

**‘EQUIPPED TO IMPACT A CONTINENT?’ A
DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PETRA COLLEGE’S
MODEL TO EQUIP AND MOBILISE CHRISTIAN
LEADERS FOR CHILDREN’S MINISTRY IN AFRICA**

by

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Summary of dissertation

In this study a contextual training model for developing leaders in ministry to children is investigated. The training model offers a dynamic training process for the development of effective leadership for the African Church and other Christian organizations in the field of children's ministries. The aim of these children's ministries would be to see holistically developed God fearing children in Africa.

This study provided an opportunity to ask deeper questions about one's assumptions on prevailing concepts about children, children ministries, leadership training, African philosophy and what is meant by contextual training models.

The complexity of Africa, its people and the challenges for the future are evident from this study. It can be concluded that it is possible and necessary to train effective Christian leadership for children's ministries.

To develop effective leadership in the field of children's ministries could prove to be one of the long term answers to the pressing needs of Africa and its people. The model serves the statement "equipped to impact the continent"

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Key terms:

Contextual; Leadership; Relational training; Children's ministry; Equipping; African; African philosophy; Model; Leadership development; African Church; Practical Theology; Children; Holistic; Culture; Dynamic process; Partnership; Mentorship.

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Chapter 1

A theoretical basis for the development of the research project

1.1 Orientation

Petra College (formerly Child Evangelism Training Institute) has been involved in training children's workers in Africa since 1989. During this time, the College has developed a number of contextual models for training these workers.

Because of its historical development processes, Petra College has been exposed to various levels of the Christian community in Africa. Because of its focus on training, Petra College is extremely interested in the role and models to be used by the church and missionary organisations in training workers for children's ministries. From a strategic point of view, Petra College believes that a church's or organisation's strategy and training program could render the most strategic input in addressing children's needs and ministering to them. The main objective of specialised training in children's ministry is to impact the lives of children in Africa, which could have a profound effect on communities and governments in which Christians may come into power as future leaders.

Visits to many countries in Africa and consulting various ministry leaders has convinced the researcher that reaching and influencing children depends to a great extent on strong church leadership and its understanding of children's ministries. It would appear, however, that the advancement of ministries directed at reaching children using theological training models has very low priority. This is evident in existing children's ministries in the church, missionary organisations and Christian communities in Africa generally. The apparent absence of effective training programs for children's ministry in theological seminaries, training institutes, and Bible schools in Africa presents the serious challenge of changing the situation positively.

Although most theological training programs in Africa focus on Christian education, they do not offer models that could help children's workers, pastors, and missionaries to effectively plan, address and manage the spiritual and developmental needs of children. Another negative phenomenon is the minimal interest on the part of researchers in the children of Africa, their needs, both perceived and real, and the ways in which these problems could be addressed from a Christian perspective to effect positive change in the societies in which the children live. There is, therefore, a definite challenge, as well as a serious need to research the possible impact of effective ministry to children in the four major contexts of the home, the community, the church, and the school. The value and impact of these four influential areas on pressing social needs could offer the world, Africa in particular, a message of hope.

A training model focusing on the development of leadership has been developed and implemented by Petra College. The model must be tested empirically and described if the Church in Africa, particularly its children, is to benefit. The model is not deemed unique in any way, and other training models in the field of children's ministries have possibly been developed in recent years. One can refer to ministries in RSA like Child Evangelism Fellowship R.S.A, Huguenot College RSA, Ed Coburn's ministries near Magaliesburg, Scripture Union, etc. Within the International context one will look at role players within Africa like Kidzana from USA, New Life Foundation in Tanzania, Compassion International Tanzania, World Relief Mozambique, Child Evangelism Fellowship USA, Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Ethiopia, Kale Haywet Church of Ethiopia etc. that are engaged in training of children's workers. Such models might even contribute to meeting the children's needs effectively. Those models receive attention in the present study when the training models that we are aware of, or those that are available as concrete models, are considered.

1.2 Description of the problem area

For the first nine years after it was founded, Petra College concentrated on training children's workers who could minister the Gospel effectively to children. The College was convinced from the outset that if a country's needs, for example, during/after war, were to be addressed, the best thing to do, considering the abject poverty experienced virtually throughout Africa, is to reach and influence the children by means of a Christian input. Some of these children may become the future leaders of their particular countries. Petra College's core beliefs about children are rooted in the Biblical basis for children's ministry (see Deut. 4:6, 31: Ps 78: Matt. 18, *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, 1996). These references indicate a Biblical command to reach children with the word of God (DCM module1:1999). The exposition of Scriptures like Matthew 18:1-14, Psalm 78 and Deuteronomy 4, 6, and 31 point to a specific theological understanding that God included children as partakers in faith and its practices (NLT: 1996). This provided the motivation to take up the challenges and engage the needs existing in the field of children's ministries. The greatest challenge was to develop a ministry to children that would be both effective and contextual. The overwhelming needs in Africa impact literally millions of children. The UNICEF 2002 report estimates that by 2010 the sub-Saharan countries will have about 50 million orphaned children, presenting Petra College with as many reasons to reach those children with the good news of hope and restoration.

The results of previous training efforts proved that, with Petra College's existing approach to training, very little impact had been realised in the countries that were already engaged. Although very substantial work had been done and encouraging results had stemmed from Petra College's input, it remained localised and in effect had managed to reach only immediate communities. It was realised that training should be spread out in an effort to reach more children's workers at grass roots level so that, hopefully, the ministry would burgeon to include work on the national and even international scale. The most strategic

approach was to adopt the multiplication model of training aimed at development of leadership which is linked to a mentorship process. (Hull, 1988; Clinton, 2005 : iii)). The limited available resources brought the realisation that the College would have to strategise in order to accomplish its vision and mission.

The strategic training approach chosen was one of partnership development and leadership development (Petra College, *Strategic Training Document*, 2004). The focus on establishing partnerships ensured that the leaders to be developed were chosen more carefully. This, in turn, ensured a more strategic leadership, which was supported by both Petra College and the partner organisation/church. Leadership training was part of the early vision, but the early training models did not support the dream of raising an effective leadership for the ministry. During its first ten years of existence, Petra College trained many children's ministry workers, but only a few of them achieved leadership positions that could have an impact on children's ministries on a larger scale. The few leaders who did impact on communities were leaders of special calibre who succeeded because of their natural abilities and other inputs rather than on account of an effective training program which is linked to Petra College. Another charge that may be levelled at Petra College is the fact that there was little consideration for the academic development of leaders.

In 1997, Petra College realised that their training strategy and models were due for revision. One of the main challenges the College had to face was to contextualise the content of study material and the training model. This exercise developed into an intensive research and development process that lasted for a considerable time. For the past three years, Petra College's training efforts have focused more on the development of leaders in the field of children's ministry. The leadership development programs have helped expose Petra College to the real situations in most African countries, and this exposure has become the resource for understanding these countries' needs. It has also provided information vital to the strategy for relevant and effective training inputs. With

regular visits to about 22 countries in Africa, the researcher has been able to formulate the following observations:

- Children's ministry workers have a very low status in the Church and communities in general.
- In the cultural traditions of most communities, children are not highly regarded.
- Most children grow up in disorderly societies where no real or constructive solutions exist pertaining to social and national problems like the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, corruption, wars, violence, and other social problems.
- The churches apparently have no definite vision and place for children as active members of the church.
- Models for training workers in children's ministry are virtually non-existent in the formal church community in Africa and in the majority of mission organisations working in Africa.
- Existing training models give very little attention, if any, to developing leadership in the field of children's ministry.
- Theological training institutes do not focus on training leadership in children's ministry. A subject like Christian education, for instance, is taught at most theological seminaries and Biblical study institutes/colleges, but there is scant reference to ways of impacting children in a practical manner as part of church activities.

1.3 The value of and need for this study.

This study could present a strategic solution for an unacceptable phenomenon. Statistics and statements released by Institutes and NGO's like UNICEF, World Relief, Compassion International, Viva Network and World Vision suggests that children in Africa are suffering. The sufferings come in the form of child abuse,

child slavery, child prostitution, etc. (UNICEF, State,2000 p.72,74). From a Christian perspective one expected that the Church and Christian communities would play an important role in addressing the critical issues that causes these proposed sufferings. Engaging the church leadership in Africa convinced the researcher that the Church has a dilemma concerning their children. The critical shortage of well equipped children ministry workers and leaders present the church with a major challenge. This is evident from the researcher's and other children ministry trainers/facilitator's regular visits to more than 28 countries during the last four years, as well as the fact that the College has not, as yet, been able to answer urgent requests for training from 15 other countries. Statistics show that the significant percentage of approximately 44% of the current population of Africa is under the age of 15 years (UNICEF, 2002). Considering serious negative factors like HIV/AIDS, poverty, violence, moral collapse and abuse, all of which are affecting children negatively, it should be presumed that a serious need exists and that dramatic intervention and help are overdue. An overview of a 2002 world report by UNICEF will help to highlight the desperate situation of the children in the world (UNICEF, 2002, *World Report*).

The researcher is convinced that a well-developed training strategy, with effective leadership development models, will present a long-term solution that will benefit Africa as a whole. Furthermore, he also believes that children's ministry within the field of religious education is a very important aspect of Practical Theology which needs to be researched. Both the children and the children's workers are impacted by theology and the environment in which they live. The presumed crisis in Africa's communities asks for faith intervention, which will formulate an action theory based on theology as well as on praxis. The place of faith and theology as discussed by A. G. van Wyk (1995) in the article *From Applied Theology to Practical Theology* may contribute to an understanding of the relationship between this dissertation on leadership training and theology. Another possibility is that the training model described here answers not only the 'how' of the training actions, but also the 'what' and 'why' of the praxis in relation

to theology. This would place the subject area within the field of Practical Theology.

The researcher did not try to approach this dissertation from a theoretical understanding of either Practical Theology or formal Theology. This study includes both disciplines in a very unique way. Should the study have been approached from the perspective of Systematic Theology, more time would have been spent on exegesis in order to link the training model to a particular understanding of particular Scriptures, for example, Matthew 18:1-14, or Deuteronomy 4:6. This would have validated an approach to the particular training model. If, on the other hand, the study had been approached from the viewpoint of Practical Theology alone, a theory would have been formulated which would have had to be tested. This being so, the study would have relied mainly on case studies in order to describe the model and the impact of the training model on church and community life. The approach to this study is, instead, to attempt to understand the implications of theology in community and church life. It is a case where theology is brought to the communities and church in practical way. In Scripture, there is a particular understanding of how God views children and the communities in which they live (Celebrating Children, 2003. p. 18 – 39). This motivates Christians to take up their responsibilities of engaging the needs of the children in the various communities. The same Christian values that are aimed at children are also relevant for the leaders who have to be developed. Practical Theology, in this study, is used to find ways of serving the spiritual needs of leaders and the children of Africa as presented in the Scriptures. It requires an understanding of the meaning and impact of God's view, and the practical models employed, if the spiritual and other needs of the church and communities, with their children, are to be addressed.

In this study the educational, philosophical, theological, social, and human science fields of study are engaged. The scientific field of Practical Theology appears ideal for exploring and exploiting the fields of understanding of the

movement and for proceeding from theory to applied Practical Theology. The researcher followed in this study to a great extent the method of phenomenological research. (De Vos :267)

In approaching the research project in the present study, it was of the utmost importance to avoid some of the common pitfalls encountered when dealing with models consisting of techniques, philosophy, and processes. The researcher noted the following comment by Charles Silberman (Peterson, 1986:14) describing the problem in the field of education: '*our educational milieu suffers from mindlessness*'. This seems to level the charge that technique is uncritically praised to the detriment of understanding and progress in achieving goals. Petra College also had to contend with this danger, but this gave rise to the belief that sound educational practices cannot proceed without clearly-defined theory. Practice can 'test' a theory and validate or invalidate educational concepts and proposals. The process of evaluating training models will expose us to a variety of disciplines and could contribute to the establishment of theological practices.

1.4 The problem statement

Petra College has some valuable models and literature that focus on leadership and skills development from a Christian perspective (*Serving as a Leader, Managing a Children's Ministry*, Unit standards C0402, C0403, 2005). The challenge is, however, to see whether this material could contribute to a change in developing effective leaders for children's ministries. The latest 'buzzword' in the evangelism efforts of church and missionary organisations is 'leadership training' and 'mentorship'. It appears, however, that much research and development still have to be carried out in these particular fields. This is because there is a lack of clarity as to what each model means by 'leadership training', or 'mentoring', especially within the Christian context. The researcher observed some important trends in leadership training.

The Christian leadership training models encountered in Africa have much in common as training models primarily aimed to empower leaders to become more 'holy' (character formation). One can refer to training models like the Samaritan Strategy, CORAT Leadership Training from Kenya, etc. TOPIC Southern Africa (2006:4) states in their mission statement "to intentionally accelerate the ministry development of millions of pastoral leaders in contexts where the explosive growth of the Church demands it. What then should be the focus of the content of the leadership training models within the Christian context? The general intention is apparently to raise the learners to a higher spiritual level, the 'Be' part, while very little attention is placed on the skills that would empower them to 'Do' the leading effectively in practice. Further, very little thought is given to the philosophical base for processes, policies and practices in the leadership training models. The outcomes in general appear to target adults as beneficiaries of input for the benefit of the church or organisational goals.

Existing leadership training models in church programs focuses on the immediate needs of the church. Major themes are evangelism training, discipleship programs and other contextual ministry related topics. Formal training of leaders for the children ministries seems to be very scarce. Children is possibly be seen as a future asset – the researcher refers to many discussions with pastors over many years - whilst adults are the "now" contributors to the needs of the church. Therefore, training of children's workers does not seem to receive the same attention as other groups within the church. The low priority that plenary meetings on children ministry workgroups receive at international consultations seems to suggest this observation. This is also evident in the great number of para-church organisations that is involved with children. Virtually all of the 50 contributors to the training manual 'Celebrating Children' (Miles and Wright :2003), contributed as representatives from other organisations and not from the formal or institutional church (denominations). They do exist because the church in the past seems not to be able to respond as church to the needs for children.

Patrick McDonald (Celebrating Children: 2003:xv) states that there are today 25000 service – providing projects that reach some 20 million children worldwide. It appears however that at this point in time, the church as body of Christ is getting more and more involved. Patrick McDonald also said 'The training and equipping of workers is pivotal to the success of the church' (Celebrating Children: 2003:xv)

Furthermore, very little research material on children and the Christian religion from an African perspective exists. One of the most significant contributions came from Mwamwenda, in his book 'Educational psychology'. His research focussed on challenging a number of important issues and perceptions related to the African child (Mwamwenda, 1989). The aspect of Christianity and the child was however not dealt with. The publisher of the works of Mugambi (1989) stated the challenge by suggesting that 'During the second half of the twentieth century African Christianity has grown tremendously in terms of numerical strength. However, this numerical growth has not been matched with as much publication of theological texts by African scholars'. (Mugambi, 1989:editorial introduction). Even less material is available on either Christian leadership in Africa or the results of effective leadership in the context of children's ministries. There is also very little development in the field of leadership training models focusing on ministry to children. The currently available models encountered in Africa appear to be based on Western cultural stereotypes. The Western-based children ministry training models have what seems to be good content but seem to fail to produce competent leaders equipped to make a difference in African societies and especially the children's life world. One can ask the questions about the existence of contemporary writings in articles and books from Africa on children and ministry to children? What about materials on training of children ministry leaders that is contextual for Africa? Who are the academics and theologians that represent Africa and the children of Africa? There exists, therefore, a serious need for leadership training programs focusing on children's ministry. Developing

leaders using an effective training model can be seen as a strategic move to change the practice as it stands.

1.5 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study, then, is to describe the training model used by Petra College and then to propose a contextual, creative, and effective approach towards Christian leadership development that can effectively address the needs of children in Africa. It would be expedient to use the same approach to test Petra College's assumptions in terms of the effectiveness and results of their training model. This scope of this study does not allow a content examination of all the study units available at Petra College, but will focus specifically on the strategic approach to training with the focus on leadership development. It would, therefore, be necessary to describe and interpret the proposed leadership-training model to be used in developing and empowering the Christian community in Africa to influence the pressing problems in society. This study could also produce new insights into existing undesirable phenomena.

The following questions need to be answered in response to the assumption that an effective leadership development process linked to ministry to children will impact the existing phenomena:

- Is it possible and necessary to train Christian leaders for children's ministry in Africa ?
- can the low status of children's workers in Africa be raised to match that of their counterparts in other professions through good leadership development ?;
- is leadership training a strategic move in changing the view, value, and role of children in African communities; and
- will an effective leadership-development process result in effective ministry to children in Africa ? Will an effective ministry to children, impact

on children and bring hope and a long-term solution to most of the pressing social problems in many countries ? Answers to such an assumption could also prove the value and place of Christianity as a basic theory for this study.

1.6 Theory and conceptual framework

In the process of formulating theory, insights from the social sciences, psychology, philosophy, business studies, and practical theology in particular will be taken into account. The approach will be qualitative and the research will include participative observation, modelling of leadership training, field research, and the description of the training model, memos and interviews (Bryman, PTH 420, 2003). The research strategy or research design chosen is that of phenomenology with some reference to ethnography. Creswell (1998) regards a phenomenological study as a study that describes the meaning that experiences of a phenomenon; topic or concept has for various individuals. (de Vos: 2002:273). In this study the researcher uses the various experiences of different role players in different countries to explain and interpret the phenomena under discussion. He also used his personal visits, discussions and observations to analyse and interpret the phenomena under research. The research methodology of ethnography is defined by Creswell (1998:246) as the study of an intact cultural or social group based primarily on observations over a prolonged period of time spend by the researcher in the field (de Vos 2002:274). In this case the researcher took in account the contextual and cultural influences on the phenomena related to the specific people groups that Petra College engaged over the last 13 years in training inputs. Visiting different countries and different regions in Africa over a period of 13 years helped the researcher gain better understanding of particular cultural and social influences on the phenomenon under research. The choices made by the researcher reflect both an empirical-confessional line of thinking and the importance of context (Burger, 1991).

The case studies used are from countries where Petra College has already been engaged in children's ministry training and leadership training for a period of two to five years and where some effect of the ministry to children is measurable in terms of developed leadership. Each of the models that are used illustrates an aspect of the success or failure of the different training models and methodology implemented by Petra College during different phases. The case studies are also intended to reflect on the development process of Petra College's leadership training model through the various trials and errors over the years. The phenomena that emerged from the case studies were supported by the interviews with prominent children ministry leaders from 6 different countries. These leaders were from Gabon, Togo, DRC, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sudan

The countries that have been selected for the case studies represent Mozambique, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Tanzania. The researcher chose the particular countries as each case study reflects on important aspects that contributed to the development of the Petra College leadership training model and process.

Mozambique offers the story of one person in a specific ministry who was influenced by and developed through the earlier Petra College processes. This is the story of one good leader who affects a large community directly and the continent indirectly. The apparent effectiveness can be seen as a result of a good leadership development program that relied on various inputs from different role players and processes. It was therefore not only a result of the effectiveness of the Petra College input alone but rather a combination of inputs that depended on different mentors at different stages (Baloy :2005 Interview).

Ethiopia yields the story of a partnership in which one of the partner's leaders was developed as a ministry leader for the children's ministry. The effect of this training process had an impact on the leadership of a large church denomination and resulted in millions of children being reached more effectively. There is also

a very intensive training program in process with many children ministry leaders that is involved across the country. This success story is closely linked to the combination of the former and existing Petra College leadership development model.

Madagascar presents us with the story of two children's workers who were trained in children's ministry by Petra College. They, in turn, managed to train over a thousand children's workers, but could not influence the church leadership in the field of children's ministries. To date, they have failed to multiply their function. This story reflects on the failure of Petra College through its former strategic approach and lack of a good leadership development program.

Tanzania focuses on a new training process based on a recent strategic approach to training. It serves as a model for the College's current formal strategic approach in recruiting and equipping leaders for the ministry to children.

1.7 Definitions

In this section, the researcher defines some of the key concepts in this research. He has selected concepts that clarify important meanings and contribute to a better understanding of this dissertation. Most of the definitions are only an expression of the researcher's personal understanding of such a word or concept. Where other sources contribute to understanding, references have been made.

- **Training model:** Bailey (1994:322) defines a model as a copy, replica or analogy that differs from the real thing in some way. Kerlinger (1986:167 – 168) sees a model as an abstract outline specifying hypothesised relations in a set of data. Mouton and Marais (1990: 139 -144) argue, however that the heuristic or discovering function is the most common characteristic of models, while the explanatory function is usually

attributed to theories (De Vos: 42 – 43). The researcher would include in this definition the philosophy of the training approach, the curriculum design, the context of the training and the process of training (methodology).

- **Christian Leader:** in the biblical context, a person with a God-given capacity and a God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God's people toward His purpose for the group (Clinton:1988:245). Petra College includes in this definition someone identified by the church/organisation as suitable for carrying out the responsibility of implementing and managing a children's ministry (Petra College Strategic document : 2004) Leroy Eims define a leader as 'one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see, and who sees before others do' (Maxwell, 1998:37).
- **Children's work or ministry:** Malherbe defines it as a holistic approach to working with children, aimed at reaching them with the word of God and empowering them to live meaningful, fulfilled lives and to impact positively on their environment. It can also be described as an interaction with children aimed at enjoying and responding in faith to the love of God as expressed in Jesus Christ (Malherbe 2003:2). The input is related to the children's phases of growth and understanding. The target group is 0 – 14 year-olds.
- **Children's worker:** Patrick McDonald refers to a children's worker as a pseudo – parent, who establishes close relationships with children under his/her care (Miles and Wright, 2003:157). It can also be described as someone who works with the children at grassroots level and who has been trained in the basics of children's ministry. Such a person will represent the community and may be anyone from an uneducated villager to a professional.
- **African context:** an environment related to a specific group of people in a specific country in Africa, including their relevant history, customs, social structures and needs. Van der Walt (1997:77) refers to traditional Africa

versus the modern West in explaining the difference between Western- and African context.

- **Culture:** the customs, beliefs, art and traditions of a particular group of people in a specific Christian community (O' Donovan, 1992, 1995, 2000:265-273). Van der Walt (1997:12) states that "Religion and worldview as well as society, politics, economics etc. are simply different aspects we call culture"
- **Christian:** a Christ-centred person who believes that the Bible is God's Word. This would refer to the qualification Romans 8:9b of having the Spirit of Christ and then following a lifestyle reflecting that Spirit, according to Galatians 5:16.
- **Learning:** the life-long process by means of which faith and values are integrated into practical Christian living and which brings both honour to God and joy and hope to the world (Malherbe, 2003:3).
- **Mentor:** a leader in the field of children's ministry who has developed to the stage where he or she can, as an expert in children's ministry, assume the role of mentoring someone else to become even more effective than the mentor. Such a person will also be able to assume the role of manager for a specific ministry. (Petra College Strategic document:2004)
- **Mentoring:** Is a relational experience in which one person, the mentor, empowers another person, the mentoree, by a transfer of resources. (Clinton, 2005:5)
- **Paradigm:** is the fundamental model or frame of reference we use to organise our observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2001:42). Creswell(1998:74) equates a paradigm with a world view, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guides their enquires.
- **Partnership:** a church/organisation that engages with Petra College in a strategic agreement with mutual commitments to a training process for leaders who have already been identified.
- **First World:** generally referred to as the 'West'. Here, it implies a first-world context as opposed to a third-world context. In this dissertation 'third

world' refers to Africa and other developing countries around the world. Sherwood, 2003:9, says "western or first world trained may encompass North Americans, Europeans, Koreans or Japanese".

