

Newsworthy

A NEWSLETTER OF THE HCD INSTITUTE
Connecting you to children advocacy and development



Newsworthy is an electronic publication of the HCD Institute containing news and information about our work and also the fellowship of the student alumni. It is published three times per year in English.

For information, contact:
HCD Institute (MBTS)
40 AD, Mukim 17, Batu Ferringhi
11100 Penang, Malaysia
Tel/Fax: +6 04 8812462
E-mail: hcd.institute@gmail.com
Website: www.mbts.net.my

The Holistic Child Development (HCD) Institute of the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) is a department for training, research and networking in holistic ministries to children. We seek to transform and enable the Church to do child advocacy and development through Christian-based theological education, research and awareness raising. The Seminary is part of the Global Alliance for Advancing Holistic Child Development, a network of theological institutions seeking to promote HCD programs worldwide.

In this issue

Kohlberg and the Slumdog Millionaire

Most of us have seen or at least heard of the 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire*. Have you ever wondered why children in the slums think and act as they do? One of our HCD students gives us a picture of how children in the slums of Dhaka develop their moral thinking.

Praise the Lord for our graduates of 2009!

Celebrate with us the recent graduation of our students in the Holistic Child Development program at certificate, diploma and master levels.

Goku and the Image of God

According to research, children build their images of god from their childhood experiences. In this interview, 7 years old Tseveenjav from Mongolia compares his image of Jesus with his favorite superhero.

HCD courses in 2010

Interested to increase your knowledge and improve your skills in children's ministry? We have the program for you. Call us at the HCD Institute.



A few words...

Dear friends,

Greetings!

As the editorial team deliberates on the 2010 issues for *Newsworthy*, we thought it would be interesting to share portions of the assignments submitted by our HCD students. In this issue, David Adhikary from Bangladesh addressed the moral development of slum children in Dhaka while Byambat from Mongolia wrote about the image of God from a child's perspective. Both articles were edited for your reading.

Enjoy this issue and as usual, we hope to hear from you.

Rosalind Lim-Tan

Director, HCD Institute

For a better reading experience, we suggest you view this copy in Full Screen mode. To do so, go to View in your Adobe Reader (or similar PDF reader) and select Full Screen Mode.

Kohlberg and the Slumdog Millionaire

MORAL reasoning is said to be the basis for ethical behavior. But how does one's moral reasoning develop? How do people justify their actions if placed in a moral dilemma?

According to American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987), there are six stages of moral development in people. In this article, David Adhikary attempts to apply Kohlberg's theory to the moral development of children living in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Stage 1: Children perceive a certain act as 'bad' because they are punished for it. The intensity of the punishment depends on the gravity of the act. While parents or even strangers in the slums generally punish children for 'bad' behavior (making noise, creating a racket, being naughty, etc.), they hardly punish them for moral wrongdoings. A common practice has been that illiterate parents often appreciate the child for bringing home stolen goods!

Stage 2: Children behave in a manner defined by whatever they think is in their best interest ("what's in it for me?"). They may show limited awareness of the needs, thoughts and intentions of others, but they

still judge reciprocity as appropriate ("tit for tat"). Slum children do better in this stage than other stages. In spite of cases of betrayal, they generally tend to return favor for favor. For example, they will generously share their food with those who act likewise. Similarly, those who treat them with kindness can expect to receive better treatment than those who are mean to them.

Stage 3: Children need affirmation from their caregivers. The children's moral behavior is highly impacted by the responses they receive from the caregivers. They desire to please those who are closest to them. Regrettably, children in the slums hardly receive compliment from their caregivers because such culture is not practiced in the slums. At the same time, their bitter and harsh experiences in the slums tend to obstruct their personal sense of value and relationship.

Stage 4: Children judge moral actions by laws, regulations and other normative social orders. But children in the slums are frequently exposed to a 'normative scenario' of neighborhood fights, foul language, abusive behaviors and hunger. These children have to abide by another set



Life for children in slum areas has never been a picnic. (Photo from the 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire*, winner of the Academy Awards for Best Picture)

of laws to survive in such a harsh environment. The law of the slums is the survival of the fittest! Thus, stealing from others is not judged as morally wrong as long as no one sees them doing it.

Stages 5 and 6: Unfortunately, most children in the slums never attain Stages 5 (moral reasoning dictated by human rights) and 6 (universal human ethics) in their moral development. The deploring and ever challenging environment of the slums does not really encourage them to consider the idea of personal rights, freedom, and conscience. Since they experience hardship on an almost daily basis, there is limited option for them to advance to the next developmental stage.

While Kohlberg's theory comfortably explains and assess the moral reasoning of children in normative settings,

we do injustice if we apply the same rules to children living in the slums. These children are at a great disadvantage where the family and community culture do not support positive development. In the context of the slum communities in Dhaka, it will be an uphill task to nurture a decent generation of children with commendable moral consciousness unless their environment is suitably transformed. Hence, implementing Kohlberg's moral developmental stages in the lives of children in the slums will continue to remain the biggest challenge for children ministries in Bangladesh.

