

**Faith formation of children: A practical theological study of Child Evangelism Fellowship**

**South Africa**

by

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## **Declaration**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research study to Child Evangelism Fellowship and all similar children's ministries in South Africa. I also dedicate this research to the faithful servants of God who labour for Him in the field of children's ministry who often go unnoticed. May God be glorified.

## **Acknowledgements**

I want to praise and thank God for the privilege afforded to me to complete this research. It is only through His great power that I have managed to get this far. To God be the glory great things He has done.

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Thank you to Child Evangelism Fellowship South Africa, for allowing me to study and to research the ministry of CEF in South Africa. I trust that this research will assist the ministry in reaching many more boys and girls with the gospel of Jesus Christ and assisting them in their faith formation.

A special thanks to all those who supported me through this journey. Your prayers and encouragement kept me going and I am grateful. Last but definitely not least, I want to thank my wife, Nicole and my three sons, Oliver, Micah and Joshua. Thank you for giving me time and space to work on this research. Thank you Nicole for all you did for us as a family during this time.

## **Abstract**

This research investigates the ministry of CEF in South Africa. As a para-church organisation operating in South Africa for over seventy years, this study seeks to establish the impact the ministry is making in enhancing the faith formation of South African children.

There is a growing concern amongst evangelical church leaders around the number of young people who are leaving the church in their teenage and early twenties. There are many reasons for this phenomenon but this research examines children's ministry and the faith formation of children. The research argues that one factor that leads to youth and young adults leaving the church is the lack of spiritual grounding.

The research question explored in this study asks: In what ways can CEFSA provide a contextually relevant approach to assist South African children in the formation of their faith? Using the practical theology research methodology promoted by Osmer (2008), this research asks four questions: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond? In response to these I undertook to understand the ministry and ministry methods of CEF international and its effectiveness in South Africa (chapter 1-2); to investigate the reasons for the current status of CEF in South Africa (chapter 2-3); to develop a theological approach to children's ministry that will address the needs of South African children (chapter 4) and to develop a contextualized ministry approach to assist South African children with their faith formation (chapter 5).

## **Opsommig**

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die bediening van CEF in Suid-Afrika. As 'n para-kerklike organisasie wat vir meer as sewentig jaar in Suid-Afrika werksaam is, poog hierdie studie om die impak wat die bediening in die geloofsvorming van Suid-Afrikaanse kinders maak vas te stel.

Daar is 'n groeiende kommer onder evangeliese kerkleiers oor die aantal jongmense wat die kerk in hul tiener- en vroeë twintigerjare verlaat. Daar is baie redes vir hierdie verskynsel maar hierdie navorsing ondersoek kinderbediening en die geloofsvorming van kinders. Die navorsing voer aan dat een faktor wat lei na hoekom die jeug en jong volwassenes die kerk verlaat is die gebrek aan geestelike begroning in kinderjare.

Die navorsingsvraag wat in hierdie studie ondersoek is, vra: Op watter maniere kan CEFSA 'n kontekstueel relevante benadering verskaf om Suid-Afrikaanse kinders by te staan in die vorming van hul geloof? Deur gebruik te maak van die praktiese teologie navorsingsmetodologie wat deur Osmer (2008) bevorder is, vra hierdie navorsing vier vrae: Wat gaan aan? Hoekom gaan dit aan? Wat behoort aan te gaan? Hoe kan ons reageer? In reaksie hierop het ek onderneem om die bedienings- en bedieningsmetodes van CEF international en die doeltreffendheid daarvan in Suid-Afrika te verstaan (hoofstuk 1-2); om die redes vir die huidige status van CEF in Suid-Afrika te ondersoek (hoofstuk 2-3); om 'n teologiese benadering tot kinderbediening te ontwikkel wat die behoeftes van Suid-Afrikaanse kinders sal aanspreek te bespreek (hoofstuk 4) en om 'n gekontekstualiseerde bedieningsbenadering te ontwikkel om Suid-Afrikaanse kinders met hul geloofsvorming by te staan (hoofstuk 5).

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

### 1.1 Introduction and Background to Study

As a missionary working in Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) for the past 5 years, I have come to realise that CEF is applying an American ministry model to an African (South Africa) context without taking the practical, and ministerial relevance thereof seriously. This has led me to asking several questions about what children's ministry and children's faith formation in a South African context should portray.

As a young Bible School Graduate, my first experience of full-time church ministry was as a Youth Pastor in a predominately Coloured community called Wentworth, in Durban; KwaZulu Natal. The denomination at which I served was the Evangelical Bible Church of Southern Africa. I then moved on to serve with Child Evangelism Fellowship South Africa (hereafter CEFSA) as local missionary to children. I soon realised that the problems that needed to be addressed with regards to the spiritual well-being of children and youth were complex. These problems needed deep consideration. Questions that I asked myself were, how can I help these children have a lasting and fruitful relationship with Jesus Christ? I was not sure of the answer. Another question I asked myself was, is the way in which we are doing ministry addressing the spiritual needs of these children? I did not believe so. It is in light of this that I took on the challenge to study the ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) and how they minister to the children of South Africa in an effort to explore what impact they are making to enhance the faith formation of these children.

Academically, CEF has not been used as the focus of any academic research study in Africa. It is indeed notable that CEF investment in the faith formation of children on this continent requires rigorous study that could benefit other similar ministry endeavours. Grobbelaar (2016: 42) says, "In the past 15 years the academic study of the connection between children and theology gained much interest and momentum". CEF as a children's ministry organisation needs to be abreast with effective ways in assisting children with forming their faith. Roberto & Pfiffner (2007) in an article titled "Best practices in children's faith formation" suggest that, "Today, we know so much more about how children learn than we did fifty years ago, and the learning methods and activities that engage children today are unlike those of previous

generations. We know that the world of their childhood has drastically changed, and adjustments are necessary to provide faith formation that forms the whole life of the child—head, heart, and soul”. This is vitally important for an organisation that was established over 80 years ago such as CEF. Methods of reaching the minds and hearts of children have changed, and this study seeks to find how CEF can become more relevant in a South African context in a fast-changing learning environment.

This research will take on a narrative approach to writing. A narrative approach to writing according to Ylijoki (2001: 1) claims that:

“Narratives constitute a fundamental form of human understanding, through which individuals make sense of themselves and of their lives. In other words, narratives impart meaning to experiences by integrating them into a temporal and coherent whole with a specific plot structure.”

As an employee of CEFSA, I am actively involved in the ministry and working with the children in different communities. I am an English-speaking coloured male, working in an environment where Black and White South Africans live. The main languages spoken in the area of focus is Siswati and Afrikaans. This research also forms part of my lived experiences, and therefore is part of my everyday life. It is considering this that a narrative writing approach will be suited. Together with this, the plot structure of narrative writing works well in conjunction with that of the practical theological framework promoted by Osmer (2008) that will be used in this research, as it has similar elements of investigation. Ylijoki (2001: 1) suggests that narrative writing seeks to tell a story through:

- 1) describing the characters and setting,
- 2) describing the problem, and
- 3) reflecting on the solution.

In the same way the practical theological framework promoted by Osmer (2008) addresses four important aspects; these are:

- 1) The descriptive-empirical task: this task seeks to investigate what is taking place in a particular setting. In the same way that narrative writing seeks to describe the characters and the setting.

2) The Interpretive Task: this task seeks reasons for what was observed in the descriptive task. Why is this taking place? With regards to narrative writing, this would be describing the problem.

3) The Normative Task: this task seeks to describe how things ought to be. How should things be happening and with regards to the narrative writing style this works in tandem with the last point which is.

4) The Pragmatic Task: this task looks at what must be done to get to the ideal situation as pointed out in the normative task. Which areas need to change and how they must change to fit with the ideal. Narrative writing style would call this the reflecting and the solution stage.

In this regard, the narrative writing approach will be beneficial for this study. It will encourage a smooth flow in the process of understanding the ministry of CEFSA through the lens of an insider and seeing how the organisation can best assist children with their faith formation.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

This study focuses on the work of Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) with a particular focus on the ministry of CEF in South Africa (CEFSA). CEF, was founded by Jesse Overholtzer (USA) in 1937. He designed a ministry model and compiled ministry material for children that is used worldwide. This model was developed based on Overholtzer's concern for the way in which children were treated in the church.

Due to traditional belief systems that children were unable to understand the gospel. Overholtzer testifies that he himself was hindered in believing in Jesus as his Saviour. According to the CEF International Ministries Manuel version 3 (2015: 144), Overholtzer is quoted saying "... if anyone had sought to lead him to Christ as a boy of 12 or even younger, he would most certainly have accepted Christ and been born again". In a CEF Bible lesson called "Jesse's Adventure" we see an interaction between Jesse and his mother in which his mother explains that he cannot be a member of the church because he is too young. Bunge in Lawson & May (2019: 35) argues that "Although many in the church care for children and have created beneficial programs for them, the church often lacks a strong commitment to

children and treats them as ‘the least of these.’” The belief that children are not fully capable to comprehend the truths of the Bible, cause churches not to give children the proper attention. This interaction is considering the fact that in order to be a member of their local church, you needed to be saved.

The problem that Overholtzer faced in the United States is not isolated to that part of the world. In some African and South African contexts children are also seen as “too young” to have a relationship with Jesus Christ or to be part of the local church. Children have often been neglected in the church and Mahlangu and Grobbelaar (2016: 112) argue that, “... children have to be seen in a new way in the African church in general. They have to become more important in the church, an integrated part of the life and ministry of every local church”. Children have for too long been silenced and demoted to after thoughts in the church. Nel (2016: 2) in an article “Children must be seen and heard” also comments on the treatment of children in Africa and says,

“This silencing is largely still the reality for children and young people in churches – not only the worship services in the various Dutch Reformed churches in (southern) Africa, but also in how theology is practised in this region. These younger believers, irrespective of their own agency, may be seen, or better, gazed upon, targeted theologically and eventually ministered to by ever-new children’s evangelism campaigns, yet they are not to speak up for themselves”.

The way in which children were and continue to be treated in the local church is concerning and this is an area that needs considerable thought and attention.

CEF has grown into one of the largest children’s ministries worldwide reaching millions of children each year. Taking this into account, the need for contextualized ministry becomes imperative. Moreau (2012: 35) states that, “From an evangelical perspective, then, contextualization captures the tension of Christians having biblical revelation that is universally true and applicable while living in a world of societies that are widely diverse in their religious identities.” In the same way this research argues that because CEF reaches children in all parts of the world, the method in reaching them, sharing the gospel and disciplining them needs to be adapted to fit their context. Bernard, Penner and Bartlett (2010: 93) write, “There is an eagerness to apply pre-packaged programs because they appear to

work. One-size-fits-all thinking has been problematic as far back as those initial days of the early youth movements". If we believe that one-size-fits-all in ministry, we are terribly mistaken. There are numerous areas that need to be taken into account when doing ministry as Mumo (2013: 794) confirms

"Different cultures have always had different ways of imparting religious education to children ... Africans likewise had an elaborate system of imparting religious education. The entire African way of life was interlaced with different types of education. There were proverbs and wise sayings which had profound messages to pass to society on all aspects of life such as, morality spirituality, relationships and life skill".