1.8 Presuppositions

The researcher distinguishes between two philosophies in education. The first is the 'traditional school model'. This model represents the pedagogical model of teaching. The second is the 'development model'. This model can be described as the androgical, or experiential, model of education (Kayser, 1997: 20). The focus here is on the experiential level of education. The researcher's choice of philosophy is the androgical approach, which is based on the following presuppositions (Kayser, 1997:1 – 20):

- Leaders in the field of children's ministry should be developed towards being (spiritually alive), towards knowing (cognitively informed) and also towards doing (skills-empowered).
- Leaders should be seen as unique individuals and should be treated as such. They need to be developed towards reaching their greatest potential, according to their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Training means growth of the person as a whole, including knowledge, spirituality, life skills, and other specialised fields.
- People learn in different ways, a reality that should be taken into consideration when considering the learning process.
- Training can be adapted to be effective in any context.
- Trainers are primarily facilitators of the learning process. They are not superior conveyors of knowledge. They may specialise in certain fields, but will use their specialised knowledge to guide students/learners to the level of teachers/trainers.
- In training, the focus should be on the process rather than on the content.

- Context represents the particular realities of a community as they exist now.
- Culture is the representation of the worldview or shift in worldview of a group of people. The heart of every culture reflects a body of ethics and the distinctions between good and evil, which are found in revealed religion. According to Saint Augustine, 'culture' is the outworking of a people's creed or the temporal manifestation of a people's faith (Samaritan Strategy, 2004: Part ii; George Grant in *The Micah Mandate* Chicago: Moody Press, 1995: 218).

1.9 Practicality of the study

It was possible for this study to be carried out successfully because:

- The needs in African contexts make a study of this nature essential. It reflects on the state of the Church. Further, pressing social needs necessitated such a study for the sake of Africa.
- The researcher is involved in various strategic training processes in Africa, so has wide access to role-players, churches, organisations, and communities in Africa where the tenets and results of the study may be favourably implemented.
- Petra College has access to various theological training institutes, models and leaders in churches and organisations in Africa.
- The College also specialises in and develops training models in specialised fields of children's ministry, such as early childhood, children's ministry, and traumatised children.
- Petra College is respected for its experience and expertise in the field of children's ministry.

1.10 Potential limitations

This study presented many challenges. The following factors affected it:

- The wide choice of countries to use in research made it difficult to choose those that represent different training models.
- The cost and time factors could have limited the research.
- Leadership development will always be difficult to measure in the short term.
- The effect of the leadership program on communities is also not a short-term outcome. The challenge for such a research project is to find a scientific and reputable set of measuring instruments that could be used as research tools in order to measure behaviour change affecting a community as a result of an effective leadership program.
- The researcher may be too closely involved with the training processes at Petra College, which could have prevented him from assessing the process objectively. On the other hand, it could have been advantageous, as he had the opportunity to reflect more critically on the Petra model from outside the system.

1.11 Research methodology

The researcher's choice of methodology for this dissertation was that of qualitative research (Bryman, 1988:40-41). To carry out the research effectively, the researcher had to be close to the research field for the purposes of observation, interviewing, and modelling of training. The study will focus on verbal data collection (interviews), evaluation of processes, meaning clarification, and personal involvement in the training processes. A qualitative research paradigm was chosen because of its systematic approach towards capturing specific people's experiences and interpretation of such experiences. Such

qualitative research involves fieldwork in which the researcher physically engages the selected people for observation, reflection, and discussions within a natural setting. The researcher is therefore more concerned with understanding (verstehen) rather than explanation; naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement; and the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm (de Vos, 2002 : 79). The researcher followed the method of phenomenological research as explained by Creswell (1998). Creswell suggests that the researcher goes into the field with a 'strong orienting framework' of what will be studied and how it will be studied (de Vos, 2002:267 – 268). Leedy (2001) states that the final result of the phenomenology study is a general description of the phenomenon as seen through the eyes of people who experienced it at first hand (de Vos, 2002:268) Speziale & Carpenter (2003) divide the phenomenological method into 5 phases which refers to descriptive phenomenology, phenomenology of essence, phenomenology of appearances, constitutive phenomenology and reductive phenomenology.

The researcher combined some elements associated to the phenomenology research method with 5 research questions. The specific questions were formulated in an effort to gain more understanding about the phenomenon relating to the perceptions that exist in church and community life about children and ministry to children. It also aimed at verifying or challenging the researcher's own understanding on these issues.

The research questions were also used to reflect on 4 very important aspects of the phenomena under discussion. These aspects were formulated as challenges facing the children of Africa. The assumption that an effective leadership development model and process could change the living world of children and also raise the status of those who work with children was challenged. The various aspects are formulated as positive statements which the researcher belief could be possible.

- it is possible and necessary to train Christian leaders for children's ministry in Africa.
- the low status of children's workers in Africa can be raised to match that of their counterparts in other professions through good leadership development.
- leadership training is a strategic move in changing the view, value, and role of children in African communities; and
- an effective leadership-development process will result in effective ministry to children in Africa ? Will an effective ministry to children, impact on children and bring hope and a long-term solution to most of the pressing social problems in many countries. Answers to such an assumption could also prove the value and place of Christianity as a basic theory for this study.

The researcher believed at the time of the research that he needed to test the formulated assumptions with other leaders within the field of ministry to children. He therefore included the opinion of 6 prominent leaders through a number of open ended questions. The formulation of these questions helped to respondents to exhaust their particular understanding or even frustrations on the various issues. The leaders chosen for the research came from the following countries and representing the following ministries. Tanzania – representing a leading ministry to children in Tanzania. Nigeria - representing children of the 3rd largest ministry in Nigeria. Togo - where the leader run a mission training centre. Democratic Republic of Congo - representing the largest denomination in that country. Gabon – children ministry leader for the largest denomination. Sudan – this leader came from the South of Sudan and representing the leading denomination in the Southern part of the country.

The following key questions were asked to the respondents:

1. What is your understanding/definition of the word “child”? What age does ‘child’ refer to?

2. How would your church or Christian community define a child?
3. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges that your church community or organisation faces concerning children?
4. In your church community or organisation, what is the general standard of children's workers/Sunday school teachers? How well are they equipped to minister to children?
5. What position of importance does a children's worker or leader have in the church or community when compared to a pastor or even to a missionary/evangelist?
6. What role, if any, can children play in addressing the perceived needs of Africa in the area of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, war poverty etc?
7. What do you think can/should be done strategically to address the burning issues concerning children and the ministry to children in order to create hope for the future?

The above questions were used by the researcher in a total of 6 interviews with leaders from 6 different countries. This questionnaire was given to respondents to complete on their own. The research process also included personal interviews with the 6 role players. Some of them were interviewed in their own homes in a relaxed atmosphere. Others were interviewed in a training setting. All of them were given the questionnaires whilst they attended a course at Petra College. They were given 2 days to think and reflect on the questions. The researcher allowed them to clarify the questions without leading them in a specific direction on the expected answers. The respondents written answers were analysed and interpreted. The researcher then included the interpretation of the findings in the dissertation in the form of statements, arguments and assumptions. The question of 'who the child is', was answered by the respondents and interpreted by the researcher who linked the answers with other arguments used in the dissertation. The 6 leader's answers showed a remarkable uniform understanding of a biblical, social, spiritual and physical view on children. Their answers also suggested that they share the same frustrations

in their struggle in the church to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by children and ministry to children. There appear also to be a suggestion that the leaders firmly believe that children has the potential to influence and change the pressing needs of communities. The leaders also suggested that there is a need for more and better equipped leaders and children workers as to engage the challenges of the future of Africa. These answers assisted the researcher in the development of the theory on the place and value of an effective leadership training model.

The chosen methodology also freed the researcher from an over-rigid research process, because the qualitative approach served as a guide for processes and meaning that cannot be measured in terms of quantity, intensity or frequency (Bryman, 1988:36,37). This approach suited the phenomenological research approach and also assisted the researcher to include aspects of the ethnographic research methodology.

1.12 Introduction to the study

Chapter 1 represents the motivation, scope, and development of this dissertation. It serves as a proposal to validate this dissertation as a study within the field of Practical Theology. It further emphasises the value of this study in terms of the global challenge of addressing the needs of African society, children in particular. The researcher also attempts to provide clarity on the intended outcomes as well as definitions used in the dissertation.

The chapters following develop the dissertation in terms of some historical developments, trends and approaches to Christian education. The topic of Christian education required a broader approach in order to clarify the rationale for the Petra College model. The influence of previous educational trends and philosophies contributed in varying degrees to training models as we describe them today. In particular, the Petra College model cannot be viewed as having

developed in isolation, but rather through historical influences in the field of Christian education. Other influences were the contextual and contemporary developments learned from practical experiences in Africa. It must be noted that a focus on Christianity has influenced the Petra College model to a great extent.

Although one acknowledges developments in the fields of science and social science in particular, the metaphysical aspect of Christianity must have a profound influence on the outcomes and effectiveness of such a training model. One reason is the fact that changes in human behaviour takes place at a level where science can, to some extent, measure outcomes in relation to the change. However, it cannot provide formulae for producing such change. Training models become the tangible tools for influencing people in effecting change or growth in understanding and behaviour. Christianity relies on Christian dynamics, which cannot be controlled. By this, the researcher suggests a spiritual dimension, where behaviour, values, and attitudes can change because of a spiritual experience that takes place interiorly. No scientific rationale for such change seems to exist. Also, there is no predetermined action that can guarantee a specific outcome.

The Petra College training model focuses on the important aspects of adult learning principles. However, the main outcome of such a training process is what happens to children as a result (Petra College, *Policy Manual*, 2004). In the process of describing the Petra College model, the understanding of Africa in terms of philosophy, terminology, and prevailing concepts about children was explored. The study also includes a brief reflection on African leadership. The description of the Petra College training model itself and its processes is followed by a few stories from the field and the effects of the Petra College training. Feedback from the operational field on the impact of the training model also contributed to the development of this study. The researcher was privileged to witness first-hand what is happening in the field. During recent years there have been continuous discussions on the training model with key role-players in Africa.

At this stage, Petra College seems to be playing a very significant role in children's ministry in Africa and in the training models for such ministry, making the College a leading figure in the expertise relating to this field

A number of important unresolved issues came to the fore during this study. For instance, it was realised that terminology is used and understandings assumed that still have to be properly researched. The researcher's close contact with the development and implementation of the training model could raise questions of subjectivity in this study in terms of opinions and experience. Nevertheless, this dissertation can certainly contribute significantly to the relevance of Christianity and, in particular, Christian training models in addressing the major challenges for the future of this continent. These challenges relate to the children of Africa, who face so many social challenges in their particular societies.

This dissertation is also a declaration of Petra College's beliefs that children are also valuable human beings, capable of enjoying a relationship with God through His Son, Christ Jesus (Malherbe, 2003). Such a relationship means dignity and hope for our children in the future. There is also a firm belief in children's potential for influencing and changing their societies. Although there are already some exciting short-term results of the various training processes, the full extent of such input will be apparent only in the years to come.

The rationale for developing this dissertation is based on the understanding of historical influences in Christian education as reflected in the various models. This will be followed by a reflection on trends in Christian education over the past thirty years. The discussion of philosophical reasoning from the African perspective, as opposed to the Western, and the understanding of children's ministries in Africa from this viewpoint will lead to a description of the Petra College training model and process.

Chapter 2

Influences and trends in the development of models for ministering to children.

2.1 Religious education: Historic factors that influence today's approach in training models.

If one wants to understand trends in the development of training models for children's ministries that will later impact on Africa, it is essential to consider the historical development of religious education. Another good reason for taking note of the historical developments is that increasing knowledge in the scientific disciplines must have certain effects. Developments and findings were recorded and described in the emerging First World, that is, the 'West'. Developments in the field of Practical Theology contributed with critical analyses of the various models and data that influenced the current trends.

The colonisation of the continent and the mass movement of people in the slave trade had a profound influence on the field of educational training models in Africa. There is also the Western missionary paradigms to consider when discussing the influences within the approach to Christian education. This does not always seem to be in the interests of Africa, but, unfortunately, the relationships between first-world models and those of developing Africa cannot be ignored. It will, therefore, also be essential to consider some African schools of thought for some insight into how the education of children can be perceived in relation to Petra College's understanding of how to reach and develop children effectively. The work of Mwamwenda in his 'Educational psychology' needs to be mentioned here (Mwamwenda, 1989). The development of effective leadership in children's ministry seems to depend largely on a correct understanding of the ways in which leaders are prepared so that they have a transformational influence on children.

The different models will provide insight into how principles in the development of religious education models may be linked to contemporary models for children's ministries. The challenge, however, will be to evaluate and describe this from an African perspective. It is common knowledge that first-world, or Western/European, schools of thought shaped and dominated intellectual perceptions over many centuries. Because study materials, educational books and models have been written from a largely Western perspective, Petra College consciously strives to develop training models from the African point of view. It is essential to understand the implications of this.

This study consequently provides insights into the philosophy behind Petra College's leadership-training model and what the College understands of a contextual African approach. It will also provide some understanding of the principles used in developing the leadership training model. The various philosophies and concepts, and the relationship between theory and practice, will emerge as we interact between the different models.

Harold W. Burgess (1996:25) describes the Christian religious education of the first 19 centuries as a 'prototype' rather than a model. The term 'model' will refer more to a conscious structuring of elements that goes somewhat beyond the facts. The term 'prototype' is used in the sense of 'exhibiting the essential features of a later, more carefully defined, type or model' (Burgess,1996:25).

The overview here relies on Burgess's work (1996) in describing the historical developments in Christian education. This is because his work is itself based on the contribution of many reputable authors in this subject area. Burgess also helps us to follow the chronological development of Christian educational models throughout the centuries. The works of O'Gangel, Wilhoit and LeBar (O'Gangel & Wilhoit, 1993) on Christian education were also consulted. The researcher also consulted the works of Sherwood & Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter (Teaching Cross – Culturally, 2003), Mwamwenda (Educational psychology

1989) and Mugambi (Christianity and African culture, 1989), and Choun & Lawson (The Christian Education Handbook on Children Ministry, 1993).

Here follows a summary of Burgess's description of the development of Christian education through the ages (Burgess, 1996):

From the times of ancient Egypt, models have been employed, first, as keys to understanding the past and, second, as bridges leading to the future. The utilisation of models offers help for religious educators to seize appropriate opportunities for better understanding, for fostering desirable change, and for communicating with one another.

The perceived educational ideals of Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament influenced the prototypical model of the first nineteen centuries (O'Gangel & Wilhoit, 1993:13,14). The deeper roots were, however, more in the Hebrew world of the Old Testament and the Graeco-Roman culture. This was in line with contemporary worldviews that prevailed for the greater part of the Christian era prior to the twentieth century (Burgess, 1996:15). The fundamental educational emphasis during the early centuries seems to have been on what we today call 'adult learning'. The motivation for educating adults at that stage was the threat of heresy and the threat of persecution. Two other important emphases developed during this period, namely, first, the notion of *kerugma*, or the announcement of the facts of the gospel and, second, *didache*, or teaching that functions as a concept that develops a number of steps in the direction of creedal formulation.

From a contemporary point of view, one could say that the current motivation for developing Christian leadership models is driven by threats from such ideologies and realities as liberal theology, wrong worldviews, new age philosophies and sheer human hardship. The positive motivation is the Good News of hope and the strategic value of adult leadership. This will include both *kerugma* and *didache*, but with a more contextual approach.

Burgess (1996:31) explains: 'By the beginning of the third century a catechumenal system was operational in at least the larger church settings'. This model focused on preparing candidates to be morally and spiritually prepared for church membership and meaningful participation in the life of the church. There appears to be no focus at that stage, on children and their spiritual needs. This seems to have influenced the church in Africa and may have contributed to the method of missionary practices in the past. It was not so much that children were ignored or removed from evangelising efforts but rather that the approach adopted towards them was cavalier and indifferent. It appears that Christian higher education in colleges, seminaries and universities grew out of the catechetical schools. The catechetical schools focused on a curriculum rooted in the Greek disciplines, especially philosophy. Biblical and theological studies were pursued along academic lines, with the main emphasis on the development of the adult to be competitive with other educated individuals. Children were never the main focus of any educational inputs. This probably influenced the majority of the religious education models in use today.

In an article from "The Words of Eternal Life" (www.thewordsofeternallife.com/sundayschool-school.html), one can read the history of the development of Sunday schools. It appears that Sunday schools were formed with the main aim to provide rudimentary education to children of the poor. It states (The Words of Eternal life: 1) "Sunday school then aimed at teaching basic Protestantism to the children of the unchurched poor" Thus also seems to explain the semantic problem that the church faces in terms of the word "school" within the approach to children ministry. The main thrust of missionary input to children was also then aimed at the education of children through a "schooling" approach. This can explain why the church over the ages has seen children as learners and not as members of the church.

All of the above contributes to existing models and approaches to children ministry within the church.

2.2 Strategic trends that influences the approach on models for ministry to children.

The following global trends do have a profound influence on the strategic approach to children and the design of a training program to prepare children workers and leadership to engage the challenges regarding children and their needs (Celebrating Children, 2003: 106 – 114). Myers (1999) name the following changes as important trends that will influence ones approach to ministry and training models.

a. People have changed.

Rosenau, 1990, Content that one of the most profound changes of the last century has been the degree to which people have changed in terms of their self- understanding. It appears that ordinary people are more involved in their socio-political-economic environment. This change resulted in a more focussed approach to children and their needs.

b. Global economy, technology and communications

Globalization brought with it the opening of a world of global communication like the internet, television and cell phone. Whilst one can value the positives it is also evident that these changes brought with it big dangers that place children at risk. The question one can ask is if Christian leadership is empowered to give direction for the various stakeholders in this phenomenon?

c. Socio-economic trends.

Poverty exposes children to extreme choices in their search for identity. The growing gap between rich and poor seems to complicate the situation even further. Myers (1999) makes the following statement “Illicit drugs,

street children, child labour and sexual exploitation of children all find their haven in this shadow economy (Celebrating Children, 2003:109-110)

d. Internal violence and conflict.

It is estimated that more than 540 million children live in unstable or violent contexts (UNICEF, State, 2002: 25). The increase in violence appears to be linked to an uncontrollable free market system as well as personal greed.

e. Movement of people.

The relationship of where people live and where the wealth is situated seems to be in contrast. The majority of people lives in the Southern part of the world but the wealth is concentrated in the North. This influences the migration of people first to cities and then further. These trends also influence a bigger number of issues like family systems, culture and economies.

f. Changing demographics.

Whilst it seems that the world's population growth rate is decreasing, the total population is growing - mostly in the South (Brown, et al., 1999). Whilst it is said that one – third of the world's population is under the age of fifteen, eighty percent of these children live in the Third World (Celebrating Children, 2003:111).

g. Changing world of children's health.

One can refer here to the challenges that HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases pose to humankind. The unstable situation in the world combined with the increase in poverty etc, contributes to

challenges the Christianity and in particular the church faces in terms of their response to the affected children.

h. The emerging power and place of woman.

Changes in perceptions about the place and role for women contributes to the increase of influence from women in leadership. The real situation on ground level indicates still that the majority of “harmful practices” is still directed at girl children. The church leadership in Africa seems still have a long way to go before sustainable change can be affected in this area.

i. Environmental limits.

Worldwatch question the ability of the environment to sustain the current population growth with its related growth in demands for resources (Celebrating Children, 2003:113). This trend seems also to be included in future intervention models regarding ministry to children as well as training models that empower Christian leadership.

Reflection.

The development of religious educational models took into account only what happened in the first-world arena. The developments described by Burgess took into account various different perspectives from writers like Wyckoff (1959), Lee (1973) and Groom (1980). The researcher also consulted O'.Gangel & Wilhoit (1993) for the various perspectives on adult education. *The Christian Educators' Handbook on Adult Education* (O'.Gangel & Wilhoit, 1993) was helpful in understanding how the historical developments in the first world contributed to current theories on adult Christian education.

Very little evidence was found of contextualised and indigenous teaching models and processes in Africa. The works of writers like Mwamwenda and Mugambi contributed in a sense to the understanding of the philosophical and psychological reasoning in terms of children and Christian education. It does not however propose a particular teaching model and process that one can describe as indigenous African. This low-level contribution by Africa in terms of formal education models contributes to the impression that science belongs to the first world. This meant that, when first world influence reached Africa, it brought with it models that were meant to be implemented in a non-existent model environment. The early missionaries, albeit with good intentions, but regardless of whichever group they were amongst, attempted from this perspective to educate the 'uneducated heathens'.

It might be true that Africa did not explore the various educational developments through the ages as a science, and it seems that it was the first-world intellectuals who developed models and systems that fitted their particular context. Coming from a first-world school of thought ourselves, one has very little understanding of the development of the African fields of science. What is seen in Africa is the reflection of educational models based on a first-world understanding. The Western approach also uses first-world principles to evaluate the nature of science. From Mwamwenda's research, one could reason that the

cognitive and moral development of African children was proofed to be compatible and competitive with Western children. (Mwamwenda, 1989: 145, 158). The counter argument could be that the educational models was mostly not developed by Africans but rather by Westerners for Western children in particular. Particular models have, in one way or another, been imposed on Africa in the course of colonisation or missionary activities. The indigenous models that do exist are perceived as and limited to a particular cultural model that is generally regarded as inferior to first- world models.

The researcher then also took in account the global trends as experienced by contemporary leaders within the field of child development. These trends challenge the historic development of Christian education models as well as the existing paradigms on how an effective leader should be developed and prepared for the existing challenges. *Celebrating Children* (2002), represents views of many leaders and organisations that work with children at risk all over the world. One can mention organisations like Viva Network, Tear Fund, World Vision, Compassion International and various individuals representing various independent ministries, universities and professional disciplines like theology, psychology etc.

Petra College's training models proved initially to have been largely influenced by the first-world approach to teaching. This was evident in the way adult training for children's ministry was understood. Content was packaged in neat first-world modules and teaching took place in formal classroom settings. It could be said that training was treated as some kind of event. The College did, however, value the ongoing training process in the field, even though it did not structure its training models to include such thinking. Content was delivered in the classroom, while practical assignments were used to test growth of knowledge and skills. The influence of previous training models remained the College's biggest drawback and challenge. At that stage, all existing models were built on a first-world understanding of teaching principles. One example would be the teaching

principles based on Dr Howard Hendricks's approach to adult learning (see *The 7 Laws of the teacher*, 2002, and Bruce Wilkinson's *The 7 Laws of the Learner*, 1988). Principles such as 'Teach for life change', 'Teach from experience', 'Teach from the heart' and others certainly sounded sufficiently universal. The reality is, however, that the ways in which the principles were formulated and taught were far better suited to a first-world teaching environment. Petra College believed in the value of such principles and trained students accordingly, but they ultimately realised that such an approach did not really help their students from other African countries as far as the training process was concerned. Consequently, while the teaching principles were retained, there was a major change in the College's teaching process.

The College shifted focus towards training principles and concepts that includes a more holistic approach to training. Contextual exposure to children and adults in different countries forced the College to ask more demanding questions on what and how they could teach adults effectively about Christianity and children's ministries and how to empower them by the training model.

Other questions asked were:

- What is required to train adults in Africa to equip them for their task?
- How could indigenous African educational models be better understood and utilised to relate to Africans' particular understanding?
- What is the impact of global trends in developing educational models?

There have been some interesting changes in the field of Christian education over the past 30 years, especially in the Southern African context, but, again, there was always a first-world representation.

2.2 Trends in the development of Christian educational practices in South Africa

The historical developments in Christian education and the subsequent philosophies that grew out of them influenced the models for children's ministry in various ways. The development of a children's ministry in South Africa has also gone through very exciting phases over the past 30 years. We will focus on 10 very distinct changes that influenced Petra College's approach towards children's ministries (Malherbe, 1998: 1-3) and the development of their children's ministry and leadership training programs.

It is also important to note that these changes occurred primarily within the first-world church context. To date, the only notable changes in Africa in this connection are limited to some first-world-orientated churches providing inputs into individual churches as a consequence of partnership agreements. Reflecting on what has happened in South Africa will, however, help us to understand the dynamics behind the constant changes in the field of children's ministry as well as the changing training needs that accommodate such changes. These developments have also influenced Petra College's training models.

