GUIDELINES FOR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN THE MISSION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

In chapter two, we looked at different examples of how children can be involved in missions. In chapter three we learned from Scripture how children were involved in the advance of God's Kingdom. Keeping these in mind, the question is, how can it be applied practically? In this chapter the aim is to take a look at some practical and relevant ways this task can be accomplished. Six guidelines are formulated and explained. In each case suggestions are given for practical application.

1. GIVE CHILDREN THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN A MISSIONAL CHURCH

Throughout the Old and New Testament, God continually gave special attention to the children. In addition we find Jesus affirming it in Matthew 18 by using a little child to teach the disciples. In this we learn that the unchangeable God (Mal. 3:6) chose to use children in powerful ways. Some of these are:

- God used Joseph to save his family and the people of Israel (Gen. 37).
- God revealed his will through the little boy Samuel when adults failed to do so (1 Sam. 3).
- God used the boy David to defeat the mighty Philistine warrior (1 Sam. 17). Through this act God showed that He does not need the strength and wisdom of adults to fulfil his purpose.
- God chose Jeremiah to be his ambassador when he was still only a child (Jer. 1).

We have already described the missional church and what place children should have in it. Next we have shown that God used children like Joseph, Samuel, Naaman's slave girl, Daniel and his friends, Esther, Isaiah's son and even very little babies still nursing at their mother's

breast. We want to emphasize that children are part of God's Kingdom and therefore should also be part of the missional church.

From the Bible we can find many good reasons for involving children in the ministry (and mission) of the church. Children are made in God's image, they are special gifts from God to his children, they have the capacity to worship and serve God and they can joyfully participate in whatever the church does (Prest, 1999: 3-10).

Deut. 6:7 says, the family should instruct children in regards to God's ways wherever they are. Brewster emphasizes the importance of Christian education in our own time: "Unless Christians impart a Biblical worldview to our children, society will impart its default worldview – self-gratification." (Brewster, 2005: 145). Missional families and churches can effectively introduce children to missions.

God showed us the example by which we should live. The question we should ask, is whether we are doing what is expected of us? Unfortunately history proved the opposite. Mostly children were "seen but not heard". We can look, for example, at worship services on Sundays where usually very little attention is given to children. If Jesus, our primary example gave children a significant place in God's Kingdom and ministry should we not do the same?

Some practical suggestions for giving children their rightful place in the mission of the church

- Allow children to partake in the **worship**. They should not only be present, but be given practical opportunities for participation. This should be in a way that they can understand and enjoy.
- They should be given the opportunity to **pray** for others. Their genuine faith and believing hearts can move mountains through prayer.

- Children should be given opportunities to participate in sharing their faith. Their boldness allows them to **share** their faith much easier than adults will.
- Children can participate in **outreaches** in their communities. This can be through serving others by helping the elderly carry their groceries, singing and praying at old age homes, orphanages, hospitals etc.
- Children can also **give**. In fact when they learn of the needs of other children in very poor countries they generally give very easily. Parents should set the example and then children would follow easily.
- As children participated in the Jewish festivals allow them to actively be part of mission celebrations.

2. TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS AND ABILITIES OF CHILDREN

The frightening reality of what happened with the CC (see chapter 2) should remind us to consider children's needs very carefully whenever we involve them in missions. For this reason I would like to spend some time focusing on different characteristics (and needs) of Children.

2.1 Physical aspects

Factors influencing physical development of children are: adequate and balanced nutrition, loving affection and general stimulation by parents (Berk, 1991: 196). Children also need physical protection from outside stress factors. Johnson said the way in which children view stressful situations will determine their behaviour (1989: 66). This is why parents should provide security for their children.

Children's vulnerability is often abused by adults, as seen earlier in the CC (chapter 2 of this study). These children were supposed to be protected; instead advantage was taken of their trust. Am I suggesting that children are not supposed to be exposed to ministry and missions? No! The number of children who successfully participated in missions outreach through KKI for example, clearly shows that this can and

should be done. However as said earlier KKI believes the parents should be part of outreaches and whenever that is totally impossible another adult's presence is required to provide security and protection. (Connor, 2007: interview).