The realities of South African children are vastly different to that of the American child where CEF originates, and where material is compiled. Languages for one play a critical role in the way ministry is done. South Africa has 11 official languages and therefore communication of the material is important. This brings us to the need for different ministry models. CEFSA not only wants to reach children with the gospel, but also desires to disciple, and train the children to be Christ-like, and establish them in local churches. As noted above, this research seeks contextualized ways in which CEFSA can nurture and develop the faith of children who receive Christ as their Saviour at a young age and guide them to a point where they play an active part in the local church.

Against this backdrop, the problem investigated in this study investigates the model or methods used by CEFSA to meet the spiritual needs of children in a South African context and assists them in forming their faith. The church in South African, like that of the church in America, is faced with great difficulties. Young people are leaving the church in numbers. Children seem happy and willing to attend, and engage in different ministries, but five years from now, in their teenage years and when they are in college or university, they just are not interested in the things of God.

This does not bode well for the future of the church and action needs to be taken for the church to break free from this trend. It is for this reason that this research will look at the ministry of CEFSA and how this ministry can guide and assist children with their faith. This will result in keeping young people attending and engaged in the life of the church even during

their teenage and university years. This research will seek a way to firmly ground children in Christ so that they are not moved. The way ministry is done in a particular area is of paramount importance and needs to be understood for it to function in the best possible way.

### **1.3 Research Question**

Against the abovementioned research, the research question explored in this study asks: In what ways can CEFSA provide a contextually relevant approach to assist South African children in the formation of their faith?

### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

The purpose of this study is to determine ways in which children in a South African context (a context which is culturally and racially diverse), can understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, accept Him as their personal saviour and grow in their faith. Reflecting on the book; *Looking Back Moving Forward* by Kretzschmar & Ntlha; Michael Cassidy (2005: 95) highlights the importance of contextualisation. Cassidy (2005:95) says, "There is also in Africa, as elsewhere, the need for the message to be brought in a relevant fashion so that it genuinely relates to the real points of the felt need and seeks to answer the real questions which are gripping people's hearts and minds". Reaching out to children with the gospel of Jesus Christ needs to be done in a manner that relates to the child. Children around the world face different challenges and encounter different obstacles yet the message of salvation does not change. The role of missionaries is to be effective in understanding how to best reach the children in a particular context. One of the major issues that South African children are faced with is dealing with the results of apartheid. South Africa is divided in many ways because of the history of this country. Two major dividing factors in the country is the racial divide and the economic divide. This causes working in different areas of the country vastly different. Dr Sam Doherty (2008: 2), an experienced school teacher and CEF children's worker writes,

“God has called many of us to minister to the spiritual needs of boys and girls; and we rejoice in the privilege of such a ministry. As teachers of children, it is necessary to examine our ministry continually and to be absolutely clear concerning what God wants us to do, and what He wants us to accomplish, or see accomplished, in the lives of the children”.

Matthew 18: 14 (NLT) says, “In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father’s will that even one of these little ones should perish”. Children’s workers know that God desires children to have a relationship with Him, but how do they prevent children from perishing? Ministry in this sense is complex, it is difficult and therefore ministry workers must be ready for the challenges the children they work with encounter. In each region or country, challenges are different and missionaries need to have the ability to adapt to what is taking place in a particular area. Missionaries need to understand inculturation and its importance to ministering the gospel. Duncan (2014: 3) says that “inculturation can be defined as a process whereby cultural values can be transformed through their exposure to the Christian message and the insertion of Christianity into indigenous cultures.”

For ministry workers to stay ahead of what is happening, they need to constantly be examining the ministry model in which they do this ministry. Kloppers (2020:1) argues that because of the Roman Catholic Churches dominance over the world-wide church it took them much longer to recognise the importance of differences between various contexts and the influence these differences could have on the ways in which faith or the sacred could be expressed in each context.

Among the many complexities facing the South African church at present, is the impact that foreign missionaries have had in our context. There is a call to contextualize many of the ways in which ministry has always been done to suite the people in this country. This means taking the social and physical challenges the children in South Africa face seriously. For this reason, this research reflects on the ministry model of CEF and how it can be contextualized in developing the faith of the children it ministers too.

## 1.5 Practical Theological Framework

This research study will focus on the ministry of CEFSA and its involvement in the faith formation of children in its different ministry programs. Faith formation can be described as our participation in God's work of inviting people into a relationship with Him. How do people understand their relationship and grow in their relationship are two questions that when answered, assist in understanding faith formation. Lawson (2017: nl) in an article titled, lessons of faith formation states

“Throughout the medieval era (600-1500 AD), the three main ways people learned the Christian faith were partly formal instruction and partly informal socialization. These included: (1) the formative power of experiencing the liturgical year, (2) basic instruction by parents and godparents, and (3) hearing sermons preached at church and personal instruction in the confessional.”

CEF focuses on ministry to children under the age of 14 years old. This research study will be using CEFSA as a core case through which to reflect. This knowledge will guide the researcher's understanding of how CEFSA continues to be able to minister to children in South Africa for over 70 years.

As a study in Practical Theology, the researcher is guided by the practical theological research methodology promoted by Osmer (2008:10); which “... involves four key tasks: the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic”. The descriptive empirical task will answer the question; what is the current status of CEF ministry in South Africa? The research will begin (chapter 2) by establishing how the ministry of CEF international was founded and its main goals. It will then move to the ministry in South Africa and look at what is happening in the ministry at present. The research will seek to understand the day to day operations of the ministry and see if the ministry is accomplishing its three desired goals of reaching boys and girls with the gospel of Jesus Christ, discipling them, and placing them in environments that will assist them to form their faith. This hopes to answer the question posed by Osmer (2008:4) “What is going on?” He continues to say that this is the



“Gathering of information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.”

Understanding the current status of the ministry will lead the research to the next point (chapter 3) which looks at the reasons for the ministry being in its current situation. What caused the current situation? This Osmer (2008: 4) calls the interpretive task. He explains this in saying that “Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring”. Here, the research will look outside the ministry of CEF and see what the external factors that affect the ministry to children in South Africa are. I believe that the history of a country like South Africa plays a critical role in what is currently taking place within the ministry. Social issues affect the way things happen and in this chapter the research will seek to identify these issues. The research looks at the impact these challenges have on the structures and leadership of the organisation. Furthermore, the chapter will seek to identify the impact of these challengers on children’s ministry in the country and within the faith formation of children in South Africa. These questions will assist in moving the research forward in that there will be greater clarity in terms of what things should be like.

Chapter 4 asks the question, “What ought to be going on” This task is called the normative task (Osmer 2008; 4) and is explained as “using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our response, and learning from good practice.” During this task, we look closely at what the Bible and theological scholars say about how the faith of children should be nurtured. The research looks at how the ministry should be operating in a way that best encourages the faith formation of children. In doing this the research hopes to find out what practical changes need to be implemented. Osmer (2008: 10) refers to this as the pragmatic task.

Chapter 5 looks at the pragmatic task. The research looks at the practical ways in which CEF can assist children in nurturing their faith, “How might we respond?” is the question Osmer (2008: 10) asks. In what way does CEF need to change and adapt the ministry and contextualize its approach to ministry so that it assists the South African church in a greater way, in helping children form their faith? (Osmer, 2008: 10) explains this task as “Determining

strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted". This can be a difficult period for the ministry as it looks internally at how it approached ministry in the past and how it should approach it going forward.

The underlying theological perspective used in this study is an evangelical one. Alan Cairns (2013: 77) says, "Evangelical is a description of a person or a position which (1) teaches that salvation is not by human merit but is provided by grace and received by faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) holds to the doctrine of God's Word which is essential to salvation."

As an organisation, CEF is an evangelical, international and independent organisation carried on by individual Christians within the framework of its doctrinal position as set forth in their statement of faith. The evangelical church has a major role in the evangelisation of children.

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes and established the law, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands." (Psalm 78:3–7, NIV)

Children are being reached from every angle by political parties, other faiths, secularism, corporations and a myriad of other causes. Above all, the children of the world need to know Jesus. They need to know the truth of His claims, to experience a personal relationship with Him and to be equipped to follow and serve Him throughout their lives. CEF primarily an American ministry, has a role to play in assisting children to form their faith. Having being established here for many years and impacting many children, this ministry now needs to be adaptable to the context of South African children's needs and it is for this reason that this research is important at this time. It is for this reason that the practical theological framework promoted by Osmer (2008: 10) is suited for this study. Smith (2008: 120) in his review of Osmer suggests that, "Osmer uses the concept of the hermeneutical circle to clarify the relationship between the four tasks. Although the four tasks are distinct, they are also

connected. The interpreter must constantly move between tasks, which leads to an interpretive spiral.”

## 1.6 The aims of this study

- To understand the ministry and ministry methods of CEF international and its effectiveness in South Africa (descriptive-empirical task; chapter 1-2)
- To investigate the reasons for the current status of CEF in South Africa (interpretive task; chapter 2-3)
- To develop a theological approach to children’s ministry that will address the needs of South African children (normative task; chapter 4)
- To develop a contextualized ministry approach to assist South African children with their faith formation (pragmatic task; chapter 5)

## 1.7 Research Design & Methodology

According to Mouton (2012: 55) a research design is “a plan or blue print of how you plan on conducting the research”. Research methodology, he adds, “focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used”. Smith (2008: 120) argues that, “The best way of doing this is to work through your proposed study one section (or one sub problem) at a time, describing the research tools (methods) you will deploy and indicating what data you will collect, how you will collect it and how it will be analysed.”

In this research, the researcher aims to understand the ministry of CEF in South Africa and how it can best assist children with their faith formation. This research will use a qualitative design. Taylor (2016: 7) states that, “The phrase qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data – people’s own written or spoken words and observable behaviour.” This research will conduct a literature study, making use of official CEF documents and literature within theology and supporting disciplines.

Through the narrative approach, I will share information garnered through my lived experience as a missionary with CEFSA for the past 5 years.

As a local missionary with CEF I have no leadership or decision making role in the national work. The research is a result of the challenges faced on the ground and through communication with fellow missionaries. I also share observations of the work of CEFSA taking place in the country. The research will verify information through the statistics gathered through official CEFSA reports. CEFSA collects quarterly reports from each full-time CEF worker, which includes the reports of all volunteer workers. These reports are combined and submitted to the regional office (Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region) and then sent on to the international office. These reports give detailed information of what has been taking place in a certain area, province and country. CEFSA has given me permission to use these in this study (refer to Annexure A Letter of approval).

As noted above, this research aims to explore how CEF is contextualized within a South African context and recommend how the faith formation of children it ministers to can be prioritized. I believe the above mentioned research design and methodology has helped me achieve the aims set out for this study.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

This chapter gives a brief overview of the outline for the research. Chapter one looks at the background and motivation to the study. This explains the reasons the researcher has embarked on this study. It goes on to look at the research problem and research question. Furthermore the chapter states why a study of this kind is needed and then goes on to explain how the study will be done by looking at the theological framework, the aims of the study and finally the design and methodology.