The following discussions reflect the researcher's interpretation of a document written by Paul du Toit in an article for 'Die kerkbode, July 2001.'

2.2.1 The change from programs to people, processes, and relationships

Up to the 1970s, the Church concentrated on the content of programs and running the Sunday school curricula requirements. This resulted in a very formal 'school' approach to education. The outcome of ministering to children was seen as the completion of programs fitted into a calendar. Sunday school teachers received very little training and had difficulty in producing creative training processes in the classroom settings. The *status quo* remains true of the situation

in the African Church. Discussions with Church leaders in Africa show that programs are still the main focus. Most churches in the RSA continue to find difficulty with this approach. But the more recent approach in churches is to develop ministry focuses that will both include children and place the emphasis on relationships. The message is that children are part of a much bigger church life system. They are to be accepted and allowed to take part in worship activities. Some mainline churches, such as the Dutch Reformed Church in Pretoria's Moreleta Park, have developed models based on this approach. Petra College is not actively involved in the development of teaching materials for children, but focuses on training models aimed at equipping adults for children's ministries. However, the College evaluates these new approaches in order to see whether its training models do indeed prepare children's workers and leaders at this level.

Adults are orientated consciously to include children more creatively in learning experiences and to build relationships with children. This implies that children do not receive the teaching in a class setting alone but actually learn through experience as the teacher engages in a relationship with them. This also means that success is not dependant on the program but on the ability of the teacher to teach through relationship.

2.2.2 The change from individuals to systems

Children were treated in the Church as individuals with no relation to the systems around them. This individualisation disregarded the children's cultural milieu and upbringing. Training input was thus intended for the person sitting in front of the teacher without taking into account the influences of the cultural world and experience of reality in which a child lived. The major shift in emphasis came when pressure was put on the Church to accept individuals who did not function in isolation. Although many churches realise this, they do not have the models and the structures to implement such training in their curricula. The key to the relevant philosophy is that every human being comes from and remains part of a

system. The emphasis is placed on the family life as the primary basis for such a system but will also include the community around the child. .

In churches where this understanding is encouraged, one sees a more holistic approach to children's ministry. New developments in Ethiopia, for instance, help to gain some understanding of the practicality and value of such a philosophy. In the development of a training centre in Ethiopia, elements like environment, health, family life and governance were included as part of the curriculum for preparing children's workers. The community, the family, the church and the government are viewed as co-responsible for the development of the child. This will also form part of their teaching materials for children in future. Until now, the South African churches have had very little impact in this area. Petra College, however, includes this approach in the preparation of leadership for the children's ministry.

2.2.3 The change from a partial to a holistic approach to children's ministry

There have been times when children's spiritual lives were viewed as separate from other aspects of their lives. The holistic approach, on the other hand, more correctly deals with the child as a growing person, who develops mentally, has a history and a future, lives in a specific environment, and forms part of a (cultural) system. The implication is that the child's physical, spiritual, and intellectual needs must all be met. The Church readily assumes responsibility for children's spiritual needs, but keeps a distance when it comes to food, health, and living circumstances. Very few churches engage in these areas and it is normally left to NGOs like World Relief, Compassion International, Viva Network and other organisations like Tearfund's Children at Risk, Bethany Project Zimbabwe, Kid Hope Ministries etc.(Celebrating Children:2002:xi – xiv), to become involved. Petra College values the holistic approach and includes important aspects of this in their training model. The College has also developed specialised ministry focuses, such as ministry to pre-schoolers, community-based ministry and

trauma ministry as part of its holistic approach. There is also a more inclusive approach that includes the four major contexts of school, church, community and home/family ministries. One area where the researcher found that Petra College does not have a clear theory formulated is within the compassion ministry.

2.2.4 The change from facts to stories, symbols, and rituals

Early Sunday-school curricula were based on factual content and learning requirements. Most churches even held annual examinations to 'test' children's cognitive levels of learning. This emphasised incorrect perceptions resulting from the use of terminology like Sunday 'school'. The focus was placed on facts in the Bible and not on the way of life reflected there.

This was changed to reaching children through Bible stories recounted with effective storytelling techniques. The use of symbols and rituals came alive in new forms as part of the teaching processes. This change also opened up the introduction of more creative and child-friendly programs to reach and teach children. Over the years, Petra College has managed to contribute a great deal to the creative approach to ministering to children. The objectives of the foundational courses are to assist learners in understanding the principles of reaching children effectively through a connecting and growing approach. The child is exposed to stories in the Bible in such a way that the stories, truths and emotions found there contribute to experiential hearing and reaction to the message they carry. Petra College still values Biblical facts, but develops ministry approaches that help to integrate these facts through a creative ministry approach that uses good storytelling techniques.

2.2.5 The change from knowledge to application to the big picture

Recently, Sunday-school material began to include a greater focus on applications with the aim of helping children to live according to the Bible. The Bible stories themselves became less prominent. This created a problem, in that

children did not know these Bible stories. Because of this, stories were re-introduced so that children could see the broader Biblical picture. Petra College made a definite effort to integrate Bible content with Bible stories. Making stories relevant for the child today requires some understanding of both the Biblical content and the specific living environment of the child. Thus raised a challenge to fit the application of the story to the message in order for the child to respond to the message. Where as Petra College placed much focus in the past on the “central truths” they now rely on the story to convey the truth and the application of the message. One can sense that there is also a danger in this. It appears that one accepts that all children will have the ability to interpret the story and be able to contextualise it on their own.

The College’s foundational courses prepare the trainee teacher to use the Bible stories more effectively. There seems to be a greater focus placed on the understanding of the bigger message combined with the story telling techniques.

2.6 The change from books to electronic media

One of the challenges recently confronting the Church is the rapid developments taking place in the electronic world. Children are growing up in the era of electronics when activities like reading stories, especially Bible stories, are becoming virtually obsolete. Globalisation has brought a new dimension to the growth of knowledge (Haddad, 2003:2) Church educators and children’s workers need to prepare proactively for the new challenges in this field. Petra College concentrates on the training value of globalisation, but will include aspects of the new technology in training programs in order to prepare learners to deal with future challenges. Cell phone technology and internet seems to become the major tools of influence with the younger generations. The influence of electronic media like television on children seems to suggest that reading of printed materials would become a scarce phenomenon.

2.2.7 The change from local to global focus

The internet opened up the child's world to virtually unlimited perspectives (Haddad, 2003:2). The question is whether the church and children's workers are prepared to guide children in engaging with this opportunity as Christians. Communication opens up the world from remote villages to modern cities. This will affect future thinking in training children's workers and leaders. It also opens up unlimited potential for reaching people wherever they are. The danger is that influences beyond our control, negative or positive, will have to be contended with. Petra College decided on the value principle that it would always be ready to adapt to and actively work at remaining contextual and relevant. This means that its future training models and processes will have to remain open to change. The use of media technology like computers, cell phone technology, radio and television is constantly being reviewed in the College's strategic thinking.

2.2.8 The change from separation of generations to uniting them

One of the reactive approaches of the Christian community is trying to accommodate children in the formal church service. The initial tendency was to separate children from adults in order to create a more child-friendly atmosphere. This approach later proved a less-than-successful Biblical model. Church leaders then searched for a better way of dealing with the challenge. This resulted in a greater emphasis on the development of 'children-friendly' sermons. New programs are now being developed and solutions to new training needs are being created. The challenge is to create a multi-dimensional approach to Sunday sermons, where the main focus will be on allowing families to experience worship together in an appropriate way. Another major development in this regard is the understanding of the need for a relational input into the lives of children. This presents the church with some new challenges in ministering to children.

The training modules dealing with Church-based ministry address this particular need. The challenge is first to create an understanding of what 'church' means to the child and then to include the child in the church. The implication is that leadership capable of assisting churches to unite generations in common worship services must be trained and developed. Petra College's training model prepares leadership for this challenge.

2.2.9 The change from theory and application to experiential learning

Learning styles have also undergone changes. The initial approach was for children to master a great deal of theory before putting it into practice. This meant that Biblical values and principles were given to the child in the Sunday school and the child was sent home to implement what had been learned. This change has not as yet been implemented by the Church generally in South Africa. The new secular school outcomes-based approach does, however, help guide Sunday school teachers into new thinking on their approach to teaching children in church.

The new way of thinking is experiential learning style (Kidd, 1973). The dynamics of this process are to help the learner detect a learning point, form a concept, reflect on the new concept, test and evaluate the new concept, and start the process again. This model also influenced the way Petra College views its approach to training children's workers and leaders.

2.2.10 The change from two styles of learning to eight

The social sciences helped educators in general to realise that people learn by using a variety of methods. In the past, the focus was on verbal and non-verbal communication. The eight basic ways of acquiring knowledge are words, numbers, pictures, music, body movements, talk, meditation and nature. The Church is being challenged to take note of these aspects of knowledge acquisition in order to move to contextual ministry. The main point to consider

here is the creative involvement of the learner in the learning process. Petra College values the principles of this approach, but employs methods that differ from those of New Age philosophy and other humanistic approaches.

Petra College employs most of the eight learning styles in its training programs. The learners are sensitised during the foundational training by the facilitators' modelling of the various creative approaches that help learners understand and master a number of learning styles.

Reflection.

A broad field of subject matter has been discussed in this chapter, the purpose of which was to gain insight into the broader picture of how Christian education developed over the ages and how this influenced the development of training models and processes at Petra College.

In the first section, it was shown that Christian education developed through the ages as part of the emerging first world. The intellectuals used their particular worldviews and Biblical views, or absence of such views, as the basis of their ideas and formulation of theories. It appears that African theories on education were not formally included in the development of theories on Christian education. The educational models implemented appear to have been based on a first-world understanding of Christianity and science. The researcher found that the theories on Christian education and training models for education are based on this understanding along with definitions developed by first-world thinkers. One only needs to look at the various Sunday school materials available in the African church to verify this assumption. The Church in Africa finds difficulty in adapting to the imposed models of Christian education, which contributes to the lack of effective models for reaching and developing children in their particular contexts. Understanding of the concept 'church and church life' is likewise affected. In turn, this influences understanding of the place and value of effective children's

ministries. As a result, in general church leaders seems not to consider children important enough for the Church to place any special focus on children's ministries. Christian communities are not encouraged to see children through God's eyes.

A further consequence is that Bible schools and seminaries seem to lack specific priorities in the field of children's ministries, as is evident in their curricula. The status of those involved in children's ministry is far lower than that of pastors and evangelists, and the Church normally uses female members to work with the children, as this is not considered to be a man's role. These problems in the Church in Africa do not differ much from those experienced in the first-world Church as far as children's ministries and children's workers are concerned. The real differences lie in the reasons for inaccurate perceptions of children and in the remedy for changing the situation.

Understanding a particular world and life view seems crucial to the development of training practices. In this case, an understanding of the culture of Africa could contribute to the correct formulation of a world and life view. There is also a great need for more African philosophers to contribute to the scientific field. The church/missionary organisations are facing the challenge of developing a Biblical worldview crucial to raising children who understand the world they live in, despite the implication that such a worldview could clash with cultural perspectives and philosophies.

These significant movements in children's ministry over the last 30 years have contributed to both the dynamics of children's ministry and an ever-changing environment. This will help us negotiate important trends and proactively prepare leaders for this dynamic field of ministry. In addition to the scientific developments taking place in the first and third worlds, we anticipate more effective training models in future. We are also convinced that well-educated and competent leaders will, in the future, engage with Africa in a positive way.

In order to describe the model developed and implemented by Petra College, the researcher also finds it necessary to consider the development of educational philosophy to facilitate understanding of the origin and background of the model. The broader aspects of African philosophy should also be taken into account if African logic is to be better understood.

2.3 Philosophy and its influence on the approach to training models

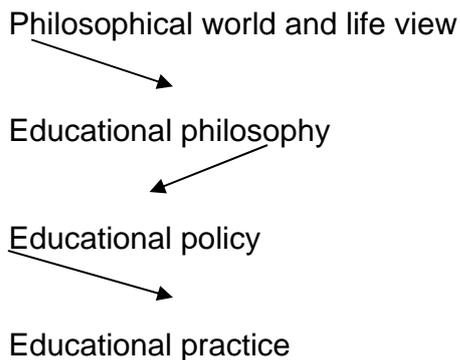
2.3.1 Reflection on first-world educational philosophies

In the formulation of theory, initial questions are often quite practical in nature, for example: What form should education take? Can values be taught in leadership training? What kind of knowledge is most valuable from a leadership perspective? Is it possible to integrate learning with faith? (Peterson,1986:22). These and other important questions allow us to progress from the practical to the theoretical level. One of the most important questions for theory to answer is: Why is leadership training desirable and what is the purpose of such a training model? The value of this approach seems to be the deeper exploration of the insights that result in theory. This theory guides the aims in terms of which a training program is established as well as the basic ways in which these aims can be achieved.

Mouton and Marais (1990:138) mention that it is generally accepted that theories and models bear a number of important similarities. To them a theory postulates real relationships between real phenomena or variables and, for this reason , it must be empirical testable (de Vos, 2002: 43)

Practice seems to have a reciprocal impact on theory, in that it can 'test' a theory as well as validating or invalidating educational concepts and proposals. Michael L. Peterson (1986:15) suggests the following scheme in the process of

formulating the relationship between theory and practice. The researcher only used the suggested scheme in order to explain the development process of the formulation of theory. The relationship between the development of the model and the formulation of theory seems to be a point of contention as one studies the various standpoints of leading academics like Kerlinger, Bailey, Mouton and Marais and also Alberts etc. (de Vos, 2002:41 – 43)



The above scheme indicates approximately the process that educational practice follows to eventually establish the educational content and methodology. It seems extremely important to understand the wider philosophical world and life view when formulating an educational philosophy. Such as policy, in turn, will guide the way in which the educational practice is developed. In future, the challenge will be to test the typical African philosophical world and life view in relation to the outcome of educational practice. It appears that the change in Petra College's world and life view was instrumental in developing a particular

educational philosophy. This educational philosophy influences their policies and training practices (Petra College, *Policy Manual*, 2004).

Within the training context, each philosophical perspective is formed by certain metaphysical, epistemological and axiological assumptions (Peterson, 1986). These assumptions, in turn, hold implications for a number of important subjects, such as science and education. The following philosophical approaches have had a distinct influence on education: idealism, naturalism, neo-Thomism, experimentalism, existentialism, and philosophical analysis (Peterson, 1986:15 - 35).

Petra College's training models reflect some aspects of these different philosophical approaches. Although there was never a conscious choice of first-world principles, the College, on account of the teaching staff's academic background, has been influenced, in one way or another, by an academic approach. The researcher also wishes to emphasise that not everything developed in the first world is, or will always be considered, wrong. The point here is that Africa is different. This being the case, one has to listen to the voice of Africa and make the effort to understand its dynamics. The following discussion represents such an effort to understand African thinking and to formulate a philosophy that will impact on the Petra College training model.

2.3.2 Understanding African philosophy

Mburu (2003:1-104) contributes to an understanding of African philosophy by employing the work of various African philosophers and their approaches to philosophy. In his efforts to define African philosophy, he also uses perspectives from the professional school of philosophers and philosophy related to political ideologies. The inclusion of cultural practices such as rituals, proverbs and stories, all of which contribute to formulating African philosophy, was of considerable advantage in our gaining understanding of the uniqueness of African thought.

The professional school, represented by Paulin Hountondji, for example, reflects a close relationship with first-world philosophy (Mburu, 2002: 4 -13). He uses three important elements. The first is critical reasoning, which relies heavily on logic. The second criterion is that it is individualistic. The third criterion is the modern. Hountondji uses these criteria to dismiss another form of African philosophy, ethno-philosophy (Mburu, 2002: 4-13). Ethnologists collect African cultural data like customs, traditions, proverbs and institutions to form a collective worldview, which they call 'African philosophy' (Mburu, 2003:7)

Tempels uses various categories to qualify African philosophy, employing first world terminology to explain African philosophy. Elements like 'ontology, metaphysical, epistemology, psychology, and ethics' are used to explain African philosophy (Mburu, 2003:10,11).

Mburu selects six prominent African leaders and uses their political ideologies to establish philosophical principles (Mburu, 2003:15 – 27). The book *The African Renaissance* (1999), to which the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, contributed, provides us with another focus on African philosophy, as well as contributing to the understanding of the diversity of African reasoning. Although it is characterised by very idealistic dreams, the truth of the reality in Africa is characterised by a unique diversity that can not easily be united under a universal philosophy. For instance, the authors rely heavily on Egyptian history as proof of ancient African knowledge and science. Working closely with some Egyptian leadership and questioning them on these issues revealed to the researcher that their lifestyle, customs, worldview and philosophy seems far removed from those of traditional Africa. The Egyptian leaders the researcher engaged are more likely to see themselves as related to the Middle East generally or even the Mediterranean region, areas which not only represent an 'own' uniqueness, but are also closer to first-world developments. The leaders

came from various backgrounds like pastors, ministry leaders and medical doctors.

Reflecting on and discussing the seven cultural elements of ideologies, proverbs, stories, rituals, traditions, art, and names might provide some idea of African thought processes. This contributes to Petra College's own thought processes, seeing that the College tries to think and function contextually. The various backgrounds of the above-mentioned philosophers could contribute to the understanding of what is really meant by African philosophy in all its diversity.

Reflection

This brief overview indicates a few challenging aspects of designing training curricula for Africa.

The first is the necessary realisation that first-world philosophers have influenced the thought processes of many Africans. The second is that the meaning of 'contextual' varies according to one's philosophical standpoint. Thirdly, there is a need for those from first-world backgrounds to understand and appreciate the value of Africa's cultural practices. Such an appreciation will contribute to a more universal understanding of African philosophy. The core principles in the first-world model for the development of educational practices seem to be valid for Africa as well. The discussion of training practice will relate back to the particular understanding of the philosophical world and life-view of the training model developer. Petra College is constantly reminded of this fact as it engages with Africa in training processes.

The differences in the various training models available in Africa highlight the diverse understandings of the African context. Even training practices from so-called African institutes reflect first-world models that have been superficially

Africanised. The implication here is that African philosophy and life-view seems not to be taken into account in the process of developing these training models.

Recent trends in Africa suggest that, for the first time in Africa's history, one may see many more significant contributions from Africans in the fields of science and technology. The change in attitude and the commitment by Africans to take responsibility will contribute to realising a universal philosophy. It is also believed that such developments will influence the Church in Africa and will help in using African thought to develop contextual training materials and processes. The richness of African thought has not yet been fully appreciated and utilised for the benefit of the people. This seems about to change.

Petra College is witnessing dynamic developments in the field of leadership training models and the formulation of sound African philosophy. One experiences these developments in recent exposures to international meetings and consultations where African leadership strongly come to the fore.

Chapter 3

Understanding ministry to children in Africa

This chapter will focus on a number of very important words and concepts to enable our better understanding of the context and value of Petra College's leadership training model. This will assist us in evaluating the contextual basis of this model.

3.1 What is a child?

When we want to try and explain what is meant by the word 'child', we need to ask a few pointed questions. The first could very well be the relevant question of whether our understanding of children from different parts of the world can be generalised. Are children in Africa so different from children in, say, North America, China, or India, that they require a different approach in Christian input? What is the real effect of Africa's traditional religions and cultural practices on the African child? (Malherbe, 2003:1) Mwamwenda seems to prove that the development of children is generic in a sense. One would understand with 'generic', that all children have equal potential to be a child. The Piaget and Kohlberg's theories can be verified with both the Western and the African child. Childhood seems to be influenced by much more factors like environment, literacy of parents etc. (Mwamwenda, 1989: 89 – 158).

In first-world society, we have access to a multitude of books in which children are studied and described in terms of their developmental stages, their behaviour, and their perceived needs. However, the research was carried out predominantly in Western or first-world societies with the focus on 'Western-developed' children. This means that theory on children focuses on the average child living under normal first-world conditions. The child from poor and traumatic backgrounds seems to be treated more as objects for specialised attention, for example, as counselling objects. This is evident when one look at the focus of

interventions with children and the program designs of organisations like Compassion International and World Relief and others. These organisations are constantly engaging children at risk. The focus of intervention is aimed at protection, healing, caring, counselling and transformation. It appears difficult to find the same scientific works on African children than the works developed for the western developed child. These Western-orientated works prove, in fact, to be very valuable resources and provide a scientific basis for our understanding of Western or first-world children. In terms of this information, one believes that one may conclude that there is a 'uniform' criterion for understanding children that can be accepted as a general point of departure. This would mean that the understanding that is reflected upon in terms of the western child is also true for the African child. Such an assumption would give one a common point of departure in the formulation of theory on children. This information is considered valuable for use as a Christian point of departure.

For the Christian in general, and the researcher in particular, the basic understanding of 'what a child is' starts with Psalm 139:13-16 (Holy Bible,1996). A child is someone created by God as unique, special and different. Such an understanding acknowledges the value and worth of the being called 'a child'. The reality of the situation, however, will influence ones thinking the moment the person decides that their approach is to be contextual. The main question influencing ones approach is whether one can compare the children of Africa, who are the products of traumatising circumstances like war, poverty and cultural pressures etc., to children from well-structured and developed societies in the West. The uniqueness and diversity of the individual country, people group, clan and cultural background suggest that individual children are much more complex than is assumed in educational handbooks. This will probably be true of all children across the world. Another challenge is whether to agree to a generally-accepted understanding of what is understood to be a child. Such an understanding will influence our approach to children and influence the training models used in training children's workers.

Copsey (Celebrating children,2003:1-3) suggests that images of children and childhood come from many different sources. Influences from personal experience and ones particular culture seems to determine ones understanding of who a child is. Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed an 'ecological' model of development where 'ecological' refers to the various environmental settings which the child experiences. It suggests that one should understand that a child exists in context and to be able to understand the child one needs to understand his or her context. (Celebrating children, 2003:3)

In Africa, one finds, for instance, the very deep-seated view that children remain children as long as they have parents (Malherbe, 2004:2). Sometimes they are thought to remain so until their own children are born. This seems particularly true of girls, who, in certain societies, may marry as early as 12 (Shoo, 2005:Interview). Shoo explained during the interview that in Tanzania it is accepted by the community that a girl becomes an adult when she marry even at 12 years of age. In the African community, there is apparently no clear distinction between children and teenagers. There are, however, recognised phases of development in different people groups. The initiation ritual seems to be the main point of distinction between the world of children and the world of adults. This becomes clear when one looks at materials and programs adopted in churches and Christian organisations in Africa. The word 'youth' is often applied to people under the age of 35 or even older. Different countries use certain age limits in legal and educational contexts. Some communities see youth as people under the age of 15, 18, or 21 (Ethiopia, Kale Heywet Church, 2004:Seminar). Petra College (Malherbe, 2004:2) distinguishes between children's and youth ministry, and considers a children's ministry to be one that aims at children between the ages of one and 14, while youth suggests the age of 15 years and more. Puberty and the transition from primary to high school play a significant role in this classification. The UN Convention on the rights of the child (1989) defines a child as a person below the age of eighteen, unless the laws of a particular country set

the legal age for adulthood as younger than eighteen. (Celebrating children, 2003:3)

The African child is part of the extended family. Osei-Mensah (1990: 65) says, in his monograph *Wanted: Servant Leaders*, that the nuclear family is the basic unit of society. He states: 'In my language there is no word for cousin. The children of my parents' brothers and sisters are all my brothers and sisters and would even call me Dad'. In many African languages, there is not even a word for 'orphan'. In terms of this information, we are challenged to think again about who and what we are talking about when we use the term 'children' from an African perspective.

