

# FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

This document is for any leader, church or agency that believes that children need to come to know Jesus and become disciples of his. It is a discussion starter from the Global Children's Forum.

The Global Children's Forum ('GCF') is an emerging and growing partnership of children's ministry agencies that operate with a global or major regional focus.

- Its focus is on the strategic opportunity of evangelism and discipleship to the world's 2 billion children.
- Its motivation is to ensure that every child in every generation is given the opportunity to engage fully with Jesus, through God's word.
- Its conviction is that this needs to be a significant priority for the worldwide church.
- Its vision is to explore what can be achieved together that is not presently being accomplished alone.

## Can we really reach 2 billion children?

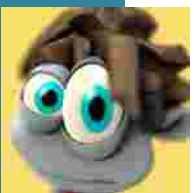
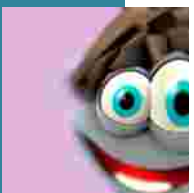
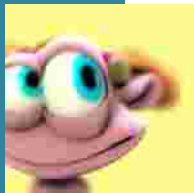
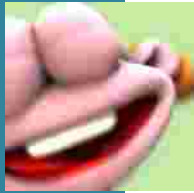
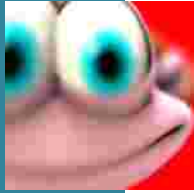
We stand at a critical point in history. There have never been more children in the world. Over recent decades they have been born at a rate faster than in all of history. We have a lot of great ministries serving children, we have many models of great ministry. Regardless, 1 billion children have never heard of Jesus. Most of the 2 billion have little opportunity to follow him and be disciplined.

- If we could dream big enough – what would we do to change the situation?
- If we could get the Christian leaders of the world together, what would we give them to serve children?
- If we were willing to do what it took to reach 2 billion children, what would that be?
- If, instead of focusing on the 'limited' resources our agency has, we ask "what if God HAS given us as his body on earth every resource it needs to get the job done?" Then, look critically at how we have used those resources – what would change?
- If we seriously consider everything it takes to not just share the gospel with children, but ensure access to child-friendly and culturally-appropriate churches and discipleship – how would that look globally when approximately 70% of the world's two and a half million churches lack resources to disciple children?

All this seems impossible, yet Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and make disciples. There is no way that the job can be done, if children are not at the top of the agenda. They are the most fruitful mission field, they have most of their lives to serve the task and they are the only ones keeping in step with population growth. There is no area of the global church that has more potential to do what it takes to impact world mission and discipleship than that of children's ministry.

It has already been stated in a simple video that a key answer for the church lies in 4 easy steps – Aim Lower, Think Smaller, Give Up and Go have a Cup of Coffee. Aim at a lower age (children), think about training smaller leaders (children and teens), give up building structures and organizations at the expense of building the Kingdom and go have a cup of coffee to remind us that mission is about relationships, partnership and being part of a global body of Christ. Start partnering with others and see how you can serve another part of the body of Christ OUTSIDE your local church. These are the first steps towards changing the world.

There are four other positive action steps you as a denomination or agency can take today that will begin the seismic paradigm shift required to see the job done ... see over.



#### RELEASE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FOR THE KINGDOM

1. Consider tithing a portion of your agency's intellectual property to be released globally to help equip leaders in their task of serving children. Maybe start with one resource now and grow the contribution each year. This may be discipleship or evangelistic material, research and data, media content (Bible videos), trainers or training material, children's Bible translations or company 'secrets'. It is time we equipped the whole body of Christ with the tools needed to accomplish the Great Commission.

Can it work? There is a global children's ministry model that demonstrates this in action. Begun less than 10 years ago, it serves as a children's ministry model that is serving 5 million children and it is growing fast. It took just a few thousand computer discs given freely and without restriction to be copied and copied and shared and they are now in the hands of leaders in every country on earth.

#### RELEASE YOUR SKILLS AND SECRETS FOR THE KINGDOM

2. Consider the Pattaya Scale. Fulfill your agency's calling well AND equip other agencies with the skills you have. The Pattaya Scale is a global tool being developed to help reflect on the question of what it would mean to reach every child on earth. It takes many disciples and participating as a leader. No one agency can do the job alone and we need each other.

India is the nation with the most children on earth. While the Indian picture is not complete, it serves as a model of many agencies working together from spreading the gospel through mass-media, planting churches in homes where no traditional churches have existed, in running sports outreach and ministry across hundreds of cities, in providing discipleship through mail and letters and in developing discipleship materials.

#### RELEASE STAFF AND TIME FOR THIS VISION

3. The Global Children's Forum was formed in 2008 to begin to tackle these massive global challenges. The changes are coming, but it will take the momentum and energy of all to provide the tipping point. This cannot be a part-time vision. Staff need to be released to interact often with the movement, and provide input to see it grow. This is not a bandwagon – it is an emergency.

#### RELEASE THE CREATIVITY AND ENERGY OF AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA AND THE PACIFIC

4. The real answers are most likely to come from children themselves and from leaders in non-Western nations. We need to let go of traditional paradigms, and control and mentor and raise up leaders from across the world.

Have we been thinking too small? Are there other ways of partnering within the body of Christ that would allow the 'blood' to flow more freely? Isn't it time to reshape our structures and leadership so that children and teenagers are released and empowered to follow Jesus and serve his people with their God-given passion and gifts. It is time to take seriously the implications of the upside-down Kingdom of Jesus where it is the child who is the key to understanding the Kingdom.

Can you imagine how many more children could discover the love of God and become his followers?

**What have we got to lose?**

**What are we set to gain?**

MAYBE you and I have been put where we are, like Esther was, and to see and hear these things ...  
... for such a time as this.

This paper serves as a discussion starter.

Global Children's Forum