2.2 Social and emotional aspects

Children are dependent on their parents. The parents are responsible to act as a filter and shelter, shielding their children from harmful things. The filters can be: supplying a protective environment and stability, contributing to the forming of the child's identity in Christ, giving emotional consolation etc. When the essential care conditions of love, compassion and positive regard are met, children can fully reach their potential (Seden, 2007).

Play is one way in which children would socialize. Garry Landreth said "Play is a child's language and toys are his words" (Coetsee, 2005: 124). It is vital to keep in consideration the social context of a situation in order to understand why the child is emotionally behaving in a certain way (Ziegler & Finn-Stevenson, 1987: 279).

The tragic reality of the CC (chapter 2 of this study) meant these children were cut off from vital protection and this resulted in the death of many. Again we can learn from the KKI model. They prepare children within the family context for missions. Their way of involving children in missions creates no tension within the family structure itself. This means whenever the parents cannot be present, the children are placed within a new family - the outreach team. In these situations constant feedback is given to the parents (Connor, 2007: interview).

2.3 Ethical and religious aspects

Based on our definition of a child (chapter 1 of this study), a child can be considered a **minor**, **dependant** and **easily trusting**. Therefore the child needs to be protected. It is important to consider what is good

for the child, what is acceptable for the parents and what is right before God (Matt. 18).

From an ethical perspective the first supervision is that of the parents. According to the Convention on the Rights of a Child (Article 14), parents play a fundamental role in the life of the child. In other words, parents have the first say in regard to what happens with their child. In Deuteronomy 6:7 parents are instructed to nurture their children's spiritual life (Seden, 2007). Brewster said if Christian training to children of non-Christian parents is done with honesty and transparency then it would be neither abusive nor unethical (2005: 8). Because children's spiritual vulnerability can be exploited and abused, there exists a definite need for clear guidance which needs to take place from within the family and the church context. The parent's wishes cannot be ignored! Should the parents for example not be considered and a child from a Muslim family is taken on an outreach, that child stands a good risk of being separated from his family for the rest of his life. In this case the danger exists of the family being destroyed. As Christians we need to respect the family structure even in a non-Christian environment. We must be careful not to take advantage of the fact that children trust so easily and unreservedly!

On the religious aspect the danger lies where the leader claims that God spoke to him or her. There also exists the danger that we simply assume that children are spiritually ignorant. Leaders may claim that they alone can determine God's guidance. Although children will never claim this, they often have a keen spiritual awareness (Hay & Nye, 1998: 56). It has been pointed out in Chapter 2 that children can discern God's guidance. It seems even Jesus was emphasising that the spirituality of a child should be taken seriously (Matt. 18). In children's ministry, one often hears people say, the same Holy Spirit lives in a child than in adults. Thus, implying that the wisdom given to children by the Holy Spirit is the same as that of adults.

KMC is a good example of how it can be done. They teach church leaders and parents the Biblical importance of children, their value, and how they can be involved and supported (see Chapter 1 of this study) (Barkhuizen, 2007: interview).

Some practical guidelines to take into account with regards to the needs and abilities of children, when involving them in missions

- Involve people who have expert knowledge of the needs and abilities of children. People professionally involved with children normally have a keen sense of what the needs and abilities of children are. These could be; mothers, pre-primary school teachers, medical workers, social workers etc. Involve them in the planning team.
- It may also be good to involve children, if the correct environment can be created, where they can get excited and can share their dreams. In this way they can even be part of the planning process.
- In practical mission work, create structures for feedback where the success can be measured and it could be seen if children are coping. When a child does not cope make sure professionals are on the team that can take care of that child. Also make provision for an exit strategy if a child cannot continue with a certain project. A traumatic experience in missions may have a negative impact on his/her whole life.

3. THE GOAL OF RAISING UP MISSIONAL FAMILIES

The Bible clearly shows that **Christian education** (Deut. 6:7, Prov. 22:6 and Eph. 6) and **Christian mission** (Matt. 5, 28 and Acts 1:8) are not only good - both are commanded. We have looked at Hancke's definition about the missional church and we have introduced the concept the missional family. Just as the missional church is not an option, but a standard, so should the missional family be raised to advance God's Kingdom on earth always and everywhere. Missional families can only be

raised through allowing every member in the family to find their place in the Kingdom of God.