From both the secular and the Christian perspectives, recent world-wide developments seem to be attempting to address the clarification of the value and place of children in our world. From the theological perspective, there are movements like the 'Child Theology Movement'. They represent organisations like Compassion International and Viva Network, as well as a number of individual African countries and European countries. A Child Theology Consultation was held in Penang, Malaysia, in 2002, and in Cape Town in early 2004. The aim of the participants was to establish a 'Child Theology' for clarifying our concept of children from a Biblical understanding. Under the topic 'What child are we talking about and why?' they stated the following (Malherbe, 2004: Lecture):

We discussed the child within, the child we thought we remembered ourselves to have been and the child, Rahner tells us, we will be eternally. We were encouraged to do this by some parts of the process. But should the child actually be the child in need? Is it the child who especially needs help or is susceptible to the kinds of help our agencies can offer? The child who is starving can be fed, secular agencies can see to that; the religiously uninstructed child can be evangelised, evangelicals can see to that, but is that the child who simply runs into Jesus' arms? We began by letting the child sit in the midst – the child without name, without a face, age, and colour etc. – simply the child who is put there by Jesus. It had to be the child, not ourselves. This focus ran through the brainstorm and proved significant to many. We wish to emphasise this as a practice,

method and spirit that need to be more widely taken up. Not as something never before known or practised but as an un-exhausted potential. Repeatedly it meets us in life, children being everywhere, and we need to work at it even if it perplexes us and we hardly know what to make of it.

In their 2002 report, UNICEF formulated their understanding of children in this way:

Seen through the Convention's lens, the child is an active and contributing member of a family, community and society.

The problem in this approach is that they refer to the general term 'youth' and, like most African churches, do not specifically distinguish between smaller children and young people. The positive aspect of the approach is the recognition given to children as people. Their campaign 'Say Yes for Children' contributed much to a change in valuing children. Petra College can also identify with their thesis '**to change the world with children**'. However, Petra College identifies more with the approach of the Child Theology movement **that a child is he/she sitting in our midst**.

The researcher's recent experience during a training session in Gabon confirmed the broad understanding of the term 'child'. Gabon is a very isolated country with very little input from missionaries. The Church in Gabon considers that children's work includes the youth. For practical reasons they choose to ignore the needs of children in relation to their developmental phases. Although Gabon has implemented a very good pre-school system, it is based on Western early-childhood models and not on their particular understanding of child development needs. The programs centre on rote learning exercises and 'to keep them busy' activities. Discussions with a prominent teacher in the community revealed that they experience difficulty in educating pre-school teachers to have any correct understanding of children. Here, the extended family concept is as strong as in the rest of Africa. Children are part of the family, which does not take into account the various developmental stages and the question of who that child

really is. Gabon has just over a million inhabitants, so is not overcrowded. According to church leaders, the 'safe' environment of the extended family leads to more serious social problems like incest and moral collapse. It was also found that children's needs are not met effectively, and that they are not allowed to be children and to develop naturally into adulthood.

A further problem was that the Church in Gabon is apparently 'missing the mark' as far as reaching and influencing the children with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. After more than 100 years of missionary input, there appears to be no functioning Children's Department within the structures of the Alliance Church, which is the largest in Gabon. Discussions with the leadership revealed that they also refer to children as part of a general group of people, ranging from birth to well into adulthood.

Further realisations came in Ethiopia, where the people are more open and receptive to outside influences. For many years, there had been excellent inputs from the missionary organisation SIM (formerly Sudan Interior Missions) in training pastors and workers for the Kale Heywet Church. Whilst the church experienced strong growth, even under Communist rule, the children were left behind. The problem seems to be the understanding of who a child is. The Kale Heywet church represents nearly five million people, more than half of whom are children. It is only since 2003 that this church has begun to focus on its children, and, unfortunately, they created a children's department without understanding the real need for such a ministry. They sent their first leader for training to Petra College in 2002, but scheduled the development and implementation of an effective training strategy to start only in 2005.

Gabonese theologians realised the deficiency in their training models for preparing leadership in the field of children's ministry only recently. Petra College engaged in a long-term strategic partnership with the Gabonese church to assist in the development of their leadership. Visiting churches allowed Petra College

personnel to observe the lack of training and understanding of children by Sunday school teachers and pastors. During training sessions, trainees went into communities and most of them, for the first time in their lives, engaged with children outside the walls of the church. These trainees acknowledged that they finally had some understanding of what is meant by the word 'child'.

There were similar experiences, with a few exceptions, in many other African countries, churches and organisations.

When interpreting the word 'child', we also need to look at the child's context, a current topic of discussion in Africa. The question is: What makes the child different? Is it his or her land of origin? It is thus essential, when considering the African child, to come to an understanding of the word 'African'.

3.2 What is African?

Malherbe (2004:2) contributed significantly to this discussion on what 'African' means. It is important to specify the reason for choosing Africa and what is meant by this term. Questions like the following must be asked: Does 'Africa' refer to sub-Saharan Africa alone or to the entire continent? Is there something like a general African culture, belief systems and attitudes? Would it be better to approach the continent in terms of its diversity? What about the increasing numbers of people of African origin living in places like Europe and North America? How would we describe minority cultures in Africa, like Indian, Arabic, Western, Eastern, or resident Whites?

Anthropological studies describe the historical development of the various people groups in Africa. There is even strong Biblical evidence of the locations and dates of specific people groups in Africa. Africa offers a wide and diverse mix of what is African. In a consideration of history and the present, the researcher

arrived at three broad categories that could possibly describe what can be thought of as African. This interpretation comes from personal observation and represents a subjective understanding.

Category 1. Indigenous African.

This category would refer to the remote villagers from the countries where cultural life, beliefs and customs have remained unchanged over the ages. This means that in one country we may have more than one category of African. For example: in a country like Kenya there is a colonised sector who grew up in a Western environment with Western education. There is also an indigenous people group living in the remote villages who still have their traditional programs for upbringing and maintain their traditional customs. They have had very little exposure to the rest of Kenya. We can call them 'indigenous Africans'. Most African countries have specific areas occupied by clans and people groups who can be called 'indigenous'.

Category 2. Colonised African

This category comprises mixed Western and Islamic influences, brought there by, amongst others, the English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic colonists. Some of these countries tried to 'be' or return to being African after their independence. The reality is that they are 'trapped' between first-world ideologies and their cultural heritage. Too many generations have been influenced and affected for them to be able to return to their ancient lifestyle. We can call this phenomenon 'Colonialised African'.

Category 3. African.

This category refers to those parts of Africa where the various cultures and races have integrated to such an extent that the distinction between African and Western has become blurred. South Africa is one example. It could be argued that, in South Africa, the only distinctions between people are those of language and skin colour. Even the previously disadvantaged people have grown up and

been cultured by a unique blend of development that cannot be categorised as indigenous African. This would represent a rainbow people group who all belong to Africa and live and die as Africans. This group represents everyone, no matter where they are from, who is living in South Africa, even Africa itself.

Our true understanding of 'African' is also influenced by our understanding of people groups, history, geography, economy, arts, social customs and religions. This understanding could itself present a research project. Certainly much has been written about Africa and African culture. Most of it is well-researched and reliable. One can refer to writers like Mugambi (Christianity and African culture, 1989), Moila (Challenging issues in African Christianity, UNISA 2002), Mburu (Thematic issues in African philosophy, 2003), Swadener (Does the village still raise the child? 2000), However, it has, in the main, been produced by Westerners, with a Western audience in mind.

Most interesting are the autobiographies of several missionaries who spent many fruitful years in various countries (Klein, 1974:1-47). In these accounts, the missionary zeal and commitment to the African people is striking. Further, these missionaries were able to evangelise the people effectively. They even focused on evangelising and educating children. Many successes have been recorded that testify to the achievements of their calling – to evangelise the lost. At the same time, we find reflected in these records the superiority of the first world in relation to the 'Bantu' or Africans. Missionary works reflect a good understanding of African cultures and admirable engagement with them on the spiritual level, but show less understanding of the person as a 'human'.

Minimal effort seemed to have been made to effectively reach and develop children on the way to adulthood other than Christianising children and putting them into schools to 'educate' them (Kenyatta, 1938:1-34). Once more, the school model was 'Western'. The argument is not that this was necessarily wrong or in vain. History proves that well-educated leaders emerged from these

Western schools. One can mention names like Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Arap Moi and others (Mburu,2003) The problem is, however, that few, if any, of these leaders made sufficient impact to turn their countries into stable, God-fearing nations in the long run. The researcher surmises that other inputs were probably also needed, especially in children's ministries, to prepare the church and the country's leadership for the future. The lack of good, sustainable leadership in the Church serves as evidence for this assumption. During recent African church leadership consultations like CRAF in West Africa and MANI in Kenya, church leaders stated that the church lacks the development program to raise good leadership. It seems that many big church denominations are experiencing shortage of well developed leaders.

We are trying to indicate some understanding of the complex nature of the term 'African'. In developing its contextual leadership training model, Petra College was also challenged to reckon with this complexity, as well as with historical developments. Petra College's stand on the matter is that it will always take the given situation into account and allow for the various interpretations of what 'contextual' means. When there is reference to a contextually-developed model, this would mean a model that can be applied to a particular situation in a particular country with particular people.

3.3 Natural views on childhood

Belief or conviction strongly influences perception, so it is not difficult to find abundant evidence of a negative view of childhood in African culture (Malherbe, 2004:2). Of course, there are also positive views, but it seems that, deep down, childhood is seen as a lower or preliminary phase of being human. This has a very direct influence on how children are treated in the family, schools, the community, and the Church. It is also evident in the way the Church treats children. We can compare the Western understanding of childhood with the

African perspective in order to gain some understanding of what we see as childhood. This will also help us to see what we need to change if we want a more accurate understanding of childhood.

Western families view children from the perspective of a closed family system. Children or planned children are measured in terms of financial considerations. The question parents normally ask is: Can we afford a child (or another child)? A child's value is determined in terms of what the nuclear family needs or wants from that child. The Western purpose of education is to bring children to a point of independence from the family so that they can start their own new nuclear family. By education, we mean the formal (schooling) and the informal (cultural) development of the child. The child is individualised during the formative years, and parents, teachers and Sunday school teachers concentrate more on the individual's strengths and weaknesses. Most family systems function as very small groups and, today, not much of the extended family of uncles and aunts is left. The Western Church in general sees the child as an individual who needs to be taught Biblical knowledge to become a responsible church member one day. This is evident by the kind of programs and processes the church uses for children. The teaching content focuses more on things like Bible knowledge, church dogma, church history etc. Children apparently need to master these things before they can move on. Ironically the church seems not to have the same requirements for new adult converts. The place and role of the child in the church also suggests that children have to wait until they are grown up as to become full members. The value of the child is, therefore, as a future asset.

The African family looks at children in terms of family survival, and the value of each individual's contribution to the family system. Education starts at birth and moves through various stages that develop and prepare the child for the 'real life' that will come (Israel Ngoudou, Gabon, 2004:Interview). Most people groups within the indigenous people have some ritual of initiation as the child enters the adult world. In some cases, it seems to happen too early, especially for girls.

Although initiation rituals may be advantageous, some of them seem dangerous and damaging. Jomo Kenyatta defended such rituals as something the Western world is incapable of valuing or appreciating (Kenyatta, 1938:130). The circumcision rituals proved, however, more dangerous than advantageous, especially for girls. However, there are groups practising rituals that are apparently both effective and valuable in taking the child through the process of becoming someone in society. We can say that, in a sense, they also have a future value as an 'asset in the making'. During the formative years, however, the child has a very low status and value in the social order. The Western-Christian perspective probably says this is wrong, but, from the viewpoint and understanding of the African school of thought, the idea will probably undergo some reevaluation.

The Church, with its understanding of what childhood is and what inputs are needed for children, poses an even greater challenge. The way in which the church values the child is reflected in the absence of meaningful inputs and programs pertaining to children. As far as the traditional views on childhood are concerned, the Church in Africa has followed suit and views children as becoming part of church life only sometime in the future.

From a more Western-Christian point of view, Charles Boyd (1994) provides a very good Biblical perspective in his book 'Different children, different needs'. This book gives some indication of the personality types found among children, which gives us some understanding of how we can look at them. This approach also explains the particular needs of children during their formative years. Using this approach will help us achieve some insight into the make-up of a child in relation to his/her character and personality. Our challenge is to determine whether our definition of a child will be applicable to all children in the world. The question will then be: Are the needs of all children the same? Although we may argue that this definition is taken from a first-world perspective, the behaviour styles that will be measured will be the same for all children throughout the world.

The personality of the child will inevitably be influenced by his or her specific circumstances and influences. Boyd (1994:31) quotes the following words on a wall-hanging: 'Children are not things to be moulded, but people to be unfolded'. This could offer the most comprehensive understanding about childhood. Such an understanding will hold true regardless of the background, culture, or creed of the child.

It is believed that the leadership responsible for children need to have a clear understanding of who children are. Boyd (1994:19) had the following to say about our responsibility of reaching and developing children:

An often quoted Proverb lays the foundation stone for effective parenting/mentoring 'Train a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it' (see Proverbs 22:6, New Living Translation Metal Bible: 1996).

Many Christians assume that this verse simply instructs us to take our children to church and keep them in school, off drugs, and out of trouble. Then, even if they stray temporarily from the straight and narrow, when they are old, they will return to the morals and lifestyle they were raised to maintain.

Boyd (1994:20) says his problem with such an interpretation is that every child has the capacity to make his/her own choices. It does not take into account the individual will or personality of the child. His metaphor of the 'metal that remembers' (this is a new metal described on Discovery Channel's 'Beyond 2000') suggests that each child needs to be trained to conform to his/her 'bend'. Another metaphor that he uses is the parable of a plant. It describes a child as a seed with no name that God places in the parents' hands. This seed needs to be cultivated in order to grow up healthy and fruitful. Each child needs to become what s/he was intended to be – the one an orange tree, for instance, another an apple tree. When the parent, church, school or community engage with children, these metaphors could offer a very balanced point of departure regarding the

views on childhood. The Bible does offer us a universal understanding on childhood when we interpret Proverbs 22:6 more accurately.

Boyd (1994:19) postulates that a more accurate interpretation of this verse should read: 'Adapt the training of your child so that it is in keeping with its natural design; *when he comes to maturity, he will not depart from that pattern of life*' (Holy Bible, 1996).

The task of equipping people to work with children normally involves a strong element of challenge, where prevailing views, attitudes, and approaches to childhood are countered with Biblical views (Malherbe, 2004:3).

The Christian influence on the development of the child could be viewed as both positive and negative. Bogonko (1992:1-9) comments that the early Christians viewed the African child as primitive, uncultured and barbaric. This view may still be prevalent. Many missionary organisations and mission churches struggle with the same erroneous approach. The African child is seen as an empty slate in need of the education and schooling designed by the first world. The missionaries mistakenly presume that literacy and schooling constitute an entire education or total human experience. Bogonko concludes that, whilst indigenous education can borrow literacy, numeric skills and formalism from Western education, the latter can, in reverse, borrow functionalism, environment-centeredness, and practicality from the indigenous (Bogonko, 1992:8-9). To the African mind, education is a life-long process through which an individual progresses in predetermined stages from birth to death. According to African understanding, children need indigenous education to become accustomed to and adept in their environment. These basic principles are common to the rest of Africa. The Western approach does not take this into account and declares a child a *tabula rasa* onto which education can be written for the first time. John Mbiti (in Gotfried Osei-Mensah, 1990:66) had the following to say on the different

approaches of the West and Africa: 'The European says - I am because I think. The African says - I am because we are'.

Africans themselves have many diverse understandings regarding children and childhood. There are common characteristics owing to location and contact, but also much diversity because different lifestyles create different cultures and practices.

Nelson Mandela's reflections on his own childhood give us an even clearer view of the true nature of Africa and the Africans' views on childhood. He said (UNICEF, 2001):

My earliest childhood memories are of the village of Qunu in the rolling hills and green valleys of the Transkei. Qunu was where I spent the happiest years of my boyhood, surrounded by a family so full of babies, children, aunts and uncles that I cannot remember a single waking moment when I was alone.

That was where my father taught me, by the way he led his life, the sense of justice that I have carried with me for the many decades I have lived. By watching him closely, I learned to stand tall and strong for my beliefs.

It was in Qunu that my mother told me the stories that charged my imagination, teaching me kindness and generosity as she cooked meals over an open fire and kept me fed and healthy. From my days as a herd-boy, I learned my love of the countryside, of open spaces and the simple beauties of nature. It was then and there that I learned to love this earth.

From my boyhood friends I learned dignity and the meaning of honour. From listening to and watching the meetings of the tribal elders, I learned the importance of democracy and of giving everyone a chance to be heard.

It was those first years that determined how the many full years of my life have been lived.

I have chosen to use a work by Sorobea Nyachieo Bogonko, *A history of modern education in Kenya 1895 – 1991*, in an attempt to find a general perspective on the child in Africa. Bogonko's views, combined with those of Jomo Kenyatta (Kenyatta, 1938), give us a certain impression of how a colonised African reflects on African children and their needs. Certainly this is a far from comprehensive picture, because there are many other African countries that could offer a much broader understanding. However, for the purpose of describing the Petra College training model, a general point of reference is necessary, which is provided by this particular input.

Boyd's work (1994) can be seen as supplementary to other understandings. He concentrates on the individual child regardless of circumstances and the environment, so that we can treat each child as an individual. The uniqueness and behaviour of each child will be part of the human being s/he. Understanding children's behaviour provides an excellent tool for engaging with children when we reach them with the Gospel of Christ. This can also contribute to building healthy relationships in family life and with children.

3.4 What do we mean by children's ministry?

The concept 'children's ministry' links us to the field of ministry that includes the Church, as well as Christian organisations involved with children. A definition of children's ministry formulated by Petra College may give us a theoretical basis for understanding children's ministry.

Children's ministry is an interaction with children that is aimed at enjoying and responding in faith to the love of God, as expressed in Jesus Christ (Johannes Malherbe, 2002:1-6).

When we analyse this statement and try to use it as an evaluation tool for measuring the state of children's ministry in Africa, very few churches or ministries would pass the test. Just the words 'interaction with children' would

disqualify most formal churches' approach to children's ministries. The development of leadership for the children's ministry will always depend on good children's ministry skills. From the beginning, Petra College has focused on specialising in the field of practical children's ministry. The College also tries to adopt a far more holistic view on ministry to children.

In reflecting on what is understood by the phrase 'children's ministries', the researcher does so from the viewpoint of Petra College's training philosophy (Petra College, *Policy Manual*, 2004).

3.4.1 The ministry process for effective children's ministries

Petra College views children's ministry as a process. The process can be described as:

- **Nurture.** This is essentially a family process by means of which children experience the love of God. It shows a strong relational input.
- **Socialisation.** This is the process of building relationships and growing in community.
- **Evangelism.** This is a process whereby Jesus is presented in such a way that children can respond in faith and be incorporated into the Body of Christ.
- **Learning.** This is seen as a life-long process by means of which we integrate faith and values into practical Christian living, bringing honour to God and joy and hope to the world.
- **Healing.** This is the process that allows wholeness to be restored to broken children and their broken world.

3.4.2 The context of children's ministries:

Petra College also focuses on the practical aspects of children's ministry. The College has identified four major contexts in which children's ministry is normally carried out (Malherbe, 2002:Lecture):

- **Home-based children's ministry**

This focus takes into account everything necessary to reach the child in the home. In particular, it involves family life. First, Petra College helps leaders to understand families and then equips them with the skills necessary for engaging with these families, so that they can effectively reach the children and help them grow. The challenge is taking into account the different scenarios on how families function in Africa. Working in this context gives leaders a greater insight into family life from the African perspective. Petra College constantly develops within this particular field of study, and family ministry also forms an important part of the College's leadership training programs.

- **Church-based children's ministry**

This context is probably the better-known one in Christian circles, but ironically it is also the most dysfunctional in the context of ministry to children. The reason for this is that the church appears to experience difficulty in understanding what children really need in that context. Petra College has suggested that the Church suffers from two incorrect paradigms, one theological and the other the conviction that children need to be schooled in the Church. Petra College is actively taking up these challenges to assist the Church in finding effective ways of ministering to children. This approach also informs part of their leadership development programs.

- **School-based children's ministry**

Another important context is schools, which offer very creative opportunities to reach and influence children. Many of the learners in the Petra College model come from the school-teaching ranks. This forms a dynamic context for engaging with children and reaching them effectively. Schools are one of the many strategic possibilities of reaching children in Africa.

- **Community-based children's ministry**

Another very valuable context to consider is that of community challenges. The African communities believe that that a child is not shaped in isolation, so they can make a contribution to an important aspect of the child's development. It is also in the community that the child can be part of the solution to the desperate needs existing in Africa. The community is where the child lives and functions as part of society. This, too, is in line with Petra College's understanding of a holistic approach to children's ministry.

3.4.3 The training approach for children's ministries

Petra College also distinguishes between three approaches to children's ministry in terms of outcomes (Malherbe, 2002:Lecture).

- **Relational focus**

Petra College has made the very important decision to think and work with a relational concept. The College's training model for adults is therefore based firmly on a relational component. This means that, when training is being carried out, the facilitator acts as mentor and relates closely with the learner through the training process. Such a learning process stretches over many years, because the mentor aims to duplicate himself (herself) in the trainee. The most significant implication of this choice is that Petra College trains only a selected leadership limited to a minimum number of learners in each training venture. This results in a very intensive process, with a more concentrated input for fewer leaders, leading to very exciting returns in the long run. It also requires a special understanding of the training process on the part of the facilitator. This model provides the basis for understanding how to reach the child in a relational way.

- **Experiential focus**

One very important component of Petra College's training is understanding the importance of the experiential learning cycle. Combining the experiential component with what is being taught has proved a highly effective teaching method. As always, the facilitator is the most important factor in the success of the training session. It has been proved that concept formation relies heavily on the effective delivery of content combined with the immediate application of what has been taught. Reflection is used to test the concept and, if necessary, to formulate a new concept. This concept is in turn tested by experience and can then be altered or validated accordingly .

- **Developmental focus**

The word 'developmental' points to a process approach in training. Petra College does not consider training as an event, but rather as a long-term commitment to walking the road with the learner until the concepts have been internalised and understood. The premise is that training will be seen as process of growth into the teaching content. Such a process can also be described as a mentorship process (Petra College, *Unit Standards C0402; C403:2004*).

3.4.4 The validation of children's ministries

It is also necessary to clarify the question: Why should we carry out children's ministry? A simple answer could be (Malherbe, 2003:1-3):

- Because of the need. We do not have to prove such a need in Africa. It is a reality.
- Because God commanded us. This will include Petra College's Biblical basis for children's ministry (Matthew 18: 3, 5, 6, 14, 19; Luke 14: 12-14; Deuteronomy 6:6-7).
- Because God's love urges us. Refer to Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:14.
- Because it is important for children at this stage. Statistics and studies have proved children's openness in the early stages of development.

- Because it is a privilege and brings enjoyment to the lives of children and even adults.

Petra College's equipping model also includes specialised ministry focus points in the children's ministry models, for instance, early childhood development, walking with wounded children and puppet ministries, amongst others.

When the College was considering children's ministry in Africa and the rest of the world, some of the personnel discovered the following:

There is very little difference between models and approaches found in the West and those found in the Church in Africa when it comes to ministering to children. The ministry models are nearly all based on the school system of teaching. The teacher is like a school teacher imparting knowledge to the ignorant learner. S/he relies heavily on the content of the curriculum as source of knowledge, and assesses this knowledge by means of a written or oral test.

Petra College's approach differs in the sense that its personnel think and work in terms of relationships as the basis of input. The teacher becomes a facilitator of spiritual and emotional growth for the child. This requires a holistic approach and a long-term commitment from the facilitator. It also involves the child in the learning process, guiding that child through an experiential learning process to detect the learning points and to provide support for personal growth. The intention is not to describe the content of Petra College's children's ministry program in this section of the study, but to point out major differences in approaching children's ministry.

The following examples are in no way intended to provide a comprehensive picture of children's ministry models in Africa, but will merely be used to illustrate what occurs generally. The reality may be better or worse than these scenarios.