## Chapter 2: Contextual analysis of Child Evangelism Fellowship, South Africa (CEFSA)

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will reflect on the history and ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) as it developed in the South African context. This chapter seeks to answer the question of what the current status of CEF is in South Africa (Osmer 2008: 4) and help us reach the goal of finding the best way for children to form their faith. Osmer (2008: 4) describes this as the descriptive task and says that this is “the gathering of information that helps in discerning patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations or contexts”. Hendriks (2004: 69) argues that, “Contextual analysis is necessary when a congregation (*organisation*) is self-centred, or to such an extent focused on its own institutional well-being that it loses sight of its missional character and the needs and challenges that must be addressed in its community (*setting*)” This research seeks to find a ministry model that fits the context of South Africa as CEF has operated for many years without considering adapting its ministry to fit the needs of the South African children.

In order to understand the context, the chapter will give an overview of CEF as an international, para-church, children’s ministry organisation. This will include who founded the ministry, why was the ministry started, and how it was started? This chapter will look at the goals and focus areas of the ministry and will assist in getting a grasp of what the ministry intends to achieve. After understanding the ministry of CEF international the chapter moves on to look at the ministry of CEFSA. It will ask the questions; how did the ministry start in South Africa and what is currently taking place in the ministry of CEFSA and also look at a particular group of children ministered to by CEFSA. The chapter will end by looking at the relationship that the ministry has with the local church in South Africa.

This chapter aims to do a thorough contextual analysis of the ministry of CEF to assist the research in reaching its goal of finding how CEF can best assist children in their faith formation.

## 2.2 The Formation of CEF

This section of the research looks at how the ministry of CEF was formed. True to my narrative approach; it looks at the life of the founder and what led him to form a children's ministry that focuses on the evangelizing of children. It further looks at how he accomplished the task of forming this ministry and ends with the purpose of the present-day ministry in South Africa.

### 2.2.1 The founder of CEF

Jesse Overholtzer (1877-1955) is credited as the founder of CEF, one of the largest children's ministry organisations in the world. The Child Evangelism Fellowship Instructor of Teachers Level 1 manual (2004: 5) developed by CEF department of education gives a brief introduction to the life of Jesse Overholtzer, and the beginning of CEF as a registered ministry. Overholtzer grew up in a very strict Christian home. His parents (Samuel and Maria) attended, and were faithful members of the Brethren Church. At the age of 12 years old he expressed a desire to become a member of their local church and he approached his mother concerning his interest. According to the website for United Brethren Church ([www.ub.org](http://www.ub.org)), there are two levels of membership. There is adult membership for ages 16 years old and older and student membership for ages 9-15 years old. The website goes on to say that "A conversion experience is required for both levels of membership. In order to be a member of the Brethren Church one has to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, otherwise known as being saved or being born again. Jesse Overholtzer's desire for church membership is reflected in a CEF lesson called "Jesse's Adventure" we see an interaction between Jesse and his mother. "Jesse is ready to do everything to please God and be able to go to heaven. But what does he need to do? Once, he has an idea. 'Mom, can I become a member of our church?' His mother shaking her head, 'It is not possible. You are still too young'". Keeling (2016: 2) states that,

"Spirituality is an innate part of being human that gives us the potential to relate to ourselves, others, the world and God. Spirituality has become a "hot" topic as the authority and influence

of the religious institutions in the Western world has waned, but humans continue to search for something other than themselves in which they can find meaning for their lives. Children especially are on the search for meaning from their earliest moments.”

Jesse Overholtzer as a young boy was searching and looking for answers and the response from his mother troubled young Jesse and for the next eight years Jesse lived a life that had no desire to honour or please God. Morgan (2015: 5) writes about the effect his mother’s response had on Jesse, “Well, I’m lost and I can’t get saved now. I can’t get any more lost, so I guess I’ll just sin if I want to”. The above insert from a CEF bible lesson seems to reflect that young Overholtzer understood sin and what it meant to be saved. Evangelical Christians understand salvation according to Cairns (2013: 212) to be the “complete deliverance which God, through the person and work of Christ, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, affords to His people.” The lesson further reflects that because he could not get saved, according to his mum, he began hanging around pool halls, gambling and drinking. At the age of 18 years old Jesse ran away from home and found work doing hard manual labour. This account of Jesse’s discouragement is similar to that of DL Moody, a man who had great influence over Jesse’s life and spirituality. Moody while still a young boy was discouraged by a pastor in their family church. Belmonte (2010: 7) says, “Everett’s successor undid much, if not all, of the good work Everett had invested in the Moody family, especially where Dwight was concerned. He now began ‘to look upon Sunday with a kind of dread,’ and soon ceased to have any interest in church at all.”

While Jesse was discouraged and working away from home, his mother’s health was failing, she began praying earnestly for Jesse, and writing to him. She then sent her husband out to find him. Samuel found Jesse in a cheap boarding house and offered to send Jesse to college if he returned home. Jesse agreed and enrolled at Lordsburg College in La Verne, California. While at college, Jesse was invited to an evangelistic meeting and he agreed to attend. It was at this meeting, when Jesse only 20 years old, accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

Jesse Overholtzer married Anna M Ewing and together had nine children, three son’s and six daughters. Morgan (2015: 6) says in a 1901 entry in a California biographical record reported

that, "... Mr Overholtzer was a proprietor and publisher of the Lordsburg Sunbeam, which he founded and which was published weekly. At this writing he acts as local agent for the Hartford Fire Insurance Company, and is also a part owner of the Lordsburg Water Company's Plant".

Although a successful businessman, soon he became discontent with what he was doing and felt the Lord calling him to ministry. Jesse Overholtzer became a pastor while he was still a young man in a denomination that was legalistic and oppressive as Morgan (2015: 7) says. Jesse often preached and followed the theology of the church which taught a works based salvation. His ministry bore little fruit and he began doubting his own salvation. After reading the biography of DL Moody, Jesse saw something that he himself lacked. He lacked the fire and faith of Moody. Moody, was a highly influential evangelist, who was known for great revivals in the Christian community, he taught salvation by grace and Jesse wanted to look deeper into this as it conflicted with his teaching but he just did not have the time. Farming and preaching kept Jesse busy until he was struck down by scarlet fever. The result of being ill meant he was confined to his house for 13 weeks. With nothing else to do he studied the scriptures and Morgan (2015: 8) quotes Jesse as saying "I asked the Lord for His guidance as I began the study and promised Him that I would follow the truth as I found it, regardless of the cost". By the time Jesse's quarantine was over, Jesse was preaching salvation by grace alone at church. The church grew and yet he encountered denominational resistance, but he continued enthusiastically preaching.

After many years in ministry, an aging Jesse stumbled upon a sermon by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Morgan (2015: x), writing of CEF president Reese Kauffman says that,

"One day, as Jesse pored over Spurgeon's sermons he was jolted by 16 words that shocked him as though they held an electric charge. In the midst of one of his sermons, Spurgeon had made this declaration: A child of five, if properly instructed, can as readily believe and be regenerated as anyone. That was news to Overholtzer. His austere denominational background had offered him no training in children's work. Preaching and evangelism, he thought, should be aimed at adults".



Being shocked by this statement Overholtzer began ministering to children. He led them to the Lord and watched as they showed genuine signs of spiritual growth. Morgan (2015:9) records that, in this time of “experimenting” he led two sisters (9 and 11 years old) to the Lord and told them not to tell anyone of their salvation. In salvation, Overholtzer is referring to their new found belief in Jesus Christ. A few weeks later their mother who was not connected to any church came to an evangelistic meeting and there accepted Christ as her Saviour. When she was probed as to why she was open to God’s word, she responded by saying, it was the change in the lives of her daughters. This excited him and he began doing evangelism work geared towards children. Overholtzer taught home Bible classes for children (now known as Good News Clubs); he went on to train adults to teach children and also started making lesson material. Overholtzer also spent much time in prayer, asking God to show him the way forward with this ministry of reaching and teaching children the good news of Jesus Christ.

By 1916 Jesse was gripped on child evangelism and after nearly suffering a breakdown in 1918, he withdrew from his denomination and relocated his family to Berkeley, California. Jesse soon began leading Bible classes at churches and public school buildings where he trained other missionaries to teach. Soon every evangelical church in the Bay area was hosting children’s meetings. The ministry was growing and soon Jesse realised that an organizational structure was needed.

As a result of Overholtzer’s late entry into children’s ministry his drive and devotion to the work was with great enthusiasm. His burning desire to see children come to Christ was passed on to those he introduced to children’s ministry and those he taught. Faith formation was not the priority but salvation for children was.

### **2.2.2 Origin of CEF**

Overholtzer founded the Christian Training Association on March 23, 1922 according to the Instructor of teachers level 1 manual. Full-time children’s missionaries were recruited and hired. Children believed in Jesus Christ and home Bible classes for children were growing. In

1933 as the great depression (the longest and most severe economic downturn in modern history) was coming to an end, Overholtzer, without his family, went to Chicago to begin children's ministry there. Overholtzer ran into some difficulty with church leaders in the area, as they disagreed with doctrine around children. According to Kurian & Lampert (2015: 232), "directors of education experienced a decline during the great depression. Resulting in, Schisms over theological positions and biblical interpretation (that divided) churches and denominations, and misunderstanding about the vocation itself". Vocation or "calling" is when a person has consciously chosen to serve in a particular field. This could be any service, but for the sake of this research, refers to Christian ministry. In this regard, children's ministry was often debated and the vocation was in decline. Overholtzer however persisted and slowly the ministry began to grow. Morgan (2015: 15) writes, "Jesse was now in the grip of deep conviction that God had called him to catalyse a mighty work for the salvation of children". He worked tirelessly to get structure to the ministry in Chicago and once a committee was formed to facilitate the ministry there he travelled back to California. Slowly there were organisational building blocks in California, New Mexico, and Chicago. This was at a time when the Christian fundamentalists began re-organizing themselves after early struggles. Marsden (2006: 3) says that "... fundamentalism was primarily a religious movement. It was a movement among American 'evangelical' Christians, people professing complete confidence in the Bible and preoccupied with the message of God's salvation of sinners through the death of Jesus Christ." Traditional beliefs were being changed which included the reliability of the Bible and also the necessity of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Musser and Price (2003: 207) say

"... in the 1930s and 1940s fundamentalists successfully organized at the local or congregational level. The success of grassroots fundamentalism in these years was due in great measure to a rapidly expanding network of nondenominational organizations, which included publishing houses, mission boards, and radio stations. At the center of this fundamentalist support structure were the approximately seventy Bible institutes that dotted the country. These schools, the most prominent of which was Moody Bible Institute..."

As mentioned above, Overholtzer was drawn to fundamentalism through reading the writings of Moody. It was in reading Moody's writings that his view of Christianity changed from a

works based salvation, to salvation by grace, and also his approach to bringing children to Jesus Christ. One example of this is that before coming into contact with Moody's writings he was of the opinion that children could not accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour (this was what he had learnt as a child) but now, that had all changed.

CEF holds the Bible as their final authority and is an important part of the ministry as fundamentalist do. The teaching of the Bible is therefore extremely important for CEF. In saying this, often this hinders the ministry in the way that the message of the Bible comes across to the children that CEF want to reach. Teaching the Bible is important, but there are different ways to bring the message of the Bible across to children. It is in this regard that this research study looks at ways that CEF cannot only teach the Bible but also assist in the faith formation of children in a South African context.