Some practical guidelines for raising missional families

- Parents should encourage their children to hear from God.
- Introduce children to other countries and cultures. This may include allowing them to do research on the needs of the people in those countries.
- Encourage children to pray for the specific country or people group and in particular for the children in that country. It is no coincidence that children respond in a positive way to the needs of other children. Children support children easily and pray for children easily. Be very cautious in handling a situation where a child may sense what God is saying ... , even if it does not seem to make sense!
- Find out details about missionaries living in that particular country. Encourage the children to communicate with them.
- Invite missionaries to visit the family when they are on home visits.
- Get involved as a family in the community you live in, and whenever possible go on a cross-cultural outreach.
- Arrange for outreaches where the whole family can participate. The DRC in White River for example takes whole families on an outreach to Mozambique every year during the June, school holidays.
- Allocate missionaries to families for correspondence and support. These families can also help missionaries with their logistics when they return on home visits.
- Share prayer needs with regard to non-Christian countries with families.
- Allow and encourage families to give new ideas on how the church as a body can be part of missions.

4. ACKNOWLEDGE THE LOCAL CHURCH AS BASIS FOR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN MISSIONS

In this study we have strongly accepted the local church as a basis for missions. We find this as clearly demonstrated in the church of Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were sent out as missionaries to what is known as Turkey today (Acts 13).

In mobilising children for missions the danger always exists that it may become something alongside the church, driven by individuals. In the beginning of this study I have illustrated my experience with the church in Mpumalanga. Where I was invited as an outsider and found it very easy to get the children excited. But it has been explained that this would be short lived unless such an initiative is part of the general dynamics of the local church. This was probably one of the major reasons for the success of the CMG. Because, it was centrally driven, and was normally championed by pastor's wives it remained a central part of the operations of the church.

Children growing in their faith should learn how they can proclaim God's word to a sick and dying world. They often have a capability to clearly hear God speak. In turn they respond immediately, which is not always the case with adults (Lander, 2007: email). It may seem that they are humble and have a simple faith yet they are vigorous, enthusiastic and do not have the reservations of adults. The capability of children to serve in God's Kingdom should not be doubted! As seen in the example of Jeanette van As (2007: interview) children seem to have no problem applying God's word in their daily lives. Children are powerful co-workers in the Kingdom of God. Whenever we involve them in a church the rest of the church will also be influenced as Horace Mann so eloquently said (Heath, 1896: 6):

Whoever so a wretch so heathenish, so dead, that the merry song or shout of a group of gleeful children did not galvanize the misanthrope into an exclamation of joy? What orator or poet has eloquence that enters the soul

with such quick and subtle electricity as a child's tears of pity for suffering or his frown of indignation at wrong?

Some practical guidelines of how the local church can be the basis for involving children in missions

- Study the structures of the local church and see how missions involvement is organized. Find out what is the vision, who drives it ~~is~~, what is the strategy, what are the practical projects and who are involved. If, for example, there is an active missions commission, make sure that by involving the children, it is done in close co-operation with the missions commission. If, on the other hand, mission work in the local church is coordinated by a single person make sure that this person is involved, gets exposed, gets excited and **understands children.**
- Be very cautious with any mission project that is once off and that does not submit to the leadership and the accountability of the local church. This is because just as much as children need parents, children in missions need to be protected, guided and supported within the local church.
- Where the mission drive is not centrally located in the leadership of the church it might be necessary to first facilitate the process where the church understands missions. Then make sure the place of the child is discovered and incorporated.
- Allow children to practically promote missions in the church and especially with the leadership.

5. ENSURE THAT THE WORK WITH CHILDREN FORM PART OF AN EFFECTIVE MISSIONS STRATEGY

A description of an effective mission strategy for me would mean the prayerful consideration of God's will. A substandard, ill-considered plan does not promote missions! Rather this may lead to influencing many people, including children in a negative way. Children are often used to

fulfil selfish desires, hindering them from stepping into the ultimate plan of God for their lives. The mere thought of possibly being a stumbling block to children fills me with fear. And I am reminded of Jesus' stern warning in Matthew 18:6 where he said: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (NKJV, 2002)! Christians' attitude should be to make a difference in the world in a constructive long-term way and children should be included in it. Any mission strategy that does not include children is therefore inadequate (Malherbe, 2001).