In Libreville, Gabon, the researcher found a dynamic new congregation conducting exciting programs to equip adults for service. The main service is lively and inspiring. However, the children, who number close on 100, are gathered in a back room and kept busy so as not to disrupt the important service for the adults. This startling picture seems to indicate the general understanding of children's ministries in Africa. In areas where much more is done for children, the concept of children's ministries nevertheless still appears to have been misunderstood.

The Nairobi Baptist church in Kenya has established excellent Sunday school programs, but, here again, the children are not included in the general life of the church. They are, in fact, separated from the adult church until their confirmation. This church seems, however, to have better-developed children's ministries than the Church generally in Africa. There is a very vibrant youth service on Sundays, but only a handful of children are involved.

In Madagascar, two perturbing cases were experienced. The first took place in a rural church, where the ministry to children consisted of a curriculum for which the teachers had not been trained. As a result, the children were merely tolerated and were subjected to two-hour sermons. They had to be content with singing a few songs during the formal classes. The other case was that of a church in Antanarivo, where there were trained teachers. The pastor included children during sermons, and in formal classes they were dealt with according to their age groups and developmental phases. Both the churches belong to the same denomination. The difference lay in the fact that the effective church had a vibrant pastor who invested in equipping children's workers. The other church had an excellent pastor who did not know how to deal with his problem.

There are a great many organisations also offering training in children's ministries for Africa. One is Child Evangelism Fellowship. They offer excellent

training content for children's workers and have also developed a club system intended to help the Church minister to children. Further, they have developed, and continue developing, excellent material for teaching children. Another organisation is Kidzana, from America. They have a good training curriculum and excellent staff. They also focus on training large groups at a time. The challenge both these organisations face is how to contextualise their material and training processes to suit the needs of Africa. Other organisations who is also involved in training programs for children workers in Africa is Scripture Union (Africa), Little Seeds (RSA), The International Christian College (UK), Viva Network (Africa), Compassion International (Africa), Ywam – Kings Kids (Africa), Every Child Ministries (Africa), Global Ministries – Children of Africa (Africa) etc. They all seem to face similar challenges in terms of effective training models. The even greater challenge is how to empower leadership to take responsibility for the requirements of their children's ministries the national level. After many years of input from various children's ministries, very little influence has touched the leadership of churches and organisations in Africa in general. This is evident in the state of the ministry to children as it stands in Africa at this juncture.

Reflection.

The section on children's ministry in Africa focuses on the clarification of a number of issues in our understanding of what is happening in the continent. The purpose of the chapter was not to investigate all the models and forms of ministry to children currently in practice in Africa, but was rather to understand what can be regarded as the principles explaining trends in children's ministry in Africa. All ministry models for children's ministries found in Africa relate to the understanding of what we mean by 'Africa'. The question of how we see and approach children from an African perspective was also dealt with. This chapter focuses, in addition, on Petra College's understanding of children's ministry and its approach to addressing the training needs of Africa. The explanations of the approach and the context of ministry focus help to formulate the very important training principles according to which Petra College operates. The researcher also attempted to validate the concern for children from a Biblical perspective.

The examples of cases in other African countries serve merely as examples of a general trend found in Africa concerning approaches to children. The value of work with children done by other training organisations in Africa must be acknowledged, and some of them have engaged with the rest of Africa for a much longer time than Petra College has done. It is true, however, that, although good training has been provided in the past, there has not really been a visible effect on or difference in communities in the long term. Another shortcoming is the shortage of leaders for children's ministries. Previous inputs, of which Petra College has also been part, did indeed develop good children's workers, but failed to impact wider fields of ministry. However, the relational approach to training and ministry is helping to forge new inroads into Africa, and there are currently some very exciting developments and new initiatives addressing the needs of Africa's children.

The most obvious difference at present is the quality of leadership emerging from Petra College. This is changing the outcomes of national ministries in churches and organisations. The impact is also evident in developments in children's ministries at the national level, as well as in the establishment of leadership training centres for children's ministries in Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, the DRC and Tanzania.

For a number of years, developments in Ghana and Nigeria have effected changes in children's ministries in those particular countries, but leadership development seems to be a major necessity in all the West African countries. Petra College engaged with them during the trial period in the late 1990s, but is now moving in with a more definite strategy.

The concept of leadership development in Africa from a Christian perspective was also briefly considered in this chapter..

Chapter 4

African leadership and its influence on children's ministries

4.1 General perspectives on Christian leadership criteria in Africa

A search through the catalogues of large libraries such as the UNISA library, along with other online resources, provided very little information on descriptive training models for leadership constructed from a Christian perspective that could be related to Africa. The main aim of the search was to find scientifically-developed leadership training models that could be used as benchmarks for evaluating the Petra College model of training. The only references available to the researcher were those for leadership training models described by the better-known first world oriented writers like Le Bar (1995) and O'Gangel & Wilhoit (O'Gangel, 1980; O'Gangel & Wilhoit, 1993). Other writers, like Covey (1991) and Maxwell (1998), contribute to leadership development by focusing on principles that help the leader function as a successful human being.

The researcher managed to find a quarterly journal, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2003, written and compiled from a secular leadership perspective. This series contributes much to the understanding of the empirical methodology and the approach to evaluating leadership development in the corporate world. It also contains articles on leadership based on scientific developments as well as contextual discussions on leadership issues (Alvesso & Sveningsson, 2003). The main inference to be drawn from this is that it confirms the understanding that leadership development remains a field of contention even in the secular world, and there is still much to be researched.

However, a number of good training models with a Christian perspective and aimed at adult ministry leadership were found in the African context. As far as children's ministry is concerned, there are apparently very few leadership training

models. The argument could be posed that leadership training models should be universal and, if a leader has been trained, s/he will be able to function effectively in any ministry. However, this assumption did not prove completely accurate. In speaking to various Christian leaders, in particular General Secretaries of big churches like the Lutheran church in Tanzania, the Episcopal church in Sudan, the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, the Evangelical Church of Christ in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Evangelical Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), to mention a few, the researcher found that the Church and many Christian organisations experience difficulty in finding competent ministry leaders. This need for leadership development was confirmed also by prominent leadership training organisations like CORATAFRICA (Christian Organisations Research and Advisory Trust of Africa), working in Eastern and Northern Africa, SALT Leadership training in Sudan but based in the Netherlands, Fida International (East Africa Empowerment Program), and leadership in general at consultancies like the Red Sea Consultation (East Africa/ Horn of Africa), CRAF (Francophone Africa) and MANI (Africa). The situation persists despite the fact that a considerable number of leadership training models offer some good universal principles and skills for developing an effective leader. The researcher interprets the lack of emerging leadership, despite all these different efforts, as confirmation that the concept, model and process of leadership development within Christian circles is not as yet fully developed and established.

It seems that a specific understanding of the particular needs and challenges of a specialised field of ministry like children's ministry is required in developing an effective leader. To know who is needed for what role seems crucial in carrying out training. Children's ministry naturally demands a focus on Christian issues, but the training model also needs the particular skills that are found in that specialised field. Further, the leadership component of the training input requires an additional specialised focus that comes, by and large, from the secular world. The facilitator and the leader in training should, in the case of children's ministry leadership, have a particularly good understanding and experience of the field.

This, of course, is true of any specialised field for which leadership must be developed. This all refers, in the end, to a specific type of leader in terms of personal qualities, as part of a specific development plan or process for a specific purpose or outcome. The personal qualities of such a leader appear to be the major consideration before a successful leadership development plan can be drafted or attempted.

Another crucial question is: What is it that makes us say someone is a leader? The secular world considers a leader to be someone who assumes a particular position of leadership, for example, in politics as a party leader, or who answers to a particular job description in the corporate world, such as the CEO of Microsoft. Some are considered leaders when they build up and run successful businesses, like Raymond Ackerman of Pick 'n Pay, South Africa. Others are counted as leaders because they have a particular organisational position, such as leader of a labour union. Still others, such as Mother Theresa, are seen as leaders because of their valuable contribution to society. Finally, there are groups like pastors, who are considered leaders on account of their position and responsibility in church ministry.

In some instances, these criteria are valid. In many other cases, however, such assumptions have proved false when we look back at the track record of so-called leaders in various sectors. This, sadly, is true also of church leaders. The crucial component in the development of a leader seems to be founded on another set of principles. As far as the ministry is concerned, it seems that more life-changing aspects taken from a variety of disciplines, ranging from theology and human science to practical business practices, should be incorporated.

The researcher is of the opinion that there should be a more scientific approach to leadership development. Important areas of focus might include direct contributions from the various scientific fields that would impact on personal formation (spiritual and inter-/intra-personal development), specific skills

development, specialisation in a particular field/s, mentorship programs and a controlled individual development plan based on the ongoing training needs of the individual leader.

For the Church, there is the essential requirement of a moral being who is linked to a reputable personal value system. Combined with this 'Be' aspect of the person, one also expects specialised skills that could contribute to the effectiveness of the leader functioning in a specific capacity within a specific environment. The reality is, however, that there is a more obvious lack of effective leaders than there is proof of any functional leadership in Africa with a positive effect on the Church and Christian organisations in general.

Biblical examples of leadership portray normal human beings like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samson or David, who functioned within the limitations of their humanity. The differences in their leadership styles can be located in their individual personalities, their God-centred paradigms, and the mystical understanding of their assignments. Equipment for their roles came from a combination of factors. Most of them were prepared from birth through upbringing, life experiences, gifts, talents and specific skills (evidenced, for example, in Jeremiah 1:5, NLT, 1996). They functioned initially in their human capacity, and then God empowered them to assume their leadership roles. The book of Hebrews refers to most of the notable leaders as giants of the faith experience (Hebrews 11, NLT, 1996). The researcher infers from this that, although science and human capacity contribute much to someone's development as a leader, it must be admitted that there is a 'God factor' in such a person's development for which we cannot not offer a rational explanation.

Petra College has to take all the above arguments into account when developing its leadership training model. The College focuses on a number of important criteria in the development of leaders for children's ministries. In the area of accountability, they ensure that leaders are carefully selected by the particular

church or organisation (Appendix 2). This ensures a leader who has been selected by the church/organisation for a specific role and according to the well-defined criteria suggested by Petra College (Appendix 2). Such a selection guarantees that the leader to be developed has the necessary support to go through the training process. Petra College and the partner church/organisation assume mutual responsibility for the leader's development at various levels. In combination with the leader's faith foundation, which is provided by their particular faith institute, Petra College focuses on the personal formation of the leader. This incorporates different areas in the discipline of human science (Petra College, *Serving as a leader, Manage a children's ministry*, 2004). The equipping process of the leader in development is based on a relational approach to training (Petra College, *Strategic Process*, 2004: 1.7, 3). This would mean that mentorship is seen as the key factor in the development of a leader. The training input will also include clear Biblical principles combined with personal experience, as well as practical expertise in the field of children's ministry. These principles should be combined with empowerment by the selected leadership skills that form part of the leader's personal development program.

Emphasis is placed, not so much on the content of the training program, but on the training process (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004). This possibly constitutes the major difference between Petra College's approach to leadership development from a Christian perspective and that of the secular leadership development programs found on the market. The researcher acknowledges that much more in-depth research must be undertaken to explore the topic of leadership on a scientific level.

The above discussion has been necessary to gain some understanding of where Petra College's training programs fit into the specialised field of leadership development.

4.2 Developments in leadership training in Africa

If we are to understand something about leadership in Africa, the various leadership programs available in the continent must be considered. A work by Dag Heward-Mills of Ghana on political leadership in that country suggests that African leadership models have a very poor image. Power struggles, coups and corruption are presented and highlighted as a contemporary model of leadership (Heward-Mills, 2000:13). This indicates a definite absence of good, reputable leadership.

Negative pictures of leadership pertain also to the Church. Religious and political leaders in Africa point out that the general crisis experienced in Africa is the result of ineffective leadership (Mills, 2000; Tite Tienou, 1990). This is reiterated at various leaders' meetings throughout Africa, at which the researcher has been present. Other researchers like Dr Roger Sharland from the organisation REAP (Rural Extension with Africa's Poor, 2004) found that, to engage with a mission field like Sudan, effective leadership is needed if the enterprise is to succeed (Sharland, 2004). FTT (Finish The Task) from Kenya facilitated an East African Congress in November 2004 to discuss the burning issue: 'What does it take to be an effective leader?' (FTT Afriserve Newsletter, Vol. 4/04). The reality is that this question might also be asked of the Church in Africa. Much more is expected from Church leadership in terms of integrity and ethics than of leaders in other positions in society. The most common shortcomings on the part of Christian leaders seem to be bad management practices, lack of competence in effective functioning, immorality and the abuse of money and power. One could refer to a very recent case of corruption in the top leadership of a very large, prominent church denomination, with about two million members, in an Eastern African country, when money and immorality contributed to the fall of a well-educated, respected leader. Christians are reminded about the vulnerability of church leaders every time there is a sensational media story concerning the fall of a Christian leader.

Church and missionary leaders are all in agreement that there is a dire need to focus more on the development of effective leaders for the near future. These groups represent mainline churches like the Episcopal Church in Sudan; the Africa Inland Church in East Africa; the Christian Mission and Alliance Church in Gabon and West Africa; the Church of Christ in the DRC, representing 64 denominations in the Congo; the Lutheran Church in Tanzania; the Assemblies of God in Tanzania and Zimbabwe; the Kale Heywet Church in Ethiopia; ECFE, representing 22 denominations in Ethiopia; the Church of the Nazarene in the whole of Africa, including the RSA; and the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in the RSA. One hears, in attendance at various work groups and seminars in different parts of the continent, that the 'buzzword' in all current training programs is 'leadership training'. One reason for such a focus is the need for good leaders but also the promising opportunities developing in Africa. There are great expectations that Africa will become the spiritual leader in the wider world. The key strategy is a gradual greater focus on the future generations, the children.

Clinton : 1988, distinguishes between leadership training and leadership development. Leadership training according to him refers to a narrow part of the overall process, focussing primarily on learning skills. This would mean that training would refer to an event orientated approach where mass training models will be implemented. Leadership development includes all of life's processes. The implication of such an approach would be to focus on a development process linked to mentorship which in turn will relate to small groups of learners.

Tite Tienou (1990:vii) maintains that one of the major crises facing African Christianity today is in the area of leadership'. Missionary research now clearly indicates that the centre of gravity for Christianity is shifting away from the West to Africa and Asia (Tienou, 1990). In his monograph *Servant Leadership*, Tienou (1990) says: 'It appears that Africa will have the responsibility to help shape the

image of world Christianity both in our own generation and for the generations to come. The African proverb "You cannot give what you do not have" forces us to look at leadership in the church'.

Furthermore, there is a question mark over the topic of leadership in children's ministries, where there is a lacuna in examples of effective leadership. Should the church realise that it needs to concentrate on leadership if it is to meet the challenges of the future, it is hoped that they will assess leaders other than traditional church leaders. Various church denominations, Bible schools and NGOs have started to put their efforts into the development of better-quality leaders. Yet again, however, the major focus is on adults as the main strategy for the future. Some of the churches represented at the consultations were the Africa Inland Church (AIC); the Presbyterian Church; the Episcopal Church; the Alliance Church; the Sudan Interior Church (SIC); and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Malawi (CCAP). Bible schools have also joined in the quest to include leadership training in their curricula. Special workgroups were established at the Red Sea consultation and the New CUSH consultation, where various Bible schools are represented. Representatives come from Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Australia. Similar discussions were held in India, Francophone Africa, South Africa and Madagascar. NGOs like SUDRA (North Sudan), Compassion International, Viva network and World Vision are also focused on finding effective leadership development programs. It is a sad fact of these praiseworthy developments that there is little to no attention given to preparing children as future leaders.

Having made visits in his personal capacity to Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Tanzania, Kenya, Gabon, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, and Sudan, the researcher is convinced that leadership in the field of children's ministries has not been included in leadership development discussions. As part of a workgroup with specialised involvement in a country like Southern Sudan, the researcher has seen many inputs in the preparation for

good leadership in the New Sudan. In such meetings, however, he constantly had to point to the fact that children must be included in the strategic inputs. The question is: Why is this not seen as a logical inclusion? The problem seems to come from an erroneous understanding of the status and value of children. Petra College perceives two problem areas. The first is theological, and has to do with the understanding of God's perspective on children as presented in the Bible. The second problem is semantic, and points to the idea that the spiritual formation of children is linked to a pedagogical approach. Children must be 'schooled' in order to 'become'. Both these problem areas contribute to a gross misunderstanding of the seriousness of children's ministries, which is in turn responsible for the lacuna in leadership development programs.

Gottfried Osei-Mensah's views on leadership development in Africa (1990:8-73) constitute a starting point for an African perspective on leadership. He argues a general agreement that there is an acute shortage of trained leadership at all levels of the Church in Africa. The question, however, is: What kind of leaders are we talking about? What kind of leaders should be trained to meet the future needs of the Church in Africa? He argues further that the Church all too readily copies the world's models of leadership, and refers to the secular styles of leadership and the way in which leaders are chosen. His assumption is that the world presses the Church into a predetermined mould. Such an argument could cause confusion, because there are many dangers inherent in the Church's efforts to emulate worldly patterns. But what do we really mean by Christian leadership development? To what type of model are we referring?

Osei-Mensah (1990:8) postulates a servant-leadership model that reflects on Biblical models for leadership, dignity and humble service, gifts for humble service, equipping leadership and varieties of leadership. However, his work is not clear on how and what one will teach or whom one will mentor in order to effectively develop good leadership. The contribution in Chapter 5 of his book *Servant Leadership* is more inspiring and helpful. In this chapter, he discusses

some of the definite contributions made by the African Church to developing good leadership. Concepts like the integration of reality represent a Western-orientated thinking pattern about the struggle between the spiritual and the material worlds, but, according to Osei-Mensah (1990), Africans live in awareness of the unity of reality (material and spiritual) and of man's relationship to both God and the total environment. The second contribution is that of community consciousness. A caring community is a natural phenomenon within the African community. The West has to implement programs and make conscious efforts to establish such understanding, whilst it is found as a natural system throughout Africa. Under the heading 'Powerlessness and power', he concludes that the Church in Africa can offer a Biblical approach to missions grounded on the weakness of lacking all the wealthy resources of the West. His third contribution is that, while the Church has many missionaries (manpower) to offer for cross-cultural missions, the greatest need remains the development of effective leadership. This approach to leadership repeats the familiar criticism that focuses on the 'Be'-aspect of the leader. This is certainly one facet of the person needed for leadership development, but it is not the only one.

The picture of leadership in the Church in Africa shows poorly-equipped leaders who sometimes fail in character and leadership skills. The models of the secular world are based on efficiency. This is something the Church does not seem to understand. There are many successful Christian businessmen/women, like Stephen Covey (USA), John Maxwell (USA), Ken Blanchard (USA), Ronnie Collatz (BBR Security, RSA), Marius Collatz (Anro Flower Farm, RSA), Andre Wohlfahrt (Wohlfahrt Poultry Farm, RSA), who make use of 'worldly' leadership principles. Some of them have written books that the Church could use to great effect. What makes strategic-planning principles in the Church different from those of the business world? We do agree that leadership stands and falls on the 'Be' aspect of the leader, but the question is whether anyone has ever disagreed on this matter. Every leadership book on the shelves mentions this issue.

However, addressing it for decades does not seem to have changed the situation.

Examples of Christian leadership training models found in Africa.

One good example of correct focus on the strategic value of children is to be found in Ethiopia. The ECFE (Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Ethiopia, representing twenty two denominations) is currently developing a leadership institute that will specialise in children's ministries. The institute will train adults, empowering them to prepare children for future leadership roles in the Ethiopian Church and Ethiopian wider society. The Ethiopian Church has the right understanding of the importance and value of children, with its holistic approach to reaching children, whom they believe have the potential to influence society significantly (CDC&R document, 2005). The only negative aspect of the church's strategy is its misunderstanding of the training process. The ECFE group falls into the same trap as most churches and organisations in opting for a 'quick fix' to their training needs. This means that they want mass training to develop as many leaders as possible in the shortest time. The main strategy centres on leadership development, which will represent the core of the institute's activities. Petra College is committed to their leadership development process, which will mean a three to five year-long process (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004). The first leader for this process was trained in 2005. During 2006 a further five leaders will be selected and included as part of the partnership agreement for the long-term process based on the three phases of development (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004).

Another positive example is in Tanzania, where there is a commitment on the part of the wider Church movement to focus on children. Partnership with Compassion International and New Life Foundation resulted in most of the major denominations joining in an effort to develop quality leadership in the field of children's ministries. The main goal is the establishment of a leadership training centre for the ministry to children in Moshi. Petra College started the strategic

process in 2005 with 32 selected leaders representing most of the mainline church denominations. This process will follow the strategic development plan set out in Petra College's *Strategic Document* (2004).

There are also admirable leadership-training developments in Kenya, with the Church initiating an organisation called 'CORAT' (Christian Organisations Research and Advisory Trust Of Africa, 1975: Brochure/Interview), which aims at indigenous leadership training. This initiative came from the wider Church body that had realised the enormous need for leadership training. The content seems to be reliable and contextual, but the training process lacks effectiveness. The reason for this is the misconception of leadership and management training as an event instead of the actual nature of the training, which is selected focus on an individual over a long process during which the greatest input is that of mentorship. By this we mean that fewer leaders should be trained more intensively and that follow-up contact should take place over a longer period of time. This training process depends on a well-developed leader who can mentor another emerging leader to become even better than the mentor. The focus of CORAT is on empowering adults to become effective ministry leaders. The researcher believes that, although children are not part of this institute's focus, the training content could contribute much in developing good leadership for the children's ministries. The immediate challenge is to establish a shared training concept between CORAT and Petra College. This would ensure that CORAT could empower leaders with management skills, whilst Petra College could develop leadership in terms of the children's needs.

Another well-known role player in the area of leadership training in Africa is the organisation called The Samaritan Strategy, which functions under Food for the Hungry International (FHI World View, 2004, review: CD). The organisation produces excellent content aimed at understanding important issues relating to topics like Biblical and worldviews, cultural issues, sound theology and the good governance required for sustainable leadership. Although it may appear from

their training model that they understand the principles of adult training in the same way as Petra College does, the fact remains that their training model does not produce the envisaged results. Further, they seem unable to create a program that would continue to produce effective leadership. One reason could be that the demand for training in Africa is so great that mass training is virtually a given scenario. It is reported that the Samaritan Strategy training venues sometimes accommodate up to 500 participants. The logical counter-argument is the virtual impossibility of effectively empowering leaders in such venues in such large numbers and in the brief training period of five days. This model also fits the typical first-world approach to seminars, which are aimed at the cognitive development of the individual through imparted information. After many years of very dedicated input, no major trends in African leadership could be seen by the researcher as evidence that leadership emerged from these training initiatives.

Another initiative for leadership training comes from Walk Thru the Bible Ministry, in conjunction with John Maxwell's ideas on leadership development (Maxwell, 1998). Walk Thru the Bible and Maxwell developed a program called the Million Leaders Mandate (*Training Document*, 2004). The content is excellent and is suitable for leadership training, but it is designed and packaged for a first-world-oriented audience. This is evident in the method used in conducting their training. The audiences are large, and the format is the typical workbook concept where the facilitator instructs the audience to complete sentences with the right words or phrases. The outcome of a training session was referred to as the empowerment of a very large group of leaders. The problem with this approach is that an audience includes different types of people with varying levels of education and leadership experience. The researcher personally attended some of these training sessions, and interviewed two leaders who had been attending them on a regular basis over the previous two years. One of them was a wealthy, successful businessman who also contributed generously to leadership training in his own business and in ministries like the Gideon Bible ministry. The other leader was in ministry management in a large, independent church in South

Africa. According to the two leaders, the participants, especially corporate business leaders, found the content interesting but not new. Others, like church leaders, were hearing about certain concepts for the first time and needed far more time and input to be able to integrate and implement this new knowledge.