The CEF Instructor of Teachers level 1 manual says that opportunities arose for Overholtzer to speak about the needs of children, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1937, at the age of 60 years old, Overholtzer registered Child Evangelism Fellowship as a non-profit children's ministry organization. Morgan (2015: xi) writes, "Overholtzer was set afire for child evangelism. His plan of ministry began to define itself, and in May of 1937 he founded an organization for the sole purpose of evangelizing and discipling youngsters – Child Evangelism Fellowship."

Mark Senter (1989: 211) in his doctoral dissertation titled "The youth for Christ movement as an educational agency and its impact upon protestant churches: 1931-1979" points to and acknowledges the boom in para-church movements around the same time as the founding of CEF. He says, "The period from 1931 to 1949 gave rise to agencies outside the local church which attempted to provide non-formal Christian education to high school students". Josh Haywood (2011: 19) in his honours thesis, argues that "the para-church movement has been a result of American individualism and the American pastime of entrepreneurship." Citing John Hammet he goes on to say,

"American individualism fueled by the increase in world awareness after the World Wars and the tremendous increase in technology and communication created a tremendous amount of interest for increased ministry outside the traditional church setting. The influence of

individualism in Baptist theology from the First Great Awakening on has encouraged a focus on the importance of the individual in Baptist ecclesiology.”

Overholtzer with his newfound desire to reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ, coupled with being a successful businessman and entrepreneur made for a good combination in beginning the ministry of CEF. He enjoyed the freedom of following his desires and vision. This could be a big factor in his drive to starting his own children’s ministry, Child Evangelism Fellowship. As seen above, much of the ground work in the formation of CEF was done by Overholtzer and a few others who assisted him. Ultimately it was his drive and determination that got CEF running and into the ministry it is today. He later travelled all across the United States promoting the ministry of CEF and soon his vision swept beyond the borders of America and into Latin America. Following World War II, the ministry of CEF grew rapidly as wartime experiences fuelled passions to serve. The uncertainty that war brought drew people to God. The ministry continued to grow steadily as more missionaries and volunteers saw the need for children’s ministry. In 2019, according to CEF official website, CEF operates in 98% of the countries of the world. For the year ending 2018, CEF reached 25, 478, 771 children with the gospel message and 10, 480, 210 children made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

### **2.2.3 The Threefold Purpose of CEF**

CEF has three main goals, and according to the CEF international ministries manual (2015: 15) “Child Evangelism fellowship is a Bible-centred, worldwide organisation, composed of born-again believers whose purpose is to evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to establish (disciple) them in the Word of God and in a local church for Christian living.”

The first part of the description of CEF says that “Child Evangelism Fellowship is a Bible-centred, worldwide organisation”. Being Bible-centred means that CEF was formed, and functions in a way that is in accordance to the Word of God, the Bible. The first point of CEF’s statement of faith as given in the International ministries manual (2015) refers to the Bible and what CEF believes about the Bible. CEF is an organization that falls under the grouping of evangelical fundamentals. Evangelical fundamentals believe that the Bible is the final

authority. Laa (2010: 11) says, "The most influential cause of the movement was the nineteenth-century intellectual revolution that included such ideas as materialistic evolution, higher criticism, and theological modernism. All three of these ideas transformed mainstream American thinking and fundamentalism emerged in part as a response to this trend." CEF says, "We believe that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," by which we understand the whole book called THE BIBLE; that it is inerrant in the original writings and that its teaching and authority are absolute, supreme and final. That the Holy Spirit guided holy men of old in all that they wrote. 2 Timothy 3:16; Deuteronomy 4:2; 2 Peter 1:21".

Hale (2007: 831), when commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16,

"There is no other book like the Bible in all the world. Other books may contain things that are true, that are wise, that are helpful; but there is only one book that contains the words of God Himself, and that is the Bible. Only the Bible has been written by the direct inspiration of God; it is God-breathed. We can fully trust every word in the Bible. It is truly God's own word."

CEF agrees with this description of the Bible by Hale and it is from the word of God that CEF derive their 3 main goals. The description of CEF's purpose shows that the ministry has three main goals. Firstly to evangelize children, to disciple them and then help them in finding a local church who will assist them with their faith formation.

Fundamental evangelicals seek to have a clear understanding of the Bible. To interpret the Bible, fundamentals use a historical, grammatical, literal approach to the scriptures. Hermeneutics (Cairns 2013: 96) is "The science of interpretation", the methods used by different individuals to interpret scripture is important to understand what the author is saying and how the reader must respond. Robinson (1980: 20) says "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context ..." Expository preaching is a method used by preachers and teachers to help Christians understand the scriptures. In using this hermeneutic, the emphasis is not on what the scripture means to us today, but rather what was the message to the original audience.

### 2.2.3.1 Evangelize

Evangelism is an important Christian practice. It is important to note that the practice of evangelism is not just one activity but a context for multiple and varied activities that are performed as part of that practice (Stone 2007: 23). Evangelizing children is important to CEF. What is of greater importance is evangelizing unreached children, children who have either never come in contact with the gospel or possibly would not hear the good news of Jesus Christ. The International Ministries Manual (version 3: 25) says, “The main thrust of Child Evangelism Fellowship is to reach those children not being touched by the church and to establish them in a local church. Most of the world’s children are in this category”. In CEF’s statement of faith, point K states that, “We believe in the evangelisation of the world, that the supreme mission of the people of God in this age is to preach the Gospel to every creature. That special emphasis should be placed upon the evangelisation of children”. The gospel, according to the CEF ‘Teaching Children Effectively’ teaching outlines (2018: 59) is,

“God’s righteous way to save unrighteous sinners. It is the grace of God provided through the cross of Christ. It is God’s solution to man’s predicament (problem). The solution is Jesus Christ Himself, who He is and what He has done to reconcile sinful man with a holy and loving God. Now a holy God can offer complete pardon, justification and eternal life. The gospel to present is the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God – crucified, buried, risen again and exalted to the right hand of God the Father”.

Reid (2009: 6) says that, “Evangelism means to share the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost person”. In “good news” Reid (2009) refers to the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for the sins of the world and by believing you can be saved, this is the good news. According to the teaching children effectively (TCE) teaching outlines of CEF, three portions of scripture are used to show why evangelism to children is important.

In the broad sense, evangelize means to attempt to convert someone to Christianity. This is done by teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade people to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:17 (NIV) says “For Christ did not send me (*Apostle Paul*) to baptize, but to preach the gospel”. The gospel that the Apostle Paul preached was the good

news of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for our sins, was buried and raised again on the third day according to the scriptures. In preaching this, Apostle Paul made people aware that they are sinners, they have fallen short of the glory of God and need a Saviour to reconcile them to God. Jesus Christ is the one who reconciles mankind to God. The role of mankind is to accept God's gracious gift by believing in Jesus Christ. Henry (1960: 1507) says, "Believing in Christ's name is receiving him as a gift from God". John 1:12 (NKJV) "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:"

Morley (2009: 170) says, "Evangelism is the process by which we help unbelieving men and women see God as He is and respond to Him by accepting His offer of salvation through the sacrificial death of His Son, through the working of the Holy Spirit".

Firstly, the Bible (Psalm 78:3-4) teaches that each generation must tell the next generation about the Lord. This scripture applies primarily to Israelite children who were part of God's people. In application showing the importance of Christians today teaching their children the things of God and helping them to be reconciled to God. Secondly, CEF believes that Jesus included "all creation" in His great commission, Mark 16:15. In all creation the Bible shows that age is not a factor in evangelism, that young and old need to hear the good news and could accept it. Thirdly, CEF believes that God does not want even one child to be lost Matthew 18:14.

The Bible makes it clear that children are important to Jesus and desires that they too believe in Him. However children are still neglected in the church. Bunge (2016) in Grobbelaar & Breed (2016: 93) suggests that "Even though children make up a large portion of the human population everywhere, and the largest portion in Africa, they are not consistently given the attention they rightfully deserve." On the other hand Doherty (2015: 1) says, "One organisation which makes the evangelism of children their priority and their speciality is Child Evangelism Fellowship, the Mission with which I worked for 57 years."

CEF views evangelism so highly for children because there is no difference between a child and an adult in Gods view of mankind, and in terms of the condition of the heart. Walvoord wrote an article titled, "Should we evangelize children" which is part of the supplementary material of the IOT level 1 manual. In this article he says, "As one searches the Old and New Testaments for ideas about how God wants to reach various individuals, it is

obvious that His basic approach is to reach the entire family, including children. It is important that Moses commanded the children of Israel to listen every seven years to a reading of the entire Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible”.

The Bible certainly teaches that children need to hear the gospel and have the ability to respond to the gospel. The Bible teaches that “all have sinned” and that “there is none righteous”, CEF view children just as they view adults. Children are viewed as unrighteous (Isaiah 64:6a), spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4:4a), spiritually hungry (Lamentations 2:19b), sick (Isaiah 1:5b-6), lame (Psalm 1:1), slaves (John 8:34b), and dead (Ephesians 2:1). The Instructor of Teachers level 1 manual goes on to say “This is such a terrible picture of the heart condition of most of our children. But this is not all. This child has an enemy that wants to keep him away from God forever. Satan doesn’t feel sorry for this child or leave the child alone. Satan, like a roaring lion, seeks who he will devour.”

The responsibility of the church and particular parents and Christian workers is to understand the dire situation that children are in. Hayden (2007: 1) supports this view by saying

“Every new generation of adults tends to complain about the behaviour of children and young people. Most parents will have at least some problems in bringing up their children; most teachers will experience difficulties in managing the behaviour of some pupils and most of us are likely to witness or experience behaviour from children and young people in the community that is at least lacking in civility, and may sometimes feel threatening.”

Children and adults who are unsaved, unregenerate, do not have the ability to respond to the commands of God. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms lives into the image of Jesus Christ. Hale (2007: 82) in describing children and the Kingdom of God says,

“The Bible says that all have sinned (Romans 3:23; 5:12). The Psalmist says that he was not only sinful at birth, but was sinful from the time (his) mother conceived (him) (Psalm 51:5). Job says similar things (Job 25:4). Thus the Bible says that all of us, even newborn babies, have natures that are sinful and set against God. Every human being needs God’s grace to be saved from sin and to be made righteous.



Evangelizing children is important. It is crucial for the child and the life that they live. Barna (2003: 29) says that “We can strive to give our youngsters all the advantages the world has to offer, and motivate them to make the most of available opportunities and resources; but unless their spiritual life is prioritized and nurtured, they will miss out on much of the meaning, purpose and joy in life.” Beckwith (2004: 62) in speaking of bringing children to Jesus Christ, mentions that it does not end there (with salvation) and that parents and churches should be more concerned about the ongoing growth of the child in the things of God. This leads to the second point of CEF’s purpose.

### **2.2.3.2 Disciple**

The condition that children are in cannot be taken lightly. Not only does CEF work at reaching children with the gospel, CEF also aims to disciple children in the Word of God. Disciple comes from the Greek word ‘mathetes’ which means to learn. Weber (2014: 96) explains that “Discipleship is not solely about learning more about God. It’s about learning how to live one’s life to glorify God”. The process of discipleship is learning from someone and it is intentionally equipping people to understand the Word of God. The methods of teaching and equipping may vary. Once an individual accepts Jesus Christ as their Saviour, they need to be taught how to think and act as a Christian. This process can be referred to as discipleship. Hiebert (2008: 311) argues that someone can become a Christian after hearing the gospel just once, but he says it is then the responsibility of those who shared the gospel with them to disciple them. In disciple he means, to root them solidly in their new faith. Without discipleship they may be a stillborn Christian. Evangelizing people is one cog in the wheel, it must be followed by discipleship or else the one newly converted will not know what to do with their new faith in Jesus Christ. Ogden (2007: 3) says “Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ”.