Having been on the mission field, I am keenly aware of the dangers of short-term and once off projects. Richard Slimbach compares it with the term "McDonaldized society" (Ritzer, 2000). According to him this pre-packaged projects, and superficial care, affirms the suspicion that the church is no different from corporate society. In essence it says that the church has lost its faith in the wonderful working power of God in a very unstable society. According to Slimbach the positive aspect of short-term missions is that it gets people moving in the right direction. But it cannot be the end goal (2000: 430-433). Unless mission is done as part of a long-term strategy it can often do more harm than good, which is also true for involving children in missions. It cannot be for the sake of exposure! It cannot be a once off! It must be part of a more effective long-term strategy! ✓

Some practical guidelines to ensure that the work with children form part of an effective missions strategy

- It must involve seeking God's face for what His will is concerning a particular project. It is important to remember mission does not just happen by itself, planning and implementation have to be done **prayerfully**.

- The church's overall vision has to be considered. The intention should not be to only expose children to missions, but rather to be used by God in order to bring about sustainable change in communities.
- Whatever the plan is, it needs to be communicated with all involved, especially the children.
- By not making it a once off experience, it first of all communicates to the locals in the host country that they are valuable. It respects the missionaries on the field and their leadership. It respects missions where the focus generally is more on the long-term strategy. It realises the importance of research.
- The roles and tasks of the children should be clearly specified.
- The children's involvement must complement mission.
- Enough adults have to accompany the children on the outreach.
- It should be determined if the field is prepared to receive these children.
- Sufficient information about the community, their cultural values, etc should be obtained.
- In the country of arrival everything should be in place. Support for the children should be available.

6. INVOLVE SUITABLY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED PEOPLE FOR THE SPECIAL MINISTRY OF INVOLVING CHILDREN IN MISSIONS

Proper qualifications are required for any profession. It does not make sense to employ a mechanic to fill a nursing position. The same is true for Christian workers, and all the more for those who work with children. The Bible says we are to be diligent "...to show ourselves approved workers accurately handling the Word of God" (2 Tim. 2:15). Again we should heed Jesus' warning in Matt. 18:6, in not being a stumbling block for children. Four important principles should be considered when inviting a mobiliser/missionary to address children. They are:

6.1 Training and experience

He needs to know how valuable children are for the mission of the church. He also needs to know – through study and experience – how to help children take up their rightful place within a missional church. Professional people can be of great help, but do not limit it to them. They could be; pre-primary school teachers, medical workers, social workers etc. The parents and siblings can also be of great help.

6.2 Modelling and practical application

The example set by modelling is essential. This is also true for those mobilising children for missions. It is important to remember actions speak louder than words. This reminds me of the saying, “What you do speak so loud that I cannot hear what you say”, popularly attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Jesus used modelling as an approach throughout his ministry. He not only spoke words of Life but reinforced his message by his conduct (Jn. 9:16-17). The expectation of Jesus is that every Christian would follow in his footsteps (Jn. 11:41-42 & 14:11). The missions mobiliser must set the example.

6.3 Networking and partnership cooperation

The mobiliser needs to connect the children with important partners in their own area and country. This may include:

- Organisations or individuals that are part of a children’s prayer network e.g. Jericho Walls, Caleb project etc.
- Child evangelisation specialists who provide theoretical and practical training, which is vital for outreaches.
- Established centres in the local region, area or city doing children’s training.
- Organisations partnering with churches that developed an effective children’s ministry by empowering churches for missions outreach with children.
- Churches already involved in outreaches with children.

The mobiliser also needs to facilitate networking with important partners on the mission field. This may include:

- Potential organisations working with children, with whom the local church can partner during the children's outreach.
- Missionaries who can provide the children with helpful information in regard to the needs of the people.
- Local churches that can work together with the children during the outreach and can do vital follow-ups afterwards.
- Schools where the children can go and minister.

6.4 Contextualisation and relevance

Many missionaries testify to the fact that some of their first impressions with regard to missions were when they were exposed to missions in childhood. It is important to remember first impressions last!