In the Western world, there is a dichotomy between the secular and the sacred when it comes to leadership. This is particularly true when viewed from a Church perspective. Some outstanding material on leadership is available, developed in recent years in Australia, Europe, and the USA. Stephen Covey (1990, 1991) and John Maxwell (1998) are contemporary leaders and writers who represent both Christian and secular perspectives on leadership issues, so they have an integrated view on its development. Their leadership material reflects sound Biblical principles as well as good practical management principles and skills. According to these two writers, the leader should be someone who 'is' and who is able to 'do' effective leadership and management as a whole person (Covey, 1990,1991; Maxwell, 1998). They do not offer a particular leadership training program or format but focus rather on the important content that should be included in a leadership training program. Petra College includes much of their leadership material in its three-month Mentorship course (Petra College, *Mentorship*, 2005).

The older leadership school is represented by writers like Oswald Saunders and Kenneth O'Gangel (1980). Their views on leadership material also emphasise the 'Be' aspect of a leader's character. The Church seems to have accepted the 'Be' in leadership development, but is reluctant to expose itself to the more contemporary approaches to leadership training, that is, the practical skills associated with leadership and management.

Reflection

This chapter provided a brief insight into the leadership philosophy of Africa. The researcher did not attempt to present extensive research on leadership training models, but tried to create a basic understanding of how leadership training is viewed and conducted in Africa. He is of the opinion that this contributes to a proper understanding of the place and value of the Petra College model for training leaders. This discussion also explains the shortcomings evident in the approaches of the various leadership development models found in Africa. One future need that came to the fore as a result of this study is a proper research project for investigating the value and impact of all the relevant leadership training models on the ground level over a longer period of time.

The greatest paradigm shift that must take place is the inclusion of children's ministry leaders in ministry leadership development programs in Africa. Clearly there is already a good understanding of the value and need for leadership development in the Church and mission organisations. This was confirmed during many discussions held between Christian leaders at various gatherings in Africa over the last three years. The challenge that the Church and Christian organisations face is to find contextual leadership training models to impact their ministries.

The value of the 'Be' facet of a leader is accepted as a crucial element for developing good leaders. The 'Do' facet seems to depend on the specialised input of whatever the functional needs are. Leaders cannot be developed by means of mere academic achievement or business success, nor can society simply designate someone to become a leader. Leaders are developed by receiving specific inputs for specific outcomes. The process for such a training input will determine the eventual success of the training program. The 'Be' and the 'Do' facets can therefore not be separated, but must be seen in combination. Africa appears ready for the required training initiatives for Christian leadership,

but training providers will still fall short of properly empowering effective leaders unless there is a paradigm shift in the strategic training models and processes.

The following chapter will describe the proposed Petra College leadership development process.

Chapter 5

Petra College's strategy for equipping leaders for children's ministry in Africa

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the general strategic procedure for equipping leaders in children's ministry. It begins with an overview of the identity and origin of Petra College. The procedure is linked to a phase-development structure and its intended outcomes, as well as the dynamics of the methodology used in running the training process (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004).

5.2 General description

Petra College is an inter-denominational Christian training college established on 1 April 1989 and committed to equipping and mobilising leaders in children's ministry. The administrative centre and campus are situated at Petra Mountain on the outskirts of White River, in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004: 3,4)

Petra College offers training in different aspects of children's ministry. This training is carried out within a framework of partnerships, employing relevant, effective training resources, an extensive system of mentorship and dedicated prayer. Training, offered at the basic, advanced and academic levels, is carried out by a team of mentors from various professions, countries and confessional backgrounds. The College's self-appointed task is to provide general training in key aspects of children's ministry. It has also developed the expertise essential for training people to work with disadvantaged children.

The College's work is supervised by a Board of Directors comprised of internationally-acknowledged leaders in children's ministry (Petra College, *Policy Document*, 2004). Its finances are audited annually and its academic integrity is evaluated according to the framework of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The College is accredited with the national Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) as a training provider (Petra College, *Policy Document*, 2004).

Vision

To extend the ministry of Jesus to the children of Africa and beyond

Mission

Petra College is committed to equipping leaders in children's ministry in Africa and beyond.

5.3 Strategy

The following are central to Petra College's strategy:

- leadership formation;
- strategic partnerships;
- relevant and efficient training resources; and
- dedicated prayer.

5.4 Statement of faith

Petra College aligns itself with the Lausanne Covenant, a statement of faith adopted at the historic 1974 meeting of church and missions leaders from around the world (Lausanne Covenant, 1974). This document is widely accepted by evangelical churches.

5.5 Core values (Petra College, *Policy Document*, 2004)

- Petra College values and enjoys children.
- Petra College builds family and community.
- Petra College serves in love.
- Petra College wants everyone to know and worship God.
- Petra College is committed to learning and the promotion of learning.
- Petra College focuses where the need is greatest.
- Petra College is committed to working together with others.
- Petra College endorses and develops leadership.

5.6 Achievements

Since the first group of students started their training at Petra College in 1990, more than 5000 people have completed at least one of Petra College's many training programs. Former students serve in various children's ministries in about 50 countries worldwide.

The College's *Johan du Preez Study Fund* has already assisted more than 260 students with bursaries.

It is estimated that more than a million children in 50 countries have already benefited from the training their leaders received at Petra College (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004).

Its partnership with a Christian foundation has guaranteed Petra College the unconditional use of the premises at Petra Mountain. In addition to accommodating the College administration, the facilities provide full residential facilities for as many as 30 students at a time.

Petra College is involved in a number of international networks and partnerships that promote international coordination in working with children. The College had entered into 22 strategic partnership agreements by 2005 (Petra College, *Strategic Plan, 2005*), and is an associate member of Viva Network, the largest partnership of organisations working with children at risk. The College is also represented at a number of important forums as part of an advocacy campaign for children. These forums include cutting-edge meetings held at venues around the world, such as TEASA (RSA), MANI (Africa), and various consultations (the Middle East; the Horn of Africa; East Africa, West Africa and North Africa). It has also developed a working relationship with leading churches, ministries, and organisations working with children.

Petra College has built up an extensive database of nearly 14 000 people from 85 countries, who share the vision of reaching children with God's love. Three times annually, *Petra College News* is sent out at no cost to more than 10 000 addresses all over the world (Petra College, *Data Base, 2005*).

Petra College combines its expertise in training with extensive research to produce quality training resources. Some of these resources have already been translated into more than 20 different languages, including many African languages, Arabic, French, Portuguese and Russian.

In 2003, Petra College designed and submitted 24 Unit Standards for the South African Qualifications Authority, which were officially published and registered in 2004 (Petra College, *Unit Standards, 2004*).

In 2004, Petra College received provisional accreditation as a training service provider with the Health and Welfare SETA (Petra College, *Policy Document*, 2004).

5.7 Philosophy of learning

Petra College maintains the following philosophy on the learning process (Petra College, *Policy Document*, 2004):

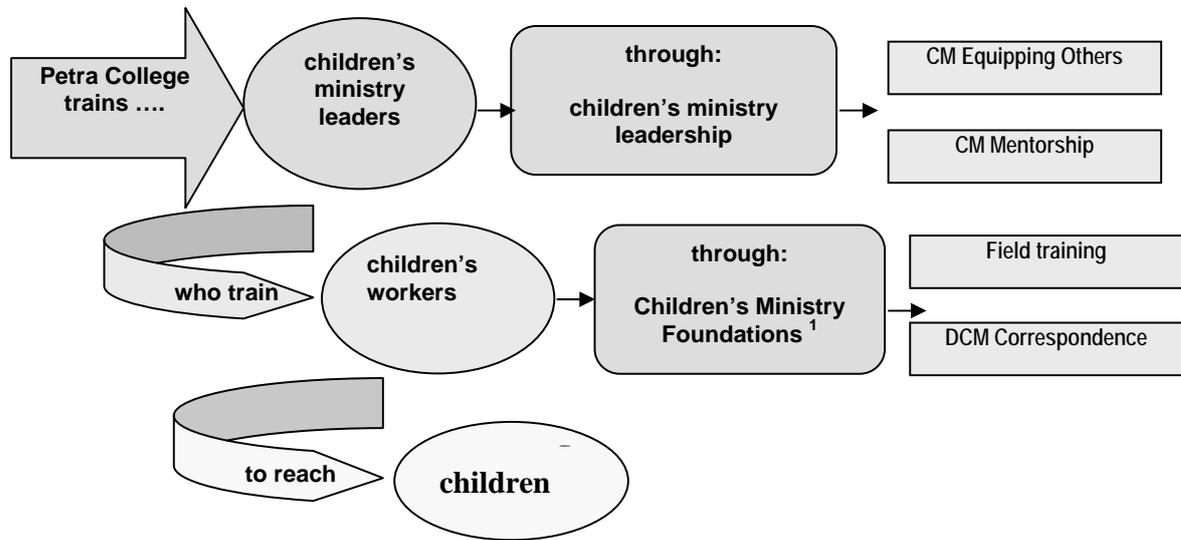
- to learn is to grow;
- learning takes place in the context of relationships;
- learning involves the whole person;
- learning can and should be facilitated;
- learning has an essential spiritual dimension;
- much can be learned from the way children learn;
- learning should equip people for better service;
- learning should be of the best quality;
- good learning requires good resources; and
- leaders should be helped to be learners and learners to be leaders.

5.8 Objectives of the Five Year Plan (2004 – 2008) (Petra College, *Five-Year Plan*, 2004):

- To help a total of **50 children's ministries** in Africa and beyond to implement a strategy for equipping and mobilising effective leaders in children's ministry.
- To help equip a total of **50 mentors** in children's ministry who are actively involved in mobilising God's people for effective children's ministry.
- To develop **leadership training programs** for a general children's ministry that can be implemented in the regions where Petra College is involved.

- To develop the **training resources** required for implementing the strategy for equipping children's ministry leadership (Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004).
- To ensure that Petra College can support **fully-accredited training** in children's ministry in the main areas of children's ministry and at different academic levels.
- To promote the focus on children's ministry and the equipment of children's ministry leadership in **strategic and relevant networks**.
- To draw up and implement a plan for upgrading and expanding the **facilities** at Petra College to be prepared for another decade of ministry.
- To draw up and implement a plan for increasing the **funds** available for training, research, and development by 25% per year over the next five years.
- To update the **organisational structure** of Petra College and provide a framework for effectively implementing the new strategy.
- To identify the key functions for implementing the strategy outlined, and implement measures for recruiting the **staff** who will best perform those functions.
- To implement a strategy ensuring that **prayer** is central to all operations carried out by Petra College.
- To implement measures ensuring that Petra College will continue to be a **place where God is served** in holiness and joy, and where his people can live peacefully in the beauty of creation.

5.9 Training Strategy



(Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004)

The **vision** of Petra College is to extend the ministry of Jesus to the children of Africa and beyond. The College wishes to see children reached with the love of Jesus Christ through the following strategic elements:

- strategic partnerships;
- leadership development;
- relevant material; and
- dedicated prayer.

This means that Petra College:

- commits itself to specific projects for equipping leaders in children's ministry in accordance with a **partnership agreement** and a **project plan**;
- develops and empowers leaders in children's ministry through **training processes** and **relevant material**; and
- seeks the Lord's guidance and supports the role players involved by means of **mentorship and prayer**.

The four elements of partnership, leadership, material and prayer are interrelated. The relationship between these elements and how they are deployed is the strategic process to be described in this document.

5.10 Overview of the process

The strategic process aims at developing and equipping the following role players in a children’s ministry:

- In the strategic process, Petra College’s main aim is to develop and equip **specific leaders** according to the partnership agreement.
- These leaders are, in turn, able to develop and equip **trainers in children’s ministry**.
- The trainers focus on equipping **children’s workers**.
- The children’s workers extend the ministry of Jesus to the children.
- Finally, the **children** themselves minister to other children.

(Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004)

Different training formats and models are used in the process. These include field (decentralised) training, correspondence training and residential training at Petra College.

The process is divided into the following three phases

PHASE	ACTIONS
Partnership Phase (P)	P1. Establishing partnership contact and related activities
	P2. Approving partnership
	P3. Agreeing on partnership and general project plan
	P4. Appointing a project leader from Petra College
Equipping Phase (E)	E1. Initiating the training of children’s workers
	E2. Follow-up training of children’s workers

	E3. Finally equipping the two selected leaders for the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course
	E4. Children's Ministry Mentorship Course for two selected leaders from the church denomination/mission organisation according to the partnership agreement
Mobilisation Phase (M)	M1. Developing training skills: training of children's workers
	M2. Developing training skills: training of trainers
	M3. Developing management skills

(Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004)

The different actions focus on one or more of the following areas:

- partnership;
- leadership development;
- developing the children's ministry in the partner organisation; and
- developing training for children's ministry in the broader geographical region of the partner church or organisation.

5.11 The operating principles of Petra College

Petra College is committed to developing leadership in the field of children's ministry.

- Petra College serve the interests of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, not its own.
- Petra College commits itself to working with others in the interests of extending the ministry of Jesus according to the requirements of a partnership agreement and a project plan.

- Petra College works in partnership with church denominations and Christian organisations that share this vision. The College's role is to help facilitate the establishment and/or growth of effective children's ministries.
- Petra College works on the principle that the partner church or organisation and the College will take up their respective responsibilities according to the mutual agreement.
- Petra College is committed to processes that will develop and equip mentors, trainers and children's workers for children's ministry.
- Petra College believes that the leaders with whom it works should themselves develop into mentors and take responsibility for developing, growing and managing the children's ministry of their church denomination or organisation.
- Petra College commits itself to developing and providing training material relevant to and necessary for the strategic training process.
- Petra College believes that its existence and all its activities are totally dependent on God, through dedicated prayer, with the help of prayer networks.

(Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004)

5.12 The strategic process

The process described here applies to both existing and new partners, and forms the framework for the partnership agreement and project plan (Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004).

5.12.1 Phase 1: Partnership Exploration & Formation (P)

Action P1: Establishing partnership contact and related activities

Petra College will work according to its overall strategic plan, finding potential partners by means of research, correspondence, visits, international consultations, workshops/meetings and other relevant marketing facilities.

Potential partners who initiate discussions with the College will be evaluated according to this strategy.

Action P2: Approving the partnership

The Head: Training Partnerships investigates the potential of the partnership for contributing to the shared vision(s) of the College and the prospective partner. The Head: Training Partnerships then makes a formal recommendation to the management of the Training Services Division, who approves the partnership on behalf of Petra College.

Action P3: Agreeing on the partnership and general project plan

The Head: Training Partnerships continues discussions and enters into a formal, but general, partnership agreement with the potential partner. This document, together with relevant documents and policies of the potential partner, will form the basis of the agreement. As far as possible, this will be done by correspondence. In the agreement, Petra College will include general descriptions of the different training programs involved in the process.

Action P4: Appointing a project leader from Petra College

Petra College appoints a project leader who will be responsible, on behalf of Petra College, for implementing joint action/training according to the agreement (Phases 2 and 3). The project leader will submit a proposed plan for the Equipping Phase to the leadership of the partner once the Head: Training Projects has approved the proposal. The project leader will continue to implement this plan once it has been finalised and approved. If the partner's situation remains too uncertain, the plan will then cover only the first action of the next phase. Planning for the remaining actions of the phase can then be carried out during that time (as described in the following paragraph). The partner should then also appoint a facilitator who will, on their behalf, join in implementing this plan.

5.12.2 Phase 2: Equipping Phase (E)

This phase is the start of the mentorship development process. The main focus is on identifying and equipping the leaders who will be responsible for developing or enhancing the children's ministry of the partner. Actions 1 and 2 of this phase are the preferred way of identifying and equipping these leaders for admission to the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course (Action 4). The project leader could propose different actions instead of Actions 1 and 2, depending on the particular circumstances of the partner. The only condition is that the end result should correspond to the recommended actions. Action 3 is compulsory, in order to proceed to the next phase. Mentoring is the foundation of Phases 2 and 3:

Mentoring constitutes the core of the relationship between Petra College and the partner. The main aim is to support and personally develop specific leaders in the field of children's ministry, as identified by and with the partner (see Action 1).

Mentoring will take place within the framework of the project plan and the partnership agreement.

The project leader will be responsible for mentoring or assigning a mentor to the process.

Action E1 (decentralised training): Initiate training of children's workers

The preferred starting point of the process is to arrange a 12-day training program, hosted by the partners in their country and context. This event will serve three purposes, as described by the following activities.

E1 Activity 1: Field training: full-time course of 12 days

This initial training will expose children's workers to a dynamic approach to children's ministry to equip and enable them to exercise such a ministry. This basic training is also used to influence the partner, the trainees, and communities at ground level to see the results when children are effectively reached with the ministry of Christ.

The training program used will be the Children's Ministry Foundations 1 Course. Petra College (and/or qualified lecturers from other partner Christian organisations in the region) will present this basic training course. Basic training should take place in decentralised locations. This model contributes to contextualising the training as well as helping the candidates to implement the content and skills as part of an ongoing training experience. The partner identifies a core group to be trained according to the terms of the general agreement. The project leader gives specific assignments on practical children's work to these candidates. The assignments are to be carried out before the next training session (Action E2), when it will be evaluated.

Where other partners are involved in this training program, Petra College follows up the input with a strategic planning session with those partners (Phase 1). This action is to be in line with Petra College's strategic plans for that particular case.

E1 Activity 2: Further development of the plan for this phase

Petra College staff will use this session to further develop and facilitate the project plan for this phase (refer to Phase 1, Action 4). It will be linked to specific role players and the expectations of the partner. The plans for Actions 2 and 3 (see below) of the Equipping Phase will be revisited, and a preliminary plan for the Mobilisation Phase can be drawn up. This plan must be documented.

Petra College will use other personal contacts with the partner or its representative, such as field visits and reports, to evaluate the progress of the plan. The project plan will constantly be reviewed and can be adapted to suit changing conditions.

E1 Activity 3: Recruiting and equipping potential leaders

The third purpose of this course is to assist the partner in the process of identifying and recruiting specific leaders for leadership development. Petra

College will use the partner's selection criteria as well as its own. One of the most important criteria is the potential to train others. At least two potential candidates should be identified during this process. The project leader could give additional assignments on practical children's work to these two candidates. The assignments must be carried out before the next training event (Action 2), when they will be evaluated.

Action E2 (decentralised training): Follow-up training of children's workers

A second 12-day training program should be held six months to a year after the first, again hosted by the partner. This will also serve three purposes, as described in the following activities:

E2 Activity 1: Field training: second full-time course of 12 days

The training program for this course will be the Children's Ministry Foundations 2 Course. Petra College (and/or qualified lecturers from other partner Christian organisations in the region) will again present this. The same candidates should attend this as far as possible, and the two identified leaders should take on certain responsibilities for the program in cooperation with the project leader. The assignments allocated at the first course will also be evaluated.

E2 Activity 2: The further development of the plan for this phase

Petra College staff will again use this event to revisit the project plan.

E2 Activity 3: Recruiting and preparing the final identified leaders for the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course (Action E4)

This phase will also be used to select the two final candidates for the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course. The evaluation criteria will be based on an individual assessment, taking into account academic standards and practical experience, as well as the relationship with the partner and the individual's future role/expected role in the organisation. The assignments given to these

candidates in Action 1, as well as their performance in the second course, will be the two main selection criteria.

If the project leader decides that the two final candidates still need additional experience or training, s/he will give specific assignments to this end. The assignments are to be completed and evaluated before a final recommendation can be made.

Alternatives to Activity 1 of Action E1 and E2

The project leader could motivate and make use of one of the following alternatives for equipping the selected leaders. The project leader must, however, still be involved in identifying and selecting the leaders for the mentorship development process. 'Recognition of prior learning' will be completed for all candidates to determine whether they meet the prerequisite training requirements. Prior learning may be any of the following:

- enrolment of candidates for certain modules of the Dynamic Children's Ministry Correspondence Course offered by Petra College;
- residential training (Children's Ministry Foundations) offered by Petra College, Western Cape, or other training partners for selected candidates; and
- previous equivalent training from organisations such as CEF, together with additional study and practical assignments.

Action E3: Finally equipping the two selected leaders for the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course

By this stage, the leaders will have undergone approximately 60% of the initial training required for entrance into the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course. The project leader will guide the leaders as to the way in which they should receive the outstanding training. There are two options:

- enrolment of candidates for certain modules of the Dynamic Children's Ministry Correspondence Course offered by Petra College.

- residential training (Children's Ministry Foundations 3) offered by Petra College for selected candidates; this takes place two weeks prior to the start of the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course.

Action E4 (residential training at Petra College): Children's Ministry Mentorship Course for two selected leaders

The third action of the Equipping Phase is to enrol one or (a maximum of) two candidate(s) identified through Actions 1 and 2 for the Children's Ministry Mentorship Course at Petra College. The candidate must have the required basic training specified by Petra College or an equivalent and meet all selection criteria for the course (refer to Appendix 2 for details). The candidates for this course are the leaders who will be responsible for the development and effective management of the children's ministry of the partner, with a special emphasis on training trainers and children's workers.

The course aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- equipping the candidates to address the training needs of the partner; these include elements like the planning of training events, curriculum design, preparation and presentation of training and follow up;
- learning more advanced skills for children's ministry, with a special emphasis on contextualised and specialised children's ministry;
- personal development; the main focus is on the spiritual growth of the individual; each individual should have a personal development plan by the end of the course; the plan will reflect spiritual and intellectual growth over a specified period;
- leadership development: this deals with the basics in the leadership development program; and
- learning management skills, including project-planning processes, personal formation, running a ministry, management, and personal skills development.

During the course, the project leader and the candidates will revisit the project plan, with a special emphasis on the training plan for the first 12 months following the course.

5.12.3 Phase 3: Mobilisation Phase (M)

(Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004)

By this juncture, one or two leaders should be fully equipped to further develop the children's ministry of the partner. The focus in this phase is on the continued development of these leaders and on developing and increasing the trainers of children's workers for the partner. The actions in this phase will not necessarily follow one after the other, but could take place simultaneously. The role of the project leader as mentor for these leaders will increase in this phase, while the direct management of the project (by Petra College) will decrease as the leaders take up more responsibility.

Action M1: Development of training skills: children's workers

The Mentorship Course will be followed by a period of approximately 12 months' duration for the implementation of the training plan. This will take place under the supervision of the partner in collaboration with the project leader.

During this time, the leader will be required to present at least six basic training events to equip children's workers for the partner. The format and duration may vary according to needs. The first training session should happen within six months of returning home. The leader will report to the appointed mentor in the agreed format and intervals in accordance with the project plan.

Leaders could make use of the Petra College programs *Children's Ministry Basics* or *Children's Ministry Foundations*, and the material for these training courses. The material will be used in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of use as determined by Petra College.

Where possible, the project leader or a representative of Petra College should attend one of these courses. This leader should be in the role of mentor for the leader(s) who present the training.

The activities for this action include:

- The leader implements and manages the 12-month training plan. This means conducting various training sessions aimed at equipping children's workers for effective children's ministries.
- The leader's personal formation and own development in practical children's ministry continue according to the personal development plan. The mentor (project leader) will play an important role in this process.
- The leader's practical skills for children's ministry are further developed through practical involvement with children and attending specialised courses. This will ensure relevant training inputs of a good quality.
- The training processes will be used to develop the leader's training skills and serve as evaluation criteria for the leader. The mentor's involvement will form part of this process.
- Field reports by the leader and communication from the mentor will contribute to the control and success of the initiative.
- The leaders are also required to use this period to build and strengthen their relationship and role with the particular partner.
- Ongoing evaluation and development of the project plan will ensure that the plan remains relevant and flexible.

Action M2: The development of training skills: trainers

The leader will also be responsible for further developing the selected children's workers to the level of trainers as part of the above-mentioned training plan. This group will preferably have done the Children's Ministry Foundations 1 and 2 in the Equipping Phase with the leader/s. If they have not done so, equipping these trainers by means of the foundations courses must form part of the training plan.