Faith formation is different to discipleship. Faith formation is a process of helping children/adults understand who God is, learn to love Him for who He is, come to know Him

as Saviour and then learn how to live for Him. Faith formation is a holistic process, differing from evangelism and discipleship. This helps children to understand Christianity and not commit to something because others are doing it or to please parents or church leaders. Transforming the lives of children to think and act like a Christian is important to the work and ministry of CEF. CEF's ministry vision is "Every Child, Every Nation, Every Day". CEF has the desire to reach every child in every nation with the gospel, they also want children to be in God's word every day. The term "every day" is important in discipling, as it stands for children being in the word of God each day. CEF official webpage says "We are committed to leading children to be in God's word every day. As children grow in their relationship with the Lord through meditating on His word, they develop a godly character, which produces much fruit to the glory of God, including spreading the gospel to their peers".

Matthew 28:19a (NKJV) says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." this command is given to Jesus' disciples but also to all Christians. Making disciples is helping people know and understand who God is and how they are to go about living for Him. Discipleship and spiritual growth are often used together as they both project the fact that a Christian must grow in Christ. Spader (2014: 96) says,

"The term "discipleship" was first used extensively in 1850 by a man named Charles Adams, who broke the phrase "making disciples" into two parts – bringing people to Christ, which he labelled "evangelism," and then growing people up in Christ, which he labelled "discipleship". He wrote articles about two different wings of the airplane: evangelism and discipleship".

CEF understands the importance of discipleship just as Spader illustrates when he says that it is like one of two wings on an airplane. An airplane with one wing is useless and in the same way, evangelising children would be useless if there was no discipleship. 2 Peter 3:18a (NIV) says, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". When referring to growing in grace, it is the understanding that God is working in you to change you so that you can live in a way that honours Him. To grow in knowledge is to learn more about God – who He is and what He is like. God the Holy Spirit is the one who helps an individual to grow in grace and knowledge. God the Holy Spirit helps Christians when they read and study God's word. Therefore CEF desires for children to be in God's word each day.

CEF understands the importance of growing in the grace and knowledge of God and therefore they do not just evangelize children but also desire to disciple them. Griffiths (2009: 83) quotes Richie in saying,

“Everything that a nest speaks of is what I want for these kids, until one day when they are older we begin to push them out of the nest and into deeper things of God... it speaks of warmth, so when the kids come we want them to feel warm and accepted. It speaks of strength and protection – I protect the kids that come. The mother feeds the chicks – I like to feed them on the things of God, Bible stories, life issues. The mother loves those little chicks and we love these kids.”

Discipleship is about nurture and care. Russ (2010: 29) says that, “Paul understood the necessity of discipleship. He poured his life into Timothy and encouraged him to continue the process”. Paul, after meeting Timothy and leading him to Jesus Christ, taught him what it means to be a follower of God. He walked along side him and showed him what God meant to him. Young Christians need guidance and someone to be there to help them as they begin their new walk with Jesus Christ. Rosenberg & Koshy (2012; 28) also say that, “It is not enough just to be spiritual adults. We must become spiritual parents, helping newly born–again believers grow from infancy to adulthood in Christ to the point where they, too, are able and willing to reproduce spiritually”.

CEF goes about discipling children through their GNC program. This gives teachers an opportunity to meet with small groups of children to help them with their faith formation. This GNC, which is normally a 1 hour, once a week lesson, may not be enough time for teachers to get a grasp of the spiritual well-being of all the children in his/her GNC, and then assist them in faith formation. Bunge (2008) in a journal of theology, volume 47 says that, “Practical theologians from a number of denominations therefore are focusing more attention on the importance of spiritual formation in the home.” This would be great, but as CEF focuses on unreached children, children who do not attend church or are from non Christian homes, this is difficult. Faith formation happens in networks as there are different people, occasions and events that play different roles in helping mould a child’s spiritual

growth. Cupit (2015: 2) says, “The greater exposure children have to God’s Spirit at work in groups to which they belong; in particular, the more they share the Spirit in a group of Christian believers; the more they experience the living activity of Christ”. CEF’s model for ministry and discipleship eliminates different aspects of what causes children to form their faith in a meaningful way. It is therefore for this reason that this study focuses on faith formation of children in a South African context.

### **2.2.3.3 Establish**

The third goal of CEF is to establish boys and girls in a local church. Hiebert (2008: 12), writing on the subject of worldviews and how people change says, “Conversion must also be corporate. The church in each locale, as a community of faith, must define what it means to be a Christian in a particular sociocultural and historical setting. It must take responsibility for defining how Christianity is different from its pagan surroundings”. Children adopt the norms of cultural groups within which they are raised. Such enculturation starts early and is continually reinforced. It contributes radically to how children identify their essential being. The local church is important for the faith formation of all believers. God in His great wisdom didn’t give us everything we need to follow Him successfully. Morley (2009: 96) says that we all have gaps in our lives that are filled by others. Therefore, there is a need for fellowship and the local church. When a young child or adult comes to Christ, change happens. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, however there is a need for the church to guide and assist the new convert by demonstrating what it is to be a Christian and how it is different from the world they once lived. 2 Corinthians 6:17a says, “Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you”. This is an instruction by the apostle Paul to the believers in Corinth to keep themselves away from those who continued in idol and pagan worship. In the same way, the church needs to help the child come away from the old life and teach and show them the way of Christ. CEF as a para-church organisation works alongside churches for the glory of God. Saunders (2015:2), in an article for the gospel coalition describes Para-church ministries by saying, “The broad concept of Para-church ministry is wonderful. Para in Greek means to come “alongside.” By definition

and design, then, Para-church groups ought to come alongside churches to provide ministries those churches cannot fulfil alone”.

CEF assist churches to do and fulfil what they may not be able to do or are struggling with. Churches are often unable to do all the work of the ministry on their own because of the lack of involvement by many who attend local churches. Thumma and Bird (2011: xxviii) say that,

“For most of the roughly three hundred thousand Protestant churches in America only a small percentage of those in regular attendance are active and engaged in mission and ministry. In fact any church is highly unusual if more than half are. Nearly all congregations bemoan this situation, but very few know how to motivate greater participation.”

The local church has a great responsibility in society today and their role and function have often been debated at length. Tim Challies (2017: nl) writes in an article titled “What’s the purpose of the Church” that Bill Hybels and Rick Warren have been strong proponents of the seeker friendly church. This church has a goal on winning the lost for Christ and therefore everything about the church is to attract the unbeliever, from the songs they sing to the design of the building, everything is done to make the unbeliever comfortable.

On the other hand there are churches who feel their primary objective is discipleship. Although discipleship is important, this too is not the sole purpose of the church. Challies (2017: nl) argues that the purpose of the church is threefold. He argues that the proper ends for a local congregation’s life and actions are the worship of God, the edification of the church, and the evangelization of the world. These three purposes in turn serve the glory of God. CEF therefore, as a para-church organisation come alongside churches and assist them in fulfilling their purpose. David van Heerden, a former National Director of CEFSA says in an Afrikaans publication the good news message (February 2004) that, “Child Evangelism Fellowship is a faith based organisation that supports the church to reach the child with the gospel”.

South Africa has many different churches active in this country. Each of these adhere to preferred doctrines and church practices. However, what kind of church does CEF associate itself with? This is an important question because of the vast differences that there are among

churches. CEF is an evangelical organisation and therefore seeks to work and align itself with evangelical churches. Evangelical theology is almost always referred to as the preaching or teaching of the “good news” or the gospel. Mcdermott (2010: 21) says, “evangelical religion has always been gospel religion, or religion focussed on the good news of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus Christ”. CEF International Ministries Manual (2015: 24-25) says,

“We seek to identify ourselves with the mainstream of the fundamental movement in every country. We endeavour at all times, without compromise, to unite ourselves with those of “like precious faith” to build a strong church. We seek at all times to foster and encourage a relationship with the church that expresses itself by saying, We need CEF”.

Dever (2013: 158) gives a clear description of what the New Testament teaches regarding the church. The church, even though often associated with the building in which Christians worship, is not a true reflection of the church. Dever (2013: 158) says, “... the church in its purpose and membership is for believers, for those to whom God’s Holy Spirit has given new birth and who join together in a covenanted community”.

Dever (2013: 158) makes it clear that the church is a body of believers. The church is formed by Christians who work together to assist one another in their walk with God and to grow in their knowledge of who God is. This is what CEF desires for the children who come through their ministry programs. They desire to work with churches who in turn will assist the children to walk closely with God and continue to grow in the love and understanding of God. Ideally CEF wants to work with churches who view children as an important part of the church. They want churches to take children seriously and invest into the lives of children. To some degree however, this has been a struggle for CEF in many parts of South Africa because of the traditional views of children.

## **2.3 CEF South Africa**

### **2.3.1 Formation of CEFSA**

According to the CEFSA website on 03 April 2020; CEF South Africa was founded in 1947. This ministry is a product of CEF, USA. There is however not much recorded evidence for when and how the ministry reached South Africa. The website continues to say that “there were faithful men and women serving in this organization. Some have left the ranks to another calling but God’s faithfulness through all the years is clearly visible”.

How the ministry got to South Africa is not entirely clear as there are various accounts of people who attended Good News Clubs or CEF teacher trainings run by American missionaries around the country. Some of these missionaries were from CEF and some from an organisation called The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM). TEAM is an interdenominational mission agency founded by Fredrik Franson. Franson like Overholtzer, was a member of the Moody Church in Chicago. TEAM was founded with a strong emphasis on evangelism through church planting. According to TEAM’s official webpage, TEAM began under the name Scandinavian Alliance Mission, or S.A.M. in January of 1890. In January of 1891, the first band of 35 missionaries set sail for China. Within five years team sent missionaries to China, Japan, North India, South Africa, East Africa, Swaziland and Mongolia. Many of these missionaries were involved in children’s ministry as this was viewed as an avenue into the homes and lives of adults. DL Moody, founder of the Moody church also began his ministry with children. Under the church history, it is reported that, “Leaving behind a life of luxury, Moody established a Sunday school for poor children in an area of Chicago known as “Little Hell” according to the Moody Church webpage. Moody’s enthusiasm for children and philosophy around children certainly had an impact on both Franson and Overholtzer. Both these men went on to form mission organisations that spread worldwide and put particular emphasis on children.

Missionaries often used education to share the gospel and in 1921, TEAM founded a school in Swaziland called Florence Christian Academy (Matham). Grobbelaar (2016: 120) says,

The missionaries that came to Africa were also influenced by the growing demand in the 19th century to provide Christian education on a larger scale. There was especially a drive for the mass provision of Christian education for the children living in poverty. The establishment of schools became an important part of the strategy to Christianise and educate Africa.