Children grow up in a certain context. If they are used to a certain medium you need to ensure that the missions training fit into their context. It needs to be **relevant** for them. Working with the children in Asia for instance would be very different to working with children living in a first world country. If all the children for example have iPods you will be able to reach them through music and the internet. In this case training is not really the answer. The real test is whether you connect with the children. When all is said and done, the question is, did the children understand what you wanted them to learn. The language, resources, media and visuals all need to consider the world the child live in (Harris, 2006). Research has shown the existence of different generations, each with its own worldview, values, strengths and weaknesses (Codrington, 1997).

Even if you have a suitably qualified person speaking to the children, that person mostly is thirty to forty years older than the children. The problem is that person normally got stuck at his/her training and does

not connect with the children. We emphasize again: the final test is does it work for the children!

Some practical guidelines for involving a suitably qualified and experienced person

- The children have to be asked how they feel about missions, why we pray for missions and why we go on outreaches to foreign countries.
- It is important to realise the children really want to give the right answers, and therefore might answer what they think you want to hear. You have to find ways to effectively assess their level of understanding and enthusiasm. This is vital for effectively involving them in missions.
- In order to connect properly with children you have to do some homework, finding out what their interests are. Do not assume the materials you used even two years ago would be relevant today!
- If high technology equipment captures their attention, you can encourage them to do research on something specific and maybe give feedback on it.
- The final test to find out if you successfully connected with the children would be to get their honest opinion, not only a superficial response.

7. SUMMARY

In this chapter a formulation of practical guidelines for involving children in the mission of the church, was given. Six guidelines were formulated:

- Giving children their rightful place in a missional church
- Taking into account the needs and abilities of children
- Raising up missional families
- Acknowledging the local church as basis for involving children in mission
- Ensuring that the work with children form part of an effective mission strategy
- Involving suitably qualified and experienced people for the special ministry of involving children in mission.

Each of these guidelines was explained and in each case suggestions were made for practical application. The findings of this research project will be summarised in the last, concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

According to Mike Phillips churches today have a desire for more involvement in missions than just reading newsletters and giving money (Winter, 1998). There also seems to be more of a focus to be missional, which according to Hancke means having a specific purpose in mind (2007: 28). This purpose is to become a witnessing community, actively demonstrating God's love in a very volatile society. The reality however, is that only a small percentage of churches are actively involved in missions. Hancke said instead of getting discouraged by this, it should rather be a motivation to respond to the challenge of restoring the local church to its identity as a missional community (2007: 61, 62). Within the small number of existing missional churches, there are an even smaller percentage of churches where children are effectively involved in mission. This leaves us with a double challenge of raising up missional churches that effectively involve children in mission.

In the beginning of this study I indicated that my involvement in missions has a dual objective. One is to see churches involved in missions and secondly for children to become part of the mission of the local church.

It can be said that the church has generally recognized the value of children. This can be seen, for example, in the emphasis placed in the Catholic and Protestant traditions on the baptism of children and on teaching them (catechisms). When the church lost much of its influence on the young during the IR, men like Robert Raikes, and George Müller, took up the torch and started caring for children in various ways. Then with the nineteenth century revival in missions, the focus was on education and evangelising the children and youth of non-Christian communities. Although it is rather slow, the focus on children seemed to grow within missions circles. Research revealed the exciting growth with regard to involving children in the mission of the local church. This means children are not only seen as receivers of ministry but as

valuable partners in missions. The purpose of this study was to see children becoming involved in, and part of the mission of the church. For us missions is the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world. It was argued that children – people under the age of 18 years – are meant to be an integral part of the “whole church”.

We looked at a selection of models and resources available to involve children in missions. The example of the CC clearly illustrated the dangers of not considering the needs and abilities of children. However on the more positive side, we have shown how a large denomination (DRC) left an impressive legacy in this regard. They developed and implemented a model through which many children became involved in sustainable mission projects. The DRC were not the only ones recognising the value of children as co-workers in missions. We have also shown how organisations like KKI and KMC effectively involved children in mission in close partnership with families and the local church. Next we introduced the concept of the missional family. We described it as a family in which the family dynamics incorporate a deep and practical commitment to missions. We also suggested that the missional church should have missional families. We then discussed how modern media could be used to involve children in missions. We came to the conclusion that the success of these models is an indication that children can be part of a sustainable mission program based in the local church. But the question was, is it Biblical?