The goal is to develop a strong team to train children's workers. The development of trainers will result in more equipped children's workers reaching more children on a regular basis and in an effective way. It will also help to develop a resource pool from which to recruit leaders for children's ministry in the future.

An *Equipping Others* course should be presented to these trainers towards the end of the first 12 months. The leader and Petra College will present this together if possible, but the role of Petra College will again be that of observer and mentor. This action will present the leaders with opportunities of developing and improving their management and ministry skills. The mentor will act on behalf of Petra College as intermediary for these processes and the relevant role players.

Action M3: The development of management skills

This action will take place concurrently with the previous two actions. It consists of developing the management skills of the leader/s by means of a mentoring process. This could include assignments, reports and regular follow-up.

Ideally, the managers of the children's ministry for the partner would have been part of the full development process as described in Phases 1-3. However, Petra College will allow other valid criteria for accepting leaders to do the *Children's Ministry Mentorship Course* only. The role of these leaders in the partner organisation will be limited to managing the children's ministry. This will depend on strategic considerations. Petra College will invite these leaders on the recommendation of the project leader. There will be specific requirements for each case, based on merit and in agreement with the partner. Petra College will also accept the responsibility for mentoring this leader and guiding the processes up to the agreed level, in accordance with the partnership agreement. For these purposes, Petra College could appoint an additional mentor to act on behalf of the College.

Conclusion

This document has outlined the general strategic training process that Petra College would like to follow when working with a partner organisation. The key role players in this process are the Head: Training Partnerships, the Head: Training Projects, the potential partner, the potential leaders and the project leader. The detailed description of the process contributes to a very clear understanding of both the process itself and the implications of such a training program for both Petra College and the proposed partner. The document also provides a suggested model for future partnership agreements concerning other spheres of ministry.

The framework or foundation of the strategic training process is the project plan worked out with the partner. The main focus is on leadership development in partnership, resulting in a fully-equipped mentor in children's ministry. The outcome of the process is a well-developed and effective children's ministry with children's workers who are equipped to extend the ministry of Jesus to the children.

The model also makes provision for an alternative strategy whereby Petra College could engage in an informal agreement with another organisation, church or person in order to develop a leader for the children's ministry.

The researcher is of the opinion that this document will eventually prove to be the key to success in developing good-quality and sustainable leadership for children's ministries. The value of the document lies in its concern with the development of a leader both as an individual and as part of a wider system. Petra College ensured that practical checks and balances were built into the easy-to-follow, controllable strategic process.

It is always important to keep the end in view, which is to extend the ministry of Jesus to the children of Africa and beyond.

Chapter 6

The impact of Petra College's leadership training on children's ministry

The following stories represent authentic case studies featuring Petra College's training initiatives in Africa after 1990. Reflecting on the specific case studies is the researcher's attempt to focus on the impact of Petra College's training models based on the previous and present training approaches. There is a choice among approximately 22 countries when selecting case studies. The researcher decided on four different training projects in four different countries that would provide perspective on the different training scenarios. Although all of them could reflect very exciting success stories, the shortcomings of Petra College's previous attempts are also clearly shown.

It is as if Africa is at a point where there are some very exciting times ahead. The researcher has noticed many pleasing developments all over Africa in terms of politics, conflict resolution and, in particular, the Church in Africa. The very specific focus on training alone could serve as proof of changing attitudes and paradigms.

Petra College is faced with enormous challenges for the future in terms of meeting the training needs of the Church in Africa. There is already heavy pressure on the College's resources and training capacity at this stage. However, the existing training strategy and its outcomes offer hope for the future. It seems possible, judging by the results in the following case studies, for leaders to be empowered and mobilised to multiply in the field of children's ministries.

6.1 The Madagascar story

The following story from Madagascar represents one of Petra College's first major engagements at the international level. The College's involvement in

Madagascar came about through the influence of a missionary called Uncle (Rev.) Chris Fourie, who established a partnership of sorts with Scripture Union, Madagascar, and who also had a close working relationship with Child Evangelism Fellowship. In fact, Uncle Chris was one of the few South Africans allowed to enter Madagascar during the 'Apartheid' era.

The first ministry inputs focused largely on abandoned and neglected children and the process of placing the children, mostly girls, into protected environments, starting with rehabilitation. A number of these girls were involved in prostitution for survival, so the initial inputs can be described as evangelistic in the main, with 'social upliftment' as a desired outcome. Uncle Chris was later followed by his son, Chris-Johan Fourie (Fourie, 2005: Interview). Through Fourie's dedicated work, Petra College became involved in providing training for children's workers in Madagascar.

6.1.1 Background information

The purpose of this case study is to reflect on a former model of training that reveals its own inherent weaknesses. In 1998, Petra College engaged in training activities in Madagascar, which has a population of 72 million people. It was also clear at that stage that organisations like Child Evangelism Fellowship and Scripture Union could not successfully penetrate the Malagasy Church and society at the national level (Petra College, *Project Report*, 2003). Scripture Union had more success in reaching children in schools, but apparently did not manage to engage with the mainline churches like the FJKM. The needs of the children in Church and society became the pressure point for thinking more strategically on how to tackle the challenges more effectively. The Malagasy Church (FJKM in particular), under the umbrella of 'Committee Josia', increasingly involved Petra College (formerly CET) in training activities. The first training session was held in 1998.

During the next seven years, up to 2005, more than 30 training courses were facilitated at various venues in Madagascar. Petra College was directly involved in about 10 of these courses. A total of 1,331 children's workers were trained in children's ministries during this period (*Petra Madagascar Annual Report, 2005*). Although these figures may look flattering from Petra College's point of view, the truth is that they point to the College's failure to empower children's workers to multiply their leadership and training. During the same period, another children's ministry organisation, Child Evangelism Fellowship, also conducted a number of training initiatives. They, too, were engaging in the development of full-time workers for the ministry as well as attempting to develop actual leadership. It could be expected, judging by their procedures, that good, sustainable leadership would result from their inputs. By 2005, however, the children's ministry work in Madagascar was still very limited, with very little impact on the wider church community. During the researcher's visit to Madagascar in April 2005, it was obvious that the mainline church (FJKM) and Scripture Union were showing very few signs of growth in the field of children's ministries (Tanteley, 2005: Interview). The researcher concluded that neither Petra College nor Child Evangelism Fellowship and Scripture Union had managed to implement an effective training strategy.

During this period, an independent ministry, which was informally linked to Scripture Union, Madagascar, and the FJKM Church of Madagascar, was established. The committee named the ministry 'Petra Madagascar'. During 1999 and 2000, Petra Madagascar sent three leaders to Petra College for training. Only two of them continued in the ministry. Petra College training inputs concentrated on advanced children's ministry skills and tried to focus on some leadership skills as well. These particular inputs later proved far from successful or empowering. Petra College failed to empower the two leaders to multiply their leadership or build the children's ministry at the national level.

With Petra College's new strategic approach to developing a multiplied, able leadership, there are already, within a few months, visible signs of change in the situation. Petra Madagascar has already taken a giant step towards becoming an independent children's ministry training provider serving the Christian community. It has already drafted an excellent strategic plan for leadership development over the next three years.

6.1.2 Petra, Madagascar, updates written by Rakotoniaina Rolland

The following report has been included to reinforce understanding of the training challenges and developments in Madagascar as seen through the eyes of a Malagasy leader in development. It reflects on the progress and the typical understanding of challenges and needs in the field of children's ministries in that country.

He (the writer) gives the report a theological base (*Petra Madagascar Updates, 2005*):

In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost(Matthew 18:14).

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is our great joy to bring you this update regarding our ministry. We, Rakotoniaina Rolland (Naina) and Raminoarilala Julie Felatiana, would like to share with you the good news and invite you to give thanks to our mighty God with us.

Who are we and how did we start this ministry?

In 1999, from January to April, Julie Raminoarilala and Hery Rakotoarijao had the opportunity to go to South Africa and attend the children's ministry training given at Petra College, in White River, over the period of three and a half months. Then they started working as children's workers with Pastor Chris Johan Fourie when they came back that same year. Then, I went to South Africa also to attend the same training in 2000 over the

period of three and a half months and when I was back, I joined the team. So we called the ministry: Petra Madagascar.

What are our mission and the goal of our ministry?

Our mission is to train Christians within organisations and churches to reach the children in Madagascar with the Gospel of Jesus Christ during their early childhood and primary years. We strongly believe that if we train more workers the work will grow fast and more children will be reached, so our main focus is to train children's workers who will teach children after the training.

Petra Madagascar aims at training the adults and teaches them better methods in sharing the Gospel with kids according to the circumstances. We aim also to help the local churches and we do not intend to compete with them or other organisations. We also train the children's workers about the total development of the child: spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially, and mentally. We are working hand in hand with churches and Christian organisations in purpose to reach these goals.

When did it start?

Actually, the training already started in 1998 when Chris and Jeanette Fourie started their ministry here in Madagascar. At that time, they invited some lecturers from Petra College together with some children workers from the Scripture Union of Antananarivo and they gave the first training.

What has been accomplished?

Praise God that within the past six years (1998 – 2004), we have been to 30 different places throughout Madagascar and have trained about 1331 students. Some of these places have been visited many times. We have given the training 45 times in total. Most of the students are children's workers.

In 1998 and 1999, we had the opportunity to train pastor students at two theological colleges. It suddenly stopped afterwards, but it is one of the best ways to make pastors aware of the importance of children's ministry. But praise God, since last year, the director of the theological college in Mandritsara has accepted that we should restart the training for the students. We thus had the opportunity again to train 72 future pastors with their wives. The first, second and third years! There is always a challenge in every training session we present, but we would like to share with you this one. This was a scary one because you know that to train pastors is not a piece of cake. At first, when

they heard that they are going to attend the training, we could see their grim look. Some of them even moaned all the way to the training centre. I had a feeling that it is the biggest challenge we are going to face so we were praying like crazy. As the first day went by, we sensitized them about the importance of children to God. Then we did evangelism because it seemed as though some of them were not born again Christians yet. Then, after the third day, they started to become interested and even asked us why it is that we only present the training within one week and not ten days as usual. Yes, we used to go to the theological college almost once a year, but the training used to be for the wives of the students. So we really want to praise God for the change of attitude that He has worked in the students' lives. We thank Him for opening their eyes that they need to include children in their ministry. After the training, most of them shared with us that they have never known about children's conversion and they are willing and excited to apply the course in their congregation.

Most of the time, we face different challenges, but by God's grace and in his faithfulness, He has never let us down. He has provided in different ways and has blessed us abundantly over the past six years.

We give the training on invitation and the hosting family is in charge of our accommodation and food, and we pay for the transport. In the very poor areas, however, we have to provide for ourselves during our stay. Then God has exposed us to different experiences as cultures also differ. Sometimes He spoils us with a rich hosting family, sometimes He teaches us to be humble with a poor family. But throughout these past six years, all we can say is that He is faithful to his children and He is in charge when He calls us to do this mission.

What is next?

This period, 2005/2006, seems to be a challenging period for us in Madagascar..

There is going to be lots of follow-ups this year. We intend to visit the previous students and find out about the work they have done and to see the areas where they still need help. We plan also to present the training in 14 different regions within Madagascar this year.

Prayer requests and thanks:

Give thanks to the Lord for the following matters:

- for his abundant blessing and provision during the past six years;

- for keeping us save through the different challenges as we presented the training;
- for the strength and good health; and
- for the life change in the students' lives.

Please pray for the following requests and present them to the Lord with us:

- for our spiritual lives, that we shall grow in knowing God through a loving relationship with Him; that our love for his Word will increase and that our trust in Him will be strengthened;
- pray for all our activities for this year: the fourteen training sessions we intend to present and the follow-ups;
- pray that the Lord will give us wisdom, insight, and discernment as we are moving toward this exciting adventure with the Lord;
- pray for the contact we are going to have with the former students, that we shall be able to reach them; and
- that God will provide for the materials and finances needed.

There are 16 different places we intend to reach throughout the year 2005.

And also please pray for the functioning budget

Thank you for reading this first update. If you feel like taking part and be God's instrument in supporting our ministry, please let us know at the addresses below. God bless you for your prayers and support. Go in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom is all the glory and honor forever and ever. Amen.

6.1.3 Petra College's input during 2005.

Petra College decided to engage Madagascar anew with a much more strategic approach. The following activities explain how the College planned to continue the project. The main focus of Petra College's future input is on the development of the two leaders in an intensive mentorship program. This constitutes a long-term commitment over the next three to four years.

The following outcomes will reflect the key areas on which Petra College focused to empower the leaders for their challenges in the children's ministry field.

Activity 1.

Petra College visited Madagascar during April 2005 and presented a management course. The outcomes of this course were:

Outcomes: week 1: Serving as a leader

On completion of week 1, the leader will be able:

- to experience and understand some of the principles of dealing with people in groups;
- to build relationships with different people with different styles of behaviour;
- to understand and explain the basics of organisational structures and functions;
- to analyse and evaluate certain organisations and churches in relation to children's ministry;
- to understand the principles of visioning;
- to formulate personal vision and values;
- to function as a whole and integrated person;
- to acquire problem-solving skills for the ministry;
- to be able to facilitate a given process; and
- to present an aspect of leadership training to other leaders.

Outcomes: Week 2: Serving as a leader

On completion of week 2, the leader will be able:

- to understand administration systems and be able to create own systems as control instruments;
- to develop and successfully implement a financial system for a specific children's ministry;
- to understand the theory of the strategic planning process;
- to understand the principles of human resource management;
- to manage human resources;
- to have acquired a basic knowledge of time management;

- to evaluate and formulate an own organisation/church vision, mission and value system;
- to know various communication styles;
- to plan and conduct an effective meeting with the correct procedures;
- to have some practice in facilitating an information-gathering process; and
- to write an operational plan for a specific children's ministry.

Activity 2.

Petra College invited both leaders for the following inputs at Petra College, White River.

One leader was re-trained in the Improved Foundations 3 Training Model in August 2005. The intended outcomes were:

- experiencing and understanding the training process and content; and
- learning skills of duplicating the training process in Madagascar

One leader was invited to attend the Mentorship Course. The intended outcome was:

- to understand and experience the intensive seven-week 'Equipping others' process at Petra College; this model is intended to empower the mentor to duplicate him or herself.

Activity 3.

Petra College will follow the described training strategy (see the *Strategic Training Document*) from 2006 onwards. The main focus is to complete the mobilisation phase by developing the identified leaders as mentors for the children's ministry in Madagascar.

During 2006 the project leader (mentor) will visit Madagascar to evaluate a training session presented by the two leaders. The focus of this evaluation will be

on planning skills and the training skills of the leader. This opportunity will also be used to evaluate office management.

Conclusion

The researcher uses criteria of positive and negative outcomes to summarise and evaluate developments in Madagascar over the last seven years.

Positive outcomes:

- There have been good training results over the years in terms of children's workers trained; over 1,300 people were trained in various places;
- Petra College has been established as an expert training provider for the Church in Madagascar in the field of children's ministry; accepted by the major church streams as an authority in the field of children's ministries;
- There has been a dynamic change in the effectiveness of the two leaders, which is visible from a good strategic plan and development of structures and systems; this occurred after the management training in April 2005;
- Both leaders took ownership of the children's ministry in Madagascar; they already function as an independent ministry; and
- An effective leadership development plan was due to start early in 2006 as part of their strategic plan.

Negative outcomes:

- There has been no growth in the training capacity of children's ministries in churches; all the required training still depends on only two people; and
- There has been no duplication in leadership in children's ministries as yet; there are no leaders in any development plan for the near future.

These observations confirm Petra College's own conclusions about the shortcomings of the previous training model. The current leadership development strategy will be able to utilise the existing base and a dramatic growth in training capacity as soon as new leaders have been developed is anticipated. The effect

of such a successful development of leaders for the children's ministry will be visible later in changed children and their societies.

6.2 The Mozambique story

This story from Mozambique has been included as a case study to illustrate another scenario of Petra College's input into training projects. It points to a leader with a strong personality, embedded leadership qualities and dedicated mentorship guidance, who managed to achieve remarkable results in the field of children's ministries. Petra College played a major role in the initial training of Sybil Baloy in children's ministries (Baloy, 2005: Interview). This training was aimed at developing her children's ministry skills, and no inputs were made for her leadership development early in 1995, for which the College had no formal plan.

However, certain of the College staff initiated an informal mentoring process with Sybil. Later in her ministry, she developed so noticeably in her personal qualities and leadership skills that she could actually contribute to Petra College's leadership training programs. She joined World Relief in the late 1990s and now functions in their programs. She is also a respected authority on children's ministry and receives regular invitations to other countries on the continent and abroad to speak about children, their needs and how to reach them effectively. Non-Governmental Organisations like World Vision and World Relief in Mozambique rely on her to supply them with quality leaders emerging from her ministry development programs. Many of her effective leaders are the children she started out with 10 years ago.

6.2.1 Background information

Sybil was born in South Africa, where she pursued a career in nursing. During 1993, she visited Mozambique and saw the tremendous need of children in this war-torn country. She also felt God's calling on her life to return to Madagascar

and help there. When she returned home, she started investigating help and resources. It was during that time that she came into contact with Petra College (formerly CET).

She returned to Mozambique in 1995, and opened two children's clubs in Chokwe. Out of this small beginning grew something very significant for the children of that country. The researcher found no other training models for children's ministries against which to evaluate the Petra College training input. The researcher is therefore presenting this case study in terms of measurable outcomes within the field of children's ministries.

6.2.2 Petra College input

Sybil attended a three-month children's ministry course at Petra College early in 1995. Since that time, she has been involved in a number of specialised training courses at the College. Courses like the Trauma Counselling Course and the Early Childhood Course empowered her in even more fields of ministry. As a trial exercise, she implemented a pilot project about early childhood ministries in her area. Sybil also contributed to the development of Petra College's first attempt to write contextual training materials for Africa.

Since 2000, Petra College has been focusing more specifically on leadership development programs, and for the last five years Sybil has been invited to the College on an annual basis to participate in Petra College's leadership training program as a guest lecturer. She is also supported by individual staff members from the College in the form of visits, telephone calls, e-mail contact and supplying materials for her children's ministry. There is currently one specific staff member who acts as mentor for her future development.

6.2.3 Impact on children's ministry

The impact of Sybil's ministry is measured in terms of the following growth statistics. The researcher will use statistics from two different years (years 8 and 10) in order to show the growth of the ministry through one well-developed leader (Baloy, 2005: Interview). It should be noted that her ministry model is based on the Child Evangelism Fellowship's ministry model. The model focuses on recruiting and training children's workers who minister to children at ground level. Petra College recruits and develops leaders who will function in children's ministries at the national level.

Sybil's children's workers start children clubs in specific villages. Such clubs become permanent points of ministry and grow into other inputs in the immediate community. Sybil's role is to recruit, train, manage and motivate the children's workers and support their ministry programs. She has also developed a core leadership team that takes responsibility for various aspects of the ministry. It should be noted that some of the children who emerged from these clubs as teenagers have later assumed leadership roles in various ministries.

Year 8: Ministry statistics (Ministry Power Point, Mozambique, 2005)

- work in two provinces;
- involved 33 villages;
- established 172 children's clubs that meet on a weekly basis; and
- started 18 youth clubs.

Leadership growth:

- 369 volunteers involved;
- 18 developed leaders in children's ministry; and
- 28 youth leaders involved.

Ministry growth:

- 18,209 children reached on a weekly basis; and

- 172 children's clubs.

Year 10: Ministry statistics

- work in four provinces;
- involved in 65 villages;
- 542 children's clubs established; and
- 18 youth clubs running.

Leadership growth:

- 1,153 volunteers involved; and
- 28 leaders for the ministry developed.

Ministry growth:

- 29,000 children in clubs (October 2004)
- 543 children's clubs running.

Development of a new ministry:

Sybil also started an HIV project and set the following goals:

- To reach 500 000 youth by 2008 with the HIV project.
- Target 60% of youth between the ages of 10 and 24 to make a commitment for abstinence by 2008.
- Target 50% of the churches to have well-trained Sunday school teachers by 2008.

The above picture speaks of dynamic growth in ministry. The researcher was privileged to see Sybil's management and control systems, which contribute much to this success story. This ministry success can also be attributed to both the mentors in her life as well as her holistic approach to the ministry. The following focus areas reflect Sybil's understanding of what is needed to reach children effectively.

She includes the following needs of the children to whom she and her workers are ministering:

- their physical needs;
- their social needs;
- their emotional needs;
- their intellectual needs; and
- their spiritual needs.

The following lessons came from her ministry to children: (Ministry PowerPoint Mozambique, 2005):

- children are adaptable, resilient and sharp;
- children are powerful agents of change;
- children are the carriers of hope; and
- leadership development starts in childhood.

She concluded with the following statement:

‘Children have the power to change the world they live in.’

Conclusion

Although this leader was not actually included in a formal, pre-planned strategy on the part of Petra College, her development over the years has been based on a close mentorship relationship with the College. There have been a number of role players from the College who acted as her mentors at different stages of her ministry.

She reflected recently (2005) on this matter to a leadership group attending the Mentorship course at Petra College. She attributes her ministry success story to a good understanding of children's ministries linked to practical experience in ministry to children. She also highly values her support structures, that is, dedicated mentors, and referred to specific people who have played a major role in her mentoring from an 'upper position', meaning leaders she sees as above her and whom she follows. They have been her role models as Christians, empowering her to engage with the huge ministry challenges in Mozambique. There have also been mentors alongside her, who have supported and helped her grow and develop as person. There have also been those under her whom she has mentored. The contribution by this latter group is their moral support and personal accountability to the ministry. These colleagues have also had a direct influence on her personal growth and commitment to the ministry.

Sybil's success story can be contributed mainly to her mentorship input, which has empowered her to grow as a Christian and has contributed to the planning and organising of this successful children's ministry.

6.3 The Ethiopian story

The purpose of this case study is to focus on training that relied on more controlled inputs by Petra College. Although this particular process was not initially structured according to our current strategy, the researcher wants to point out some valuable developments that were the result of consistent involvement and control. These show the effects of training that relies on building relationships. This means that a mentor from Petra College walks in a close relationship with the leader.

At the beginning of this training project, Petra College was still in the development phase of their training content and programs. Quite unintentionally,

the College happened on some correct principles and the correct process of training.

6.3.1 Background information

The Kale Heywet Church is the fruit of the missionary work of SIM, formerly Sudan Interior Mission (*History of SIM Ethiopia*, 2004:1-15). The church was founded in 1974, and currently totals about 5,700 congregations representing about 4.3 million members. They have developed 240 Amharic Bible Schools. These developments indicate a remarkable development and growth in the church. Another exciting fact is that the church developed independently, so is not run by foreigners.

However, while about 50% of the church consists of children, it did not grow in terms of children's ministries. This is evident from the virtually non-existent focus on children's ministry in the Bible schools and the poorly-equipped children's workers observed recently in the church by the researcher. It was only in 2002 that the leadership of the Kale Heywet church realised that drastic intervention was required. They did not know where to start taking up this challenge. Some of their leaders met with the leadership of Petra College during that time. In 2003, the first leader from this church was sent to Petra College, White River, for training in children's ministry.

6.3.2 Petra College input

In 2003, Zwedenesh Tadese came to South Africa for a course in children's ministry. The course was under revision at the time, and can be described as Petra College's 'older' approach to training. Her training also included specialised fields such as early childhood ministries and counselling of traumatised children. She also attended a seven-week leadership course called 'Management'. This was an empowering course that focused on administration skills, system development, organisational structures, procedures, finance, and other skills,

such as problem solving, public speaking and facilitation. Zwedenesh finally left Petra College with a comprehensive strategic plan for the children's ministry of the Kale Heywet Church.