Florence Christian Academy was led by William Dawson. Pat Nunn, in Matham (2002: 122) says that, "(Dawson's) greatest concern and burden was the spiritual welfare of his pupils. This is so movingly seen in his diary. He not only wanted to see that children had an education, but that they committed their lives to Christ". From the school, missionaries were able to reach children and adults with the gospel and through this, evangelical churches were planted in Swaziland. They later moved into Northern Natal and continued to spread their ministry to major cities in South Africa. Mumo in Grobbelaar & Breed (2016:120) says that the establishment of successful Sunday schools often preceded church planting. Daisy Naiker, the current (2020) National Coordinator of CEFSA recalls that sometime in the 1950's her late husband attended a Good News Club in Northern Natal run by a TEAM missionary and accepted the Lord as his Saviour at the Good News Club. This was during the apartheid era which ran from 1945 to 1994. Apartheid meaning, apartness or separateness and is pronounced "apart – hate" (Clark & Wager 2016: 3). Apartheid was a political and social system in South Africa during the era of White minority rule. It enforced racial discrimination against non-Whites, mainly focused on skin colour and facial features. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the most prominent church in the country at the time, and a church with close ties to the government, was known to be a supporter of apartheid. According to [www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za)

The history of the church has been very much bound with the politics of the Afrikaner community of South Africa. The church supported the system of apartheid, which institutionalized separation and stratification of the people of South Africa according to race. The social segregation of Black, Coloured and White people was reflected in the establishment of churches of these three groups.

The politics of the country had a huge impact on ministry. The way in which churches are positioned today and even the cultural make up of churches can largely point back to the regulations imposed during the apartheid. Joost de Blank, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town of 1958 said in Walshe (1983: 8) that the DRC should be praised for their work in missions and education, but condemned for their support of apartheid using a misguided understanding of Calvinistic theology. Swart et al (2012: 154) confirms that, "It is well known



that the DRC supported the apartheid ideology and maintained a close link with the former National Party government". It is also true that there were some members of the DRC that were not happy with the policies in place and challenged them. The DRC conducted several debates around the issue of apartheid. Prozesky (1990: 64) says,

"The 1948 document stated that Scripture posed the 'unity of humanity', Yet Scripture also 'recorded and presupposed the division of humanity in races and nations as a deed of God'. This division comprised the totality of life: constitutional, social and religious. God therefore 'graced those who obeyed this apartheid'. Regarding the church, the document affirms the 'unity in Christ' but sees this unity as a spiritual communion with Christ and not as a physical communication of believers beyond the boundaries of one's own nation."

During the time of apartheid TEAM worked with the different people groups as they were separated. The Group Areas Act meant that whites could not live with other race groups. White missionaries lived in the white areas and commuted to coloured, black and Indian plant churches. It is also the time in which TEAM were transitioning from Swaziland to the Transvaal (Matham, 2002: 129). Although there is no record of an official partnership between CEF and TEAM, there are many past and present TEAM missionaries who used CEF as their preferred children's ministry and continue to do so today. These missionaries were possibly trained in the USA and had access to CEF material. Team missionaries therefore played a vital role in the ministry of CEF in South Africa.

At the 60th anniversary celebration of CEFSA in 2008, David van Heerden (National Director 2004 – 2010) gave a presentation on a brief history of Child Evangelism Fellowship and the United Committee. The United Committee was the name given to the CEF working committee that went against the separation laws of the time. This committee comprised of missionaries, volunteers and supporters of all races who were responsible for the running of the ministry. This interracial committee was unique considering the turbulent political situation in South Africa, Apartheid. This committee started to allow local workers to be involved in the ministry in a greater way. As local volunteers were trained and became competent to continue the work, missionaries gave more responsibilities to the local volunteers. Local workers followed

the American model that they were taught and this was implemented even while locals became more involved with the ministry.

A report from Mr W Bowling an ex-chairperson of CEF in Transvaal (now Gauteng) states that,

The Rand Committee of Child Evangelism Fellowship International was formed in October 1946 in Johannesburg (this being prior to CEFSA being registered with South African authorities). Mr and Mrs Wright – trained CEF workers from America and were living in Brakpan, were appointed field directors of the Transvaal. They opened the first book room for CEF literature in Brakpan and in March 1948 they returned to the USA. Miss Fay Butler was appointed Director of CEF work in the Transvaal Area in 1948.

Miss E Mader who was a trained CEF worker came into the ministry reporting to Miss Butler during the year 1950 and in October 1958 took over Directorship, which she held until 31 December 1974. Under Miss Mader's guidance the work progressed into Vrededorp, Bosmont, Newclare, Noordgesig, Kliptown and later in Eldorado Park with the help of enthusiastic workers like Mrs Rebecca Hendricks, Mrs Macks, Mrs Walsh and later on Ms Zanne Hendricks, Mrs Sheriffa Martin, Mrs Allewaya Goss and many teachers who were so faithful for many years.

All the above-mentioned communities are known as “coloured communities”, and as seen in the above report, the ministry was well received in the coloured communities. Coloured people, sometimes referred to as mixed race are a marginalised people group. They are part white and part black and yet struggle to identify with either group. Bloom (1960:nl) explains how coloureds came about. He says;

During the first few decades there were some marriages between Dutchmen and Hottentot women and many non-marital liaisons between masters and their female slaves. By the 1670's it is estimated that about three quarters of the children of female slaves had white fathers. This was the origin of the present Cape Coloured people, and the early miscegenation persisted in the form of concubinage in a manner similar to that of the Deep South of the United States

The ministry of CEFSA was well received in the coloured communities and this could be as a result of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church for coloureds. It was known as the sister church to the DRC and was reliant on the mother church (DRC) for clergy and finance. Van Rooi (2010) describes the reasons for the starting of this church and points to the disunity within the DRC.

“... as time passed and the number of converts grew, cultural differences and the growing fear of the ‘mixing of blood’ and gelykstelling, became clearer. This was roused through the growing contact between mostly the Dutch Settlers and the local inhabitants of not only the Cape area, but also in the other parts of South Africa as we have it today. Prejudice, combined with the growing idea of Volksplanting (the planting of a distinct nation under white people) led to clearer social divisions between European and Native, Christian and heathen. This in turn led to erection of separate church buildings for the coloured and black members of the DRC”.

The popular view in the black communities was that the DRMC was a mirror image of the white *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church or NGK), also called the *moederkerk* (mother church) (Kinghorn 1997:151–154). Giliomee (2003: 455) notes that, “By 1950 some 30 per cent of the coloured population were members of the DRC mission church”.

The 1980’s was a volatile time in South African history. There was growing frustration among the majority of South Africans, fighting against the Apartheid government. South African History Online (2019) says, “The 1980s were also the most violent years of apartheid, as the government tried to hold onto its power and repress the resistance of the black people by any means they could”. It was at this time when there was a split in the united committee. As the work grew in the coloured communities, they were able to form a separate committee that dealt with the ministry in their coloured communities. At the time they had 5 full-time local CEF workers. In 1989, CEFSA held their first 3-month training course in Ermelo Mpumalanga, which was previously held in Swaziland. This later moved to Petra Mountain Inn in White River Mpumalanga which was owned by Gerry and Mary Schoombee. From 1990 – 1996 CEFSA in partnership with Petra College ran children’s worker training from this venue. The relationship between CEFSA and Petra College began when Johann DuPreez, a Petra

College employee, attended CEF leadership training in Kilchimmer, Switzerland. Petra College then joined CEFSA as the training centre for CEFSA. Petra College continued with their own children's ministry training as well as CEF training. John Huisman, who was the course developer for Petra College, then attended Children's Ministry Institute (CMI) in the USA. On his return, Petra College received permission to run CMI in South Africa. In 1996 during the teaching of CMI, tension broke out between CEF workers from the USA and staff at Petra College, it was after this that CEF moved on from Petra College. CEFSA moved to their own training facility called Lenteland just outside Vereeniging Gauteng where they conduct the teacher training CMI.

Another informal link with TEAM is that they assisted in the building of security walls around the training facility. In the 2017 Fall edition of the CEF quarterly magazine Impact, Allewaya Goss writes of her mother's (Rebecca Hendricks) ministry with CEF in the south of Johannesburg. The Impact magazine is distributed worldwide and highlights the ministry of CEF in different parts of the world. Allewaya Goss, principal and founder of Feed My Lambs, a private Christian primary school in Eldorado Park in Johannesburg, credits the start of the ministry in Eldorado Park to the work of American missionaries. Allewaya's mother, Rebecca attended a teacher training for Good News Clubs in 1952 soon after coming to salvation, and immediately began teaching Good News Clubs. Through these Good News Clubs Rebecca reached hundreds of children with the gospel message and many came to know Christ as Saviour. Frik van Rensburg, the current CEF Regional Director for Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region (SAIOR), came to know about the ministry of CEF through Rebecca's ministry. Allewaya at the age of 20 years old continued where her mother left off and later attended Children's Ministry Institute (1979) at the CEF international headquarters in Warrenton, Missouri, United States. After her return she began working full-time to reach children for the Lord through Good News Clubs and 5 Day Clubs which is a holiday program that runs for 5 consecutive days. She also started a school called Feed My Lambs which caters for children 3 -12 years old from all walks of life.

After Van Heerden's leadership as National Director, CEFSA has had 4 National Directors leading the ministry in South Africa. Kobus Viljoen from the Strand in the Western Cape served as acting National Director from 2011 – 2015. Kobus was then appointed as the Regional

Literature Director of the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region. Ashby Kurian from Durban in Kwazulu Natal then took over as acting national director and served in the role for 2 years (2015-2017). After acting in this role, he returned to being the provincial director of KwaZulu Natal. Louis van Tonder from Benoni in Gauteng, who joined CEFSA as a volunteer, acted as national director for 1 year and returned to being a volunteer in Benoni. Currently Daisy Naiker from the North West is the national coordinator of CEFSA. Mrs Naiker was previously the national director of Seychells and returned to South Africa after the passing of her husband. The fact that besides Kurian and Naiker, all other national directors were Afrikaans speaking may point to a lack of trust, or fear of losing control of a ministry that is by and large dominated by the Afrikaans community. Weber (2015: 3) argues that, "One of the reasons foreign models have been welcomed without criticism has been because Africa and its youth are often negatively portrayed by the media to the outside world, while Western culture has mostly been portrayed in a favourable light and associated with freedom, justice, equality and emancipation". This points to the power the media have and the perception people derive from what they read and see in the media. The national board through the constitution has great authority. They can use and misuse this authority to the furtherance of the ministry or to bring about its demise. The National Director is appointed by the national board in consultation with the Regional Director. He or she is to be preferably a national of the country but could possibly be a cross cultural missionary if a suitable local cannot be appointed according to the international manual (2015: 73). The international manual (2015: 73) continues to say, "The National Director is to lead, guide and direct the work and missionaries of CEF in an entire country".

### **2.3.2 Ministries of CEFSA**

The ministry of CEF in South Africa (2019) has now reached most provinces of the country. CEFSA has full-time workers in the Eastern Cape (4), Gauteng (5), Mpumalanga (1), KwaZulu Natal (3), North West (3), and the Western Cape (9). CEFSA have also sent international missionaries to France, Netherlands and Madagascar. In addition to the full-time workers, CEFSA has a large pool of volunteer workers. Volunteers are those who offer their time to

teach Good News Clubs at their homes or in and around their communities. Volunteers are a great asset to the work and progress of the ministry of CEF in South Africa. Volunteers are sourced through churches. Training is given at no cost in the forms of “Super Seminars”. Once they have completed this they are assisted in starting GNC’s by the full-time worker closest to them. Training manuals are all written in the United States, by workers of the international office. None of the content taught is contextualised to different countries or contexts. Volunteers in Germany will go through the same training as a volunteer in Kenya, Australia or South Africa.