It is true that the Bible does not give direct examples of children being sent out for missions. However, a study of a selection of passages from various parts of the Bible clearly showed that children are important to God, actively involved in ministry and in advancing God’s Kingdom. In this we saw a pattern, which we believe should also be followed today.

We showed that children can find their rightful place in the missional church through participation in worship, prayer, giving and witnessing in their immediate environment and also beyond. We emphasised the importance of considering the parents’ wishes before children are included in the mission of

the local church. By choosing a missions team our suggestion was to include professionals who understand the needs and abilities of children. We believe for churches to be missional it is vital that they have a sustainable missions strategy that submits to the church leadership. And for any missions drive to have an impact on a community it cannot be a once off project. Children should have their place in the long-term strategy of a missional church.

I would like to conclude this study with a visual and verbal illustration of what has been said so far and how it could look like in practice.

New Hope church is situated in a small farming community. In recent years the number of its members has continued to decline until the church could no longer afford its pastor and he left. In the end it seemed that all that was left was the Sunday morning worship service and a few special events like funerals and, once in a while, a wedding. Without making it publicly known, a group of believers started to meet for prayer. They did not only pray for the survival and growth of their church. They asked God to help them respond to the needs of people outside the church – in their community and even beyond.

One day a pastor called the church committee and informed them he sensed God calling his family to their little town. He had a heart for missions and loved children dearly. This was something new to the church. It is not that they did not value children or that they rejected missions. It was simply that neither children nor missions were a priority in their ministry. The new pastor and the few committed members continued praying and started taking small steps of becoming involved in their wider community. Slowly the church grew. People stopped focusing on their own needs and became more involved within their own community.

The best part of it all was the children becoming involved. After hearing a missionary speaking on Libya, the country where he was working, they decided to become involved as well. Because the pastor loved children and had good relationships with his congregation's children they had the courage

to share with him their new desires. They wanted to do something for the children in Libya. But how could they? They could not go there themselves. The pastor knew he dared not kill their enthusiasm. He therefore encouraged them to pray, speak to their parents and also do some research about the country.

He thought he will only hear form them the following Sunday. Instead he was pleasantly surprised by phone call after the other he received from the children's parents the following day. Virtually all wanted to know how they as families could become involved. Soon the church leadership adopted Libya as their missions target. Their eyes were not only opened to the needs around them but also to that of a foreign country. The children's excitement grew. During their research they discovered there are very little Bibles available for the few believers in Libya. The pastor encouraged the children to become part of a project, which sends Bibles to these kinds of countries. In order, to do this the children needed to give money, which they had very little of. With their parents' help they decided to have a meal introducing Libya to the members of the congregation. The parents would help preparing and serving the meal while the children was to sell the tickets for the meal and help with preparations wherever possible. The money made was used to buy Bibles.

As time went on, one family after another shared with the pastor how their focus was more on what others need rather than being self-centred. One testimony he heard was that of a little girl who heard of a missionary kid that broke his arm. Because the missionary family had no medical aid, the child could not be taken to a good hospital. On hearing about this family's need, the little girl not only prayed for the family, but also wanted to give her pocket money to help them. Although her parents knew the pocket money would not be sufficient they did not discourage her. This testimony spread through the whole community and soon rich farmers' hearts were touched. One farmer in particular decided they, as a family would like to pay the monthly contributions for a medical aid for this missionary family. One by one more families took

the responsibility for other things, which this family might need. One little girl's conviction moved a whole community to become actively involved.

As a result, a dying church became a missional church with missional families. For me this is not only a dream. It is my passion to see that this would become a reality in all churches.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CC	Children's Crusades
CMG	Children's Missions Guild
CP	Caleb Project
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
GCOWE	Global Consultation on World Evangelisation
HANDS	Helping a Neighbour Develop and Serve
IR	Industrial Revolution
KKI	King's Kids International
KMC	Kingfisher Mobilising Centre
MK	Mission Kids
NKJV	New King James Version
WMG	Women's Missions Guild
YWAM	Youth With a Mission