On her return to Ethiopia, she set up an office for children's ministry and developed the training plan for the church. She is responsible for the children's ministries of all 5,700 congregations. In the first two years, she trained workers across Ethiopia and even initiated the development of training projects in Somalia.

Petra College followed up on Zwedenesh and her leaders. During its engagement with the Kale Heywet church, the College also began to focus on the Evangelical movement called ECFE, representing 22 denominations, and became part of second training process in Ethiopia. Petra College formed a partnership agreement with the Kale Heywet Church (Petra College, *Partnership Concept Document*, 2005). A formal partnership with ECFE was due to follow early in 2006. The training processes with both Kale Heywet and ECFE presented Petra College with many training opportunities in which the Petra College mentor could engage with Zwedenesh in practical training processes. The College also used these opportunities to evaluate her development on all levels of leadership and facilitate her growth in terms of establishing and running an effective office.

Furthermore, Petra College is committed to its future roles and inputs as specified by the *Strategic Document*. Leadership development will, in future, bring about a dramatic improvement in the quality of Sunday school teachers and children's workers in general.

6.3.3 Impact on children's ministry in Ethiopia

It is possible to see, from this process, the effectiveness of a developed leader in the field of children's ministries. The children's ministry is already functioning with

zone leaders in about 51 zones. All the zone leaders are taking part in a leadership development plan under Zwedenesh and the Petra College mentor (Zwedenesh, 2004: Interview). It is foreseen that, by the end of 2009, all 51 leaders could have qualified as mentors for the children's ministries. There are also discussions in progress concerning the inclusion of a training model for children's ministries in Kale Heywet's Bible schools from 2007.

As a result of the first partnership, Petra College has engaged the ECFE group with very exciting development prospects for the next three years. Petra College is committed to developing six mentors like Zwedenesh for the ECFE group over the next three to five years. The first leader for ECFE was trained during 2005, which started another intensive mentor development program. This leader will also be part of a wider strategy in a new project called the Child Development and Research Centre, which will become, for Ethiopia, a training centre specialising in all aspects of children's ministries. The vision for this centre is that it will become, in the near future, a specialist training centre focusing on children's ministries for the whole of Africa. The two processes will be run separately, but millions of children will eventually benefit from this initiative.

Conclusion

Although Petra College did not start this training project on the basis of its current training strategy, a number of good principles contributed to what can be described as a success story. Training organisations like Child Evangelism Fellowship and Kidzanna have trained many children's workers in Ethiopia since 2003. There are, however, no developed leaders to run the children's ministry at Zwedenesh's level of expertise. This was confirmed by the respective leaders of Kidzanna and the Kale Heywet church. The question is: What did Petra College inadvertently do right to make such an impact? Apparently Petra College's training strategy and process contributed greatly to the success of this project. Kidzanna's leadership has indicated that it is extremely impressed by the

standard of Zwedenesh's leadership capabilities and her training abilities in children's ministries (Forth (Kidzanna), 2005:Interview). Petra College and Kidzanna have agreed to partner in future training initiatives. Kidzanna will focus on the mass training of children's workers while Petra College will continue according to its training strategy for developing leaders. These developments have helped Petra College compensate for the drawback of being unable to provide the necessary training capacity for the Church in Ethiopia.

The dynamic developments in the Ethiopian Church community confirmed the value of Petra College's strategic choices on training. The concept of partnership formation, combined with the various strategic phases of training inputs, as well as the actual training processes in the field, proved the effectiveness of Petra College's approach to training. Recent evaluation reports (refer to training reports from project leader) also reflect a growing change in attitude to children's ministries in Christian communities. One can also interpret the substantial training drive by the Church as a positive outcome of effective advocacy. This case study thus serves as confirmation of the dynamic nature of the Petra College training strategy and its possibilities.

6.4 The Tanzania story

The Tanzania story has been included to describe a strategic training project that has developed in terms of Petra College's current strategic document. The purpose is to see the strategic value of this approach and its possibilities in terms of children's ministries.

The preparation for this training project produced some interesting experiences that confirm the value of Petra College's current approach to partnership and training activities. The researcher was involved at various stages of the preparation phase as well as the first Foundations training during 2005.

Tanzania has turned out to be a very strategic choice in terms of its geographical position and its influence in the Central African region. The country's stability ensures excellent opportunities for tackling the challenges with better-planned and well-structured inputs.

6.4.1 Background information

Tanzania is a large country emerging from an era of communism. The effects of under-development are still visible (Shoo, 2005:Interview), and generally the people are very poor. However, the country reflects a very positive attitude to life and the future. There are 31 million people in Tanzania, the majority of whom are children under the age of 15. Through efforts from Compassion International, churches and other organisations, a rewarding relationship was formed between churches and organisations. Petra College went through the preliminary process of discussing partnership formation with prominent leaders. This meant that the Head: Training Partnerships and the Head: Training Projects had to visit the relevant leadership from all the important churches and organisations to discuss proposed training projects. This effort later proved a key input for starting the project on a successful note.

The College made a strategic choice in entering into a partnership agreement (P4) with an indigenous organisation called New Life Foundation, who act as training providers for the so-called brotherhood in children's ministries. This organisation is involved with children's ministries, and they have developed schools for destitute children as well establishing an orphanage for babies.

Petra College is also involved in more discussions for establishing another two formal partnerships resulting from this training process.

6.4.2 Petra College input

Petra College and New Life Foundation signed an official partnership agreement. The first equipping activity (E1) took place in August 2005 (Petra College, *Strategic Process Document*, 2004). The College presented a Foundations 1 training course for 31 selected leaders from Compassion International, the Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church and others. During the first training session, leaders were evaluated in terms of their understanding of children and children's ministry. Petra College identified six possible candidates to go through the entire program over the next few years. The group was facilitated for two weeks so that they could connect with children and master some elementary skills in engaging children at their own level.

The next equipping (E2) input took place in March 2006, when Petra College presented a Foundations 2 training session to the same group of leaders. During this training, the six potential candidates from various partnerships were evaluated and invited to attend the Petra College Mentorship course to take place from August to November 2006. The College will then deal with the further development of these leaders in accordance with the strategic plan. Petra College will mentor specific leaders for specific partners over the next three to five years in Tanzania.

6.4.3 Impact on children's ministry

This initiative can be described as a project in development. The short-term results were already visible in Arusha as a spin-off from the Foundation 1 course, when the leaders engaged children as part of the experiential phase of Foundation 1. Within two weeks, very intimate relationships had been built with children, their parents and the wider community. The feedback at the end of the course reflected on the powerful impact that this training made on the participants, as well as on the children, their parents and the community.

Leaders left the training with action plans on how to duplicate this training in their churches and communities. The future developments in Tanzania are eagerly anticipated. Petra College also received a commitment from the participants for the follow-up training that took place in April 2006. The researcher will follow future developments of this training project with great interest. This training project will in future serve as a very good benchmark for the real value of Petra College's Strategic Training Program.

Conclusion

The Tanzania story provides us with a closer-to-ideal model for an effective training process than any other training initiative undertaken by Petra College. The selected leaders who started the training process with the College fulfilled the Partnership (P1-4 Phase) objectives of engaging strategic and quality leadership from the start of the process (Annexure 2). These leaders come from various church denominations and Christian organisations. They represent various leadership positions in the churches and organisations in Tanzania. They all completed Foundations 1 and provided Petra College facilitators with the opportunity of evaluating them on an individual basis. Recommendations were made to the various leaders who were already in a formal partnership agreement with the College.

During 2006, the same group will attend the Foundations 2 training, when the project leader will have another opportunity of evaluating them and making further suggestions to the Partnership leadership on their future development. This process will then follow the process described in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. The most exciting aspect of this process is the quality of leadership available for development in children's ministries. Another development emerging from this initiative is the possibility of being involved in the development of a training institute in Moshi that will, like the Ethiopian training centre, focus on training in different disciplines of children's ministries.

The researcher believes that, within the next 5 years, there will be a noticeable impact on children in Tanzania resulting from this process.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This dissertation has provided the opportunity for asking more probing questions about assumptions made on concepts like children, leadership, the idea of 'African' and African philosophy. The study was not intended to cover the complete subject area of children's ministries but was meant to focus specifically on a training model for leadership in the children's ministries. The research included various developments in the field of Christian education and training models that could influence the Petra College training model for the development of leaders for children's ministries. In the course of the research, a number of interesting topics were identified for a much more detailed research project. One such challenge has to do with an in-depth empirical study on what has taken place in the practical sense with former trainees and the ministry impact in their communities since Petra College started its first course. The challenge would be to follow up on the Petra College data base in an attempt to trace former students of the College.

Other possible topics would include research on models that successfully develop African leadership in the Church. This could be developed to test the hypothesis that the problems in the African Church arena relate directly to the lack of good leadership. Perhaps the most important topic would be the effects of trauma (war, poverty, abuse) on children's development from birth to adulthood in terms of their leadership potential. This would test the hypothesis that children are enormously affected by their environment, whether positively or negatively, which determines the character of their communities by the time they function as adults.

The researcher also intended this dissertation to show how Petra College developed the successful training models currently in use. The Petra College

training model can be seen as having developed through many processes and influences. This means that a number of factors possibly contributing to the development of an effective training model must be taken into account, such as human science, philosophy, history, experience, culture and Biblical studies, to name but a few.

Perceptions of contextual training and effective leadership development were challenged in this research. It appears that the Western or first-world thought processes affect understanding of the complex nature of Africa and its people. It is generally accepted that the Western mind thinks in a linear fashion, or has a cause-effect orientation. The African mind is perceived to work more cyclically and creates a return to family roots and customs. It appears that, for Africans, relationships are more important than gaining knowledge. This creates a tension between the Western and the African approaches to reasoning. To engage this challenge requires the suspension of habitual notions and for people to 'listen to Africa'. This would mean engaging with and listening to African leadership at grassroots level as they try to express themselves. The researcher has realised, however, that not every voice speaking out or writing a book on Africa represents Africa, even if the voice is that of a black African. It became apparent that many so-called African voices speak from the first-world cultural perspective rather than from the real heart of Africa. The implication here is that established paradigms can be so influenced by Western principles of thought that everything African is interpreted through that lens.

Petra College does not suggest that it has every answer and solution to the challenges of Africa. What the College offers, though, is a dynamic training process for developing effective leadership for the Church and organisations working in the field of children's ministries. The key to Petra College's approach to leadership development lies in its choice to train adults and teach them to minister to children in a relational way. It also looks at sustainability of leadership and values the leaders' capacity to multiply themselves. The impact of this

approach in Africa has resulted in many invitations to carry out leadership development for other ministries in the Church. Petra College's main business, however, is children. For this reason the College could not engage the challenges of the wider Church to develop leadership in other areas of ministry, nor would it consider doing so. The college is convinced that, in order to reach children effectively and help them to grow into healthy adults in the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical senses, the best-quality leadership is essential to develop and control the required inputs into children's lives.

It was also established that there is a definite relationship between the proposed training model and theology. The foundation of this training model depends on the practical expediting of sound theology as a principle in the life of the leader. The researcher found that there was a constant dialogue between the praxis of the training model and process and the 'Be' aspect of the learner. Petra College also places a high value on the personal formation of the leader. This depends largely on an understanding of what the Bible says about the life of a learner. The key to achieving this outcome is the motivating principle of a mentorship program based on a relational training process in which the mentor demonstrates to the learner the practical implications of Biblical values. Such a developed leader would be able to engage children's spiritual needs according to a relational model.

All the possible contributing factors to Petra College's training model were taken into account in developing this dissertation. The researcher relied firmly on contributions from writers representing first-world thought, but tried also to involve writers from the African school. His decision to use certain writers selectively in some instances was determined by their in-depth research on particular topics. The rationale for this was that it would be pointless to attempt an improvement on their research content, but that employing perspectives from their works could contribute insights into the topic of this dissertation. The researcher also tried to gain some understanding of the complexity of Africa, its

people and the challenges for the future. Much of the understanding reflected in this dissertation is owing to extensive interviews and discussions with various role players in various countries.

This research project concludes that it is both necessary and possible to train Christian leadership for children's ministries. This could serve as positive proof of the validity of a first proposed hypothesis. Through visiting a total of 10 countries in 18 months, the researcher had the opportunity of interviewing various church leaders on these issues. A second proposed hypothesis, which refers to the poor perception of children's workers by other ministry groups, was tested at a number of important mission consultations. During the past five years, Petra College has regularly been invited to attend these consultations. The importance of the College as a representative for children's ministries, as well as that of including the topic of children in discussions, was very low-key in the initial years. However, this has changed over the past two to three years. The researcher noted that more leaders had been representing the children's ministries at the various gatherings. Some of them came from training processes in which Petra College had played a major role. It is possible now to refer to leaders like Sybil Baloy from Mozambique, Betty Cassia from Uganda, Rev. Zwedenesh Tadese and Rev. Tewabech from Ethiopia, Jestina Kandawa from Zimbabwe, Rev. Mirriam from Kenya, Carol Kondowe from Zambia, Rev. Joseph Phiri from Zambia, Rev. Jerome Arrese from Togo and Joseph Dyamba from Burkina Faso. The emergence of these leaders in the field of children's ministry has gained considerable respect amongst Christian leadership from all over the world. In the space of five years, Petra College has become a very important role player in the eyes of ministry leaders in Africa and abroad. Petra College is currently considered the leading training provider in Africa in the field of children's ministries. The amount of correspondence received monthly by the College, as well as the number of applications from leaders in Africa for the College's leadership courses could also serve as proof of this fact. Applications come from

further a field than Africa, with increasingly more requests for training from countries like Pakistan, India, Russia and the Far East.

The validity of the hypothesis that Petra College's leadership training is a strategic move in order to change the views, value, and role of children in African communities must still be tested thoroughly. Although we have reasonable proof in case studies like the Mozambiquan one cited above, empirical research into these facts has yet to be carried out. While there is evidence of changing views on children's ministry in the Christian community in Africa, actual cases are isolated. Everybody interviewed during the research process agreed that an effective engagement with children has the potential to change the face of Africa, but the researcher acknowledges that a long road lies ahead before this hypothesis can be fully proved.

The researcher is of the opinion that this dissertation could contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of Africa's challenges and the exciting prospects of engaging these challenges for the future. It could also raise hope for Africa and its children. The decision to develop effective quality leadership in the field of children's ministries could prove to be the long-term answer to the pressing needs of Africa and its people.

The researcher can confidently present this dissertation as a model with descriptive statement 'equipped to impact the continent'.

**Appendix 1: Prior training required for the Children’s Ministry Mentorship C
Petra College, *Strategic Document, 2004*)**

Certain requirements must be met before an applicant can take part in the Children’s Ministry Mentorship Course. These requirements can be met through training at Petra College or through other relevant training and experience.

The entry requirements for the Children’s Ministry Mentorship Course are proven competence in the following (refer to summary table of outcomes below):

- building relationships with children;
- helping children to grow in Christian maturity; and
- understanding children’s ministry.

A questionnaire will be sent to candidates recommended by the project leader for invitation to the course. The aim is for both Petra College and the candidate to have an indication of the areas in which knowledge and experience are lacking. This allows the project leader to construct a plan for reaching the outstanding outcomes for final acceptance/approval of the candidate’s application.

Build relationships with children	Help children to grow in Christian maturity	Understand children’s ministry
Build relationships with children through effective listening and talking	Use the Bible to help children grow in Christian maturity	Understand the needs of children and know how to respond to them in ministry
Build relationships with children through play	Help children to sense God’s love	Understand and value relationships with children
Build relationships with children by storytelling	Present a program that will help children grow in Christian maturity	Understand the Biblical basis of children’s ministry
Build relationships with children through the use	Help children grow in	

<p>of humour</p> <p>Build relationships with children through music</p> <p>Build relationships with children through the expression of love and respect</p> <p>Work with children in groups</p> <p>Build relationships with children in setting boundaries</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of building relationships with children</p>	<p>Christian maturity in their daily lives</p> <p>Help children to take part in the fellowship of Christians</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of helping children grow in Christian maturity</p>	<p>Understand the basic contexts and processes in children's ministry</p> <p>Evaluate ministry needs and opportunities for children in a specific situation</p>
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Appendix 2: Selection criteria for the Children’s Ministry Mentorship Course (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004)

General criteria	Measuring tool
Comes from a children’s ministry background; or intends to function within the field of children’s ministry	Discussions during partnership formation
Accepted by the partner organisation as a key person for the development of their children’s ministry	Verify with partner during initial discussions on partnership agreement
Attended or willing to attend the Children’s Ministry Foundations training events at Petra College	Personal discussions with relevant role players
Able to communicate effectively in English	Verify in person
Committed to the agreed process of mentorship development as described	Partnership agreement
Schooling to at least a grade 12 (senior certificate) standard or higher	Application procedure/partnership agreement
Competency in all prior training requirements for admittance to mentorship course	Application procedure - Recognition of prior learning questionnaire
Recommendation by project leader for further development	Children’s Ministry Foundations training events/proposed training plan
Specific criteria:	
Clear testimony of being a born-again Christian, established in Christian living, and adherence to sound Biblical truths	Written testimony
Agreement to Petra College’s statement of faith (Lausanne Covenant)	Application procedure
Accepted in own community as a children’s worker	Recommendation from a community leader

Sound motives for closer interaction with children and a clean record in former relationships with children	Application procedure – Declaration on acts against children
Teachable spirit and a willingness to participate in practical learning experiences and in the training processes of Petra College	Application procedure – Confidential report from leaders
Good interpersonal relationships and communication skills	Application procedure – Confidential report from leaders
Must have a love for children and a clear calling from God to be involved in children’s ministry; and a proven ability to build relationships with children	Application procedure – Confidential report from leaders; and Children’s Ministry Foundations training events
Must have a good understanding of children’s ministry	Observation and Application procedure - Recognition of prior learning questionnaire
Complete assignments in relation to working with children	Personal development plan from project leader
Must have the potential to motivate, mobilise, and guide adult training	Children’s Ministry Foundations training events
Basic good health	Application procedure

**Appendix 3: Profile of a mentor that completed the development process.
(Petra College, Strategic Document 2004)**

Personal criteria	Measuring tool
Dedicated Christian lifestyle	Partner organisation and fellow workers' testimonies – field reports
Known as a person with good character in the community	
Known for good relationships with others	
Leadership qualities	
Good and healthy family life	
Active member of a church	
Experience criteria	
Completed required training in children's ministry and management (Equipping phase)	Petra College's assessments, project leader reports, and personal field reports
Evaluated and approved by Petra College on children's ministry skills	Recommendation by project leaders from the mobilisation phase
Evaluated and approved by Petra College on management skills	Recommendation by project leaders from the mobilisation phase
Evaluated and approved by Petra College on training skills	Recommendation by project leaders from the mobilisation phase
Recognized and utilized by the partner in a leadership capacity	Written confirmation from the partner
Completion of the mobilisation phase	Written confirmation from Petra College
Functional criteria:	
Act within a leadership capacity	Field reports

Ability to plan and implement a training strategy	
Ability to develop and implement a strategy to duplicate mentors, trainers, and children's workers for the partner	
Commitment to communicate with Petra College on a regular basis	
Commitment to assist in training events in order to develop the children ministry of the particular partner	
Availability to be part of a bigger training input as per agreement between Petra College and the partner for other training processes when needed	

Appendix 4: Plan of the training process. (Petra College, *Strategic Document*, 2004)

Action 1. Concept and skill formation

In this process, the facilitator has to deal with content in a very creative way. The learner is given skeletal theoretical content and is guided towards discovering fuller content or truths about it. The learner forms a concept from the teaching, while, in some cases, a skill will be learned through demonstration and practice.

Action 2. Test the concept and skill

The learner is sent to a field of practical experience where the concept and/or skill acquired are implemented. This tests and proves the learner's understanding of the newly-acquired concept and skill, while even a new understanding can be detected.

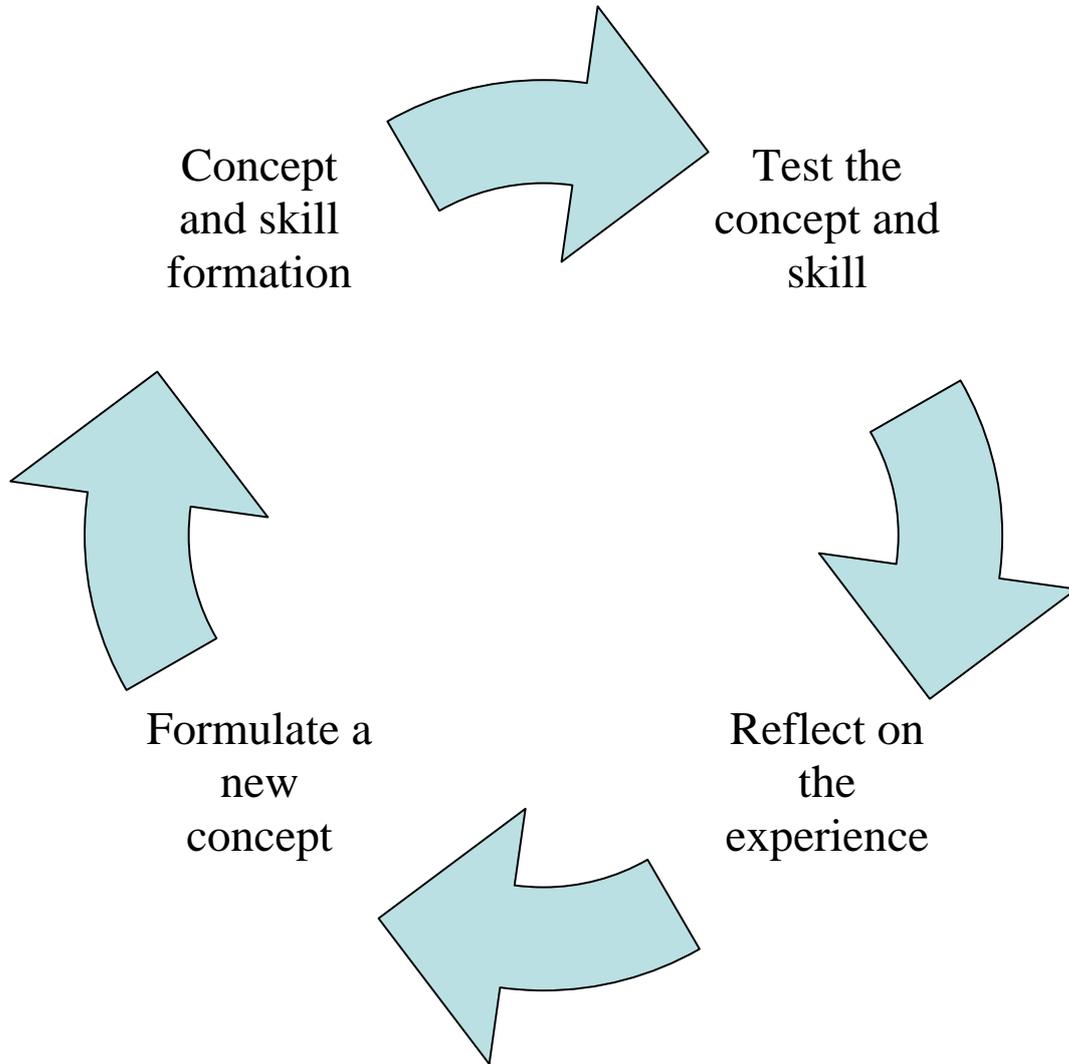
Action 3. Reflect on the experience

After the field trip, the learner reflects on the experience under supervision. With the facilitator's help, the learner will be able to verbalise the experience. The facilitation process involves the rest of the learners in contributing to the evaluation of the concept or skill tested.

Action 4. Formulation of a new concept

The learner will now be in a position to reinforce the concept or skill or reformulate it. This process is always cyclic. The new concept or skill will once again be tested and evaluated.

Diagram of learning cycle (Petra College, *Training Process PowerPoint presentation*)



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