This article is a condensed and edited version of an original paper by David Adhikary, an HCD student from Bangladesh.

Praise the Lord for our graduates of 2009!



Diploma in Child Studies graduates: Ah Lu Mee (left) and Zin Zin Mai (right)



Master of Arts in Holistic Child Development graduates (from left): Blossom Eileen Phillips (Singapore), Rensius Sinaga (Indonesia), and Yohanes Adidjaja (Indonesia). Paul O'Rourke (Australia) is not pictured.

GRADUATION is a time of celebration, thanksgiving and dedication for those who have completed a program of academic study. On Nov 13, 2009, 74 students graduated from the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS). The 54th Graduation Service held at Kompleks Masyarakat Penyayang, Penang was well attended. Of the graduates, seventeen persons were from the Holistic Child Development program (eleven at certificate level, two at diploma level, and four at master level).

Diploma in Child Studies graduates Ah Lu Mee and Zin Zin Mai came from the Shan Highlands in Myanmar to study at MBTS in 2007. The time of learning and equipping for ministry to children has been a meaningful experience for them. In spite of the challenges of coping

with a different culture and studying in another language, both were nevertheless thankful for the encouragement and support from lecturers, staff, and fellow students.

Ah Lu Mee said, "I've been blessed so much at MBTS. I am indeed grateful to God for His guidance and provision and also thankful to those who have supported me in many different ways during my time at MBTS." Zin Zin Mai happily concurred, "I really appreciate what MBTS has done for me, I learnt and experienced that God has a unique purpose for everyone."

Ah Lu Mee is now serving at an orphanage in Pyin Oo Lwin while Zin Zin Mai returns to the children's ministry at St Matthew's Kachin Baptist Church. We pray that all of our graduates may adjust well to their ministry roles and find great favor with God and the community.



Certificate in Child Studies graduates (second from left): Ng Yean Hat, Chan Wei Wei, Cheng Yeong Yik, Ho Ai Ling, Lim Bee Lee, Ng Chow Wai; (from right): Saw Guan Hee, Tan Huai Ru, Tan Choon Li, Thang Siang Ying. Corina Lee Ai Nee is not pictured.

Others in the picture: BTh graduate Chloe Fu Ka Wai (far left) has attended most of the Child Studies classes; HCD Institute staff Tryphena Chin (fifth from right).

Goku and the Image of God

HOW and why do people come to perceive God the way they do? Psychologist and author of 'Image of the Living God' Ana-Maria Rizzuto believes that children build their images of god from a variety of sources, one of which is their childhood experiences. In this article, Byambatesern from Mongolia shares a story of a young boy and his image of God.

Tseveenjav entered school when he was 7 years old. The teacher was always angry with him because he had difficulty understanding the lessons and could not catch up with the other children in the class. He did not like to be shouted at by the teacher, so he stopped going to school.

Among his many favorite cartoon heroes, Tseveenjav likes Goku best. Goku is the main hero of the *Dragonball* cartoon series. Tseveenjav said that Goku is very strong and powerful; he gets his power from the sky. Goku's father is also very powerful and that too is the reason why Goku is powerful.

I asked Tseveenjav who is more powerful, Goku or Jesus? At first he answered "Goku." Then he changed his mind and said, "Jesus is more powerful."

I asked him to explain himself. He answered, "I heard in church that Jesus died on the cross but after three day he rose from the dead. If Goku dies, he probably will not rise."

I asked him where did Jesus gets his powers from: "Is it from the sky like Goku?" Tseveenjav laughed. "Jesus does not need that power," he said. "It is already in him."

It was most interesting to see how this young boy made the connection between God and his favorite hero Goku. In our HCD class, we say this is theological reflection!

Byambatesern is an HCD student from Mongolia.



HCD courses in 2010 (last updated Oct 27, 2009)

DATES	MODULE ONE (Core)	MODULE TWO (Core)	MODULE THREE
June 7-11	Child, Church & Mission by Dan Brewster	Theological Foundations of Holistic Child Development by Keith White	Leadership & Management in Children's Organization (Elective) by Toyditz Cosico
June 14-18	Childhoods in Cultural Contexts by Keith White	Children's Agency: Protection & Participation by Glenn Miles	Children & Spirituality (Elective) by Rosalind Lim-Tan
June 21-25	Poverty & Marginalization of Children by Thomas Swaroop	Self-Care for Caregivers by Grace Lim	HCD Colloquium (For HCD students only) by Dan Brewster
June 28 – July 2	Child Development & Functioning in Families & Communities by Rosalind Lim-Tan	Intervention Strategies in Holistic Child Development by Menchit Wong	HCD Integration (For HCD students only) by Sunny Tan