CEF uses different types of ministry programs to reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the two most used and most recognizable CEF ministries are the Good News Club (GNC) and the School Good News Club (SGNC). In the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Region which comprises of 16 countries, CEF reached 768 507 children through these ministries in 2019 according to the annual Southern Africa Indian Ocean regional report. In South Africa; however, CEFSA reached just 16 371 children through these two ministries according to the South Africa annual report. These two exciting ministries take place in neighbourhood settings such as homes, backyards, schools, churches and community centres all over the country. These fast-paced, one-hour programs are designed to bring the Gospel of Christ to children on their level and in an environment where the children are most comfortable. CEFSA’s most popular ministries are the school assembly program and party clubs. CEFSA reach 91 970 children through these two ministries. Many government and private schools have allowed CEF missionaries to share the good news of Jesus Christ to their school pupils during their weekly assembly. The National Policy on Religion and Education (2003) for South African schools states that,

School Governing Bodies are required to determine the nature and content of and religious observances for teachers and pupils, such that coherence and alignment with this policy and applicable legislation is ensured. It may also determine that a policy of no religious observances be followed. Where religious observances are held, these may be at any time determined by the school, and may be part of a school assembly. However an assembly is not necessarily to be seen as the only occasion for religious observance, which may take place at other times of the day, and in other ways, including specific dress requirements or dietary injunctions. Where a

religious observance is organised, as an official part of the school day, it must accommodate and reflect the multi-religious nature of the country in an appropriate manner.

This policy gives school governing bodies the freedom to choose which religion of preference the school will follow. This is based on the make-up of the pupils and educators. Missionaries are normally given 10-15 minutes to present the gospel or give a biblical principle to the pupils. This is not something that happens across the board, in certain provinces, schools still seem reluctant to allow Christian instruction, yet in other provinces principals and teachers are grateful for this. The turn of events comes about because of the discipline issues that schools are currently facing in the country. Maano Ramadwa, a former school principal wrote an article for News24 on the 18 September 2018 titled "Lack of discipline in schools concerning, but teachers are not totally disempowered". Ramadwa says, "There is sufficient consensus that learners especially in township schools are out of order and they are not respectful of the teachers who are their dream polishers and deliverers. There is also sufficient consensus that the disrespect of teachers and their killing in the classrooms is an unacceptable feat".

South African schools have been in the news often because of the behaviour of children. Weapons are frequently found at primary schools and principals complain about gang related incidents taking place at school. Children in South Africa are vulnerable. South Africa has the one of the highest crime rates in the world and children are often soft target. Maluleke (2018), writing for statistics South Africa says that crime levels in South Africa has risen, he also points to the fact that the public's perception is that crime is far greater than what is reported. Children therefore feel the need to constantly be on the defensive and are watchful because of their safety concerns.

Along with the clubs and school assemblies, CEFSA also has other ministry programs that are sometimes used. These ministries are fairs, camping, party or seasonal clubs, and open-air programs for children. These ministries are used in areas where a CEF worker or volunteer desires to start a new Good News Club or wants to grow their existing club. These ministries if used correctly can help in the faith formation of children. They have however not been utilised to their full capacity in many areas. These different ministries can play a pivotal role

in the faith formation of children. There is much growth that can happen in the different settings outside of the classroom.

CEF relies on teacher training to grow their ministry. These trainings include Super Seminars, Teaching children Effectively 1 & 2, and Children's Ministry Institute. CEF desires their teachers, full-time and volunteers to be fully equipped as they teach and instruct children in the word of God. In fully equipped, CEF desires their teachers to understand the ministry material and the specific teaching methods. This is of great importance for children's workers because children are not to be undermined or disrespected by teachers who do not take the time to adequately plan and prepare for lessons. Teachers are to be prepared and capable to teach the truths of God's word. The Children's Ministries Institute (CMI), is a 3-month course located at CEF's campsite, Lenteland, close to Vereeniging. It is dedicated to providing quality, practical training for those who desire to take the Gospel message to children. CEF also offers on going teacher training in the form of Super Seminars. This is a series of lessons that prepare teachers for the classroom, assisting them with ways to teach a Bible lesson, a memory verse, a song etc. This type of training is most popular and also very effective in the way it is able to reach many teachers. From these training events, many teachers grow in confidence and are able to do their respective clubs with greater enjoyment and effectiveness. These training programs are not contextualized to the South African context. All modules are compiled in America and are taught around the world. There is very little done to assist a South African teacher to translate the material and apply it to their specific context.

I currently do ministry in Hazyview, Mpumalanga. I will focus on this context to elaborate on the day to day ministerial practice of CEFSA. This will then help us reflect on the contextual realities that children in this context face and alert us to areas we should consider for adapting our American based model.



### **2.3.4 CEFSA in Hazyview and Surrounding areas**

Quality research cannot be done without good demographic data. This data will help us to understand the local children. To begin with, it will look at the family setup of the children and the schooling system in the area. Furthermore this section will look at the faith structures of the area and conclude by looking at society in general. The children that CEFSA minister to in Mpumalanga are based in Hazyview and surrounding areas. These areas include Marite, Mkuhlu, Shabalala and Bushbuckridge. Hazyview is a small part of the Mpumalanga Lowveld. Mpumalanga is the second smallest of South Africa's nine provinces with approximately 4.3 million people ([www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za)).

Mpumalanga also includes parts of the homelands called KaNgwane, Gazankulu, and Lebowa. Homelands were territories where black South Africans were forced to live during the apartheid era. Black Africans therefore make up about nine-tenths of the province's total population of Mpumalanga. They belong to the Swazi, Ndebele, and other related groups. They live mostly in rural areas and speak Bantu languages, including siSwati, isiZulu, and isiNdebele. White Africans make up about one-tenth of the province's total population and most speak Afrikaans. The white Africans are predominately commercial farmers in the province.

#### **2.3.4.1 Family**

The children in our ministry have different family situations. There are nuclear families, single parent families, grandparent headed families and child headed families. Kuhn (2016: 10) says "A nuclear family is a small unit consisting of a father, mother and offspring and by virtue of its irreducible size, it is the building block of all larger family systems. Within the nuclear family there is usually a durable relationship (marriage) between male and female and a continuing relationship between these two persons and their offspring". Single parent homes occur when either a mother or father has left the home for various reason (ie: divorce, death) and then there are grandparent and child headed families. These are a result either of parents

passing on or parents who work away from home. Grandparents and older siblings then take on the role of parents and become primary care givers. 25.7% of homes in Hazyview are headed by females (statssa 2011). Delany (2016: 34) comments on single parent households and says that,

“Children are far less likely to live with their fathers than with their mothers. Again, this is partly due to orphaning (children are more likely to be paternally than maternally orphaned), but in the majority of cases it is related to gender relations and gender roles: men have historically been more likely than women to migrate for work, fathers are often not in ongoing relationships with the mothers of their children, and are simply more absent from children’s lives.”

In a community and area like Hazyview, where job opportunities are limited, this scenario of single parent households is prevalent. Men and women are left with very little option but to seek employment away from home in an attempt to provide for their families. There are grandparent headed families and also child headed families for similar reasons.

Families are also disrupted by the fact that there are not many employment opportunities in Hazyview. Parents often need to travel to different provinces to find employment and leave children behind with the grandparents. In some situations, children are sent to boarding school because of the unavailability of suitable schooling in the area but also for a way for parents to work away from home. This applies mainly to high-schoolers because there is no high school in Hazyview.

Families within the community of Hazyview includes both working class and middle class citizens. These families make up the majority of the community. On either side of this is a small group of wealthy families and a small group of families living in great need. Wealthy families are the large business owners and farm owners in the area. The middle class people are mainly made up of government employees, teachers, nurses, policemen/women, municipal workers, senior managers etc. Which make up the majority of the population in Hazyview. The working class will be retail and farm workers as well as domestic workers and informal traders.

98.5% of the homes in the community are predominately formal dwellings (statssa 2011). Formal dwelling refers to a structure built according to approved plans, i.e. house on a separate stand, flat or apartment, townhouse, room in backyard (statssa 2011). Very few live in informal dwellings in the yards of friends or family or on a separate stand. Homes are relatively well spaced apart as compared to that in the outlying areas. The population density of Hazyview is 187 people per km (statssa 2011). In contrast to these, the outlying areas are made up of middle class people, working class and a large portion of unemployed people. Working class people make up the majority of these communities. Homes in these areas are generally smaller and closer in proximity to each other. Informal dwellings (shacks) are also popular. Water is available in the community although not everyday. Many homes make use of jojo tanks to store water when it is available. Households are not charged for this water. Sanitation facilities are available in these households.

The age of the community members of Hazyview is also mixed. There are very few older (65+) people. This group makes up 5.7% of the population (statssa 2011). Demographics in the community have changed. Younger working class individuals, with young families have moved into the area as older people move out. Most of the community is of working age (15-64) and they make up 69.8% of the population and there are approximately 4236 people living in Hazyview (statssa 2011). The age of the children that are ministered to by CEF are between 4 -14 years old and they fall into the category of that makes up just under 24.6 % of Hazyviews population. These children are reached through pre-schools, primary school and a children's ministry at one of the local churches. The behaviour of the children and the manner in which they interact with others gives us an idea of the environment in which they are being raised.

### **2.3.4.2 Education**

There is one former “model C” primary school with approximately 550 learners in Hazyview (Laerskool Numbi), but there is no high school in Hazyview. Macmillan dictionary says a model C school is “a state school in South Africa that used to be for white children only and is now mixed. Model C schools are generally considered better. Learners and staff were all white. This was changed in 1992 when schools could enrol non white pupils as well. This school is now predominately non white pupils although there is still a large contingent of white staff. These schools to some degree have established infrastructure to meet the learner’s all-round needs. Buildings are well built and maintenance is done regularly. According to the education department, it is ranked as a quintile 5 school. Quintile one is the 'poorest' quintile, while quintile five is the 'least poor'. These poverty rankings are determined nationally according to the poverty of the community around the school, as well as, certain infrastructural factors.

Through personal observation of the area, there are also various small private schools that have limited infrastructure in the form of sporting facilities and extra-mural activities. There are a number of public schools many of which are non-fee paying (quintile 1) schools in the surrounding areas. There is a vast difference between the former model c school and the others. Class sizes are much smaller at the model c school compared to the others. Facilities available are also vastly different. This makes the former model c school highly attractive to many parents in and around Hazyview.

Many parents desire for their children to attend the former model c school because of the advantages that it brings. Facilities, class sizes and sporting opportunities are some of the few differences between the schools. The former model c school is also able to employ more staff to keep the school in good running order and keep class sizes smaller than the public schools. The public schools have limited resources to maintain the buildings and keep class sizes down. In some schools, class sizes can rise up to 90 children per class.

Schools in the surrounding areas lack the infrastructure of the model c school. These are non paying schools. They then receive a grant from the government for each child at the school. This grant in many instances is insufficient to cover the needs of the school. Many still use pit toilets which have proven dangerous for pupils, and some still do not have water and sanitation. Mr Malaza (2019), the MEC for education in Mpumalanga says in his report to the

minister of education that “84 of 127 schools still had pit toilets that needed to be eradicated”. Roads leading up to the schools are untarred, making it difficult for transportation. Although education is available to the children, many for various reasons dropout of school. Delany (2016: 106) says “In 2014, 85% of 10 – 11-year-olds had completed grade 3, and only 67% of 16 – 17-year-olds had completed grade 9.” One of the reasons for this is child labour. Instead of attending school during the day children are watching over cattle in the communities or working on small vegetable farms. Children are needed by their families to contribute financially to the home.

### **2.3.4.3 Social services**

The social services available to the area of Hazyview and surroundings include:

- Primary care clinic
- South African Police Services
- Primary & High Schools
- Post office
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Labour

Social workers and NGO’s operate and assist in the areas that have the greatest need. According to the Hazyview Precinct Plan 2015/16, by Khanyisa Joint Venture (2016); “The spatial disparity in the settlement pattern of Hazyview and its larger surrounding area means that the residential population does not have good access to the CBD area. It also has implications for the provision of social services, as the smaller settlements do not have high enough population numbers to form thresholds for services like schools and clinics”.

An example of an NGO is Good Work Foundation that assists the communities. GWF is an organisation that services a large portion of these communities with various services. They assist children and adults. This NGO is well resourced through different private enterprises and government programs. They are well received in the community

(goodworkfoundation.org). There are other NGO's that assist in providing basic necessities and nutrition to families in need. CEFSA has to date not partnered with any NGO in the community because of different religious views and values.

There are limited sports and extra mural activities in the area for all classes of children. Sports for children are offered at schools, but facilities are not freely available to the children. At the former model C primary school, they have facilities as well as the resources to employ staff to manage and facilitate these sports. However, when it comes to children living outside of Hazyview, they struggle to participate in school sports. Transport to and from school is via arranged public transport. This transport has set arrival and departure times and does not accommodate for extramural activities. Outside of the model C school, there are no sporting facilities for children to use for recreation in Hazyview. There is a public swimming pool, however this facility has not been maintained or been in use for many years and needs to be renovated. The outlying communities do have sports fields, mainly soccer fields, but these are not well maintained and are often not safe for children to use. According to the Hazyview Precinct Plan of 2016, there was a need for the following infrastructure:

- Refurbishment of swimming pool
- Sport field
- Multi-purpose centre
- Library (Shabalala)
- Community Hall
- Secondary School (Shabalala and Hazyview)

Within the area of Hazyview residential area there are two churches, a Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and an Old Apostolic Church. Both these churches are largely underutilised, with no or very few church meetings taking place at their properties. This could largely be a result of the change of the demographics in the community. A large number of former residents have relocated and new residents have come in from the rural areas. In the rural areas, there are a number of independent churches and different denominational churches. These churches vary from Charismatic, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches. In terms of ministries that focus on children and their faith there are no other

children's ministries in the area. Popular ministries like Scripture Union or Youth for Christ are not active in the area, leaving CEF as the only children's ministry.

## 2.4 Child Evangelism Fellowship and the Local Church

This section hopes to explain the relationship between CEF and the churches in the country it ministers too. CEF strives to have a close working relationship with churches and other mission minded organisations. CEF understands that each full-time, part-time and volunteer missionary is part of the Church of Jesus Christ, but also needs to be an active member of a local church. Being part of the Church of Jesus Christ means that you have a responsibility to reach the unreached with the gospel. Ephesians 4:12 teaches that Pastors (church leaders) have a responsibility to "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." CEF therefore does not feel that the organisation can do the work alone, and in so doing isolating itself from other organisations or ministries that also seek to reach children with the gospel, but instead desire to work with others for the glory of God. The International manual version 3 (2015: 24) says,

"We seek to work in close cooperation in every phase of this worldwide ministry. CEF is made up of individual, born-again Christians, who can subscribe to the statement of faith and who have a burden for the salvation and discipling of children. CEF is a mission that operates as a service organisation, working in close cooperation with other evangelical missions and churches that are in agreement with our statement of faith and teaching program".

The International manual (2015: 24) further goes on to say that,

"We are part of the body of Christ – the church. As child evangelism missionaries, our ministry is one of the ministries of the church. Just as Paul and Barnabas were commissioned and sent forth by the church at Antioch, so everyone in CEF is sent forth by and is a member of a local church and is required to be active in a local evangelical church on the field where they serve".

For CEF it is also important that they work closely with churches that are able to subscribe to their statement of faith. Churches and organisations have statements of faith, stating what they believe and ascribe to. Churches and organisations have a statement of faith so that others are aware of what the church/organisation believes. CEF desires to work with evangelical churches and organizations who view the Bible as the absolute authority. They also desire to work with churches that see children in the same manner as Christ sees children. CEF will work with any church or organization which ascribes to their statement of faith.

Bible doctrine is important to CEF and therefore cannot work with churches that will distort their understanding of the Bible and salvation. CEF being an evangelical organization, whose main thrust is on the salvation of children, needs to work with churches that believe and understand salvation in the same way. There are however differences that will not affect a working relationship. Differences that do not affect salvation are termed as minor and therefore CEF is still open to work with them. As long as the gospel message is clear and accurate, CEF is willing to partner with them.

CEF believes that as a ministry they are here to serve the church. As an evangelistic ministry they fall under the gifting to the church for its edification and therefore to serve. CEF serves the church in that they reach unreached children with the gospel and guide them to different churches that will continue to assist the children in their faith formation. Evangelism is one of the areas of the local church that is often neglected for various reasons. Dever (2013: 139) says, “... The main reason we want to shift the responsibility for evangelism to others is that we’re not exactly sure how to do it”. Therefore many churches and members of churches feel that it is the role of “specialists” to do the work of evangelism. Scripture does teach that the evangelist is a gift to the Church, but the Bible also teaches that all believers are to do the work of an evangelist. CEF was founded by a man who was not taught to reach children with the gospel at his local church. He was not exposed to ministry to children because this was not a focus area of the church. By the reaction of his mother who told him that at the age of 12 he was too young to be a Christian, helps to understand the theology of this particular church. The Bible teaches repeatedly that evangelism is a work for all Christians, but sadly this does not take place. As a result, ministries such as CEF are formed to concentrate in this area



of children's ministry. Although separate from the local church, CEF as a ministry always desires to serve the church and to assist in the growth of local churches. In the supplementary notes of the IOT level 1 manual, CEF shows the benefit to churches working with CEF.

“While Child Evangelism Fellowship is necessarily a Para-church organisation, churches which are really seeking to make the church an evangelistic tool and reach out into their communities will do well to co-operate with CEF in reaching children, first through Bible home classes (Good News Clubs) and then by encouraging children to participate in the ministry of the church. Not only will children be saved, but often their parents will be reached as children demonstrate the redeeming grace of God in their lives”.

CEF never wants to hinder the local church but instead wants to help the church grow. Over the years it has been seen how children have been a huge asset in church growth. When the church grows God is glorified.

Regardless of the goals and desires of men and women the ultimate goal of all at CEF and CEFSA is to please God by fulfilling the mandate He has given in the great commission.

In the South African church there is a great need for churches and children's ministry partnerships. Ofosu-Kusi (2017: 13) says, “Children are critical to every society because they are every society's hope for the future. When properly nurtured, they will blossom and become agents of constructive change, but if neglected, they could become agents of destructive change”. Churches and children's ministries need to work in partnerships and assist one another in the important task of developing children. CEF's relationship to churches and mission groups is described as follows:

“CEF seeks to work in close cooperation in every phase of the worldwide ministry. CEF is made up of individual, born again Christians, who can subscribe to the statement of faith and who have a burden for the salvation and disciplining of children. CEF is a mission that operates as a service organisation, working in close cooperation with other evangelical missions and churches that are in agreement with our statement of faith.”

(International ministries manual, 2015: 24)

CEF has the desire to work with organisations and churches to further enhance the gospel of Jesus Christ. CEF does not consider itself a church and as stated above, requires each of their workers and volunteers to play active roles in their own local assembly. CEF is a Para-church organisation. Para-church organisations strive to support, partner with, and resource Christians and local churches so that they can focus on and fulfil what God expects of the church. Para-church organisations carry out the church mission in specific and strategic areas where the church does not have full access. Schools and universities are good examples of these areas. Resane (2020) says,

“The idea of a para\_church organisation has been around for at least two centuries. For instance, during the 19th century, abolitionist organisations that were not tied directly to one denomination provided a means for persons who were against slavery to unite their efforts without having to report to any one Christian church”.

A Para-church organization works alongside the local churches. CEF is not only a para-church organisation, but is a faith permeated organisation and Sider and Unruh (2004: 119) describe this as follows;

“These are organisations in which the connection with religious faith is clearly evident on all levels, for example, in the mission statement, the staff component and the management structures. In these types of organisations it is believed that the faith dimension is essential for the effectiveness of the programme and participation in religious exercises is often a prerequisite”.

CEF’s faith is important to the ministry and therefore CEF as a para-church organisation works with churches of like-faith. The international ministries manual version 3(2015: 24) says that,

“The question naturally arises, can we or should we work with all churches? We interpret the ‘evangelical church’ as meaning that which is capable of a soul winning-ministry and with whom we can fellowship on the basis of our Statement of Faith. We seek to identify ourselves with the mainstream of the fundamental movement in every country.”

Para-church organizations work to assist the church to fulfil its mandate and role in the Kingdom of God. Great Value Colleges in an online article titled “What is a Parachurch organization” (2021: nl), says that,

“A Parachurch ministry is a ministry that operates outside of the confines of a traditional church. While many of these organizations have some type of connection to a church, those taking part in the ministry look at ways that they can give back to the local community and others in need in ways that a church cannot. Most are either Evangelical or Protestant. As a member of one of these organizations, you can work with others who have the same interests and passions as you to help both children and adults.”

CEF falls into this category of service providers to the church but to a greater extent the Body of Christ, which according to the Bible is the Church. CEF’s mission is the gospel of Jesus Christ and has Godly principles it follows throughout the organisation. It was established to fulfil the great commission and all functions of the ministry are aimed in that direction.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This second chapter looks at the starting point of the ministry of CEF as well as CEFSA. Starting with the life of Jesse Overholtzer, the research then went on to describe how and why the ministry was formed. CEF is a ministry that has a personal touch to it, as it was started by a man who was interested in each child. Not only was Jesse Overholtzer interested in each child but he invested much of his latter years in life to the ministry of CEF. As a founder, he was forced to make many sacrifices and one of these was time away from his family. The research also investigated the start and progress of the ministry in South Africa, and although not well documented, the verbal and written evidence of long standing members of CEFSA help to give a description of how the ministry developed in this part of the world. Lastly the research looked at the relationship between CEF and the church and the reasons for this relationship and its importance. There is no doubt that CEF understand that they cannot be effective in their mission if not with the help of the local church. It is the local church that supplies and equips full-time workers, Sunday school teachers as well.

## **Chapter 3: Historical legacy of CEFSA and its relevance today**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will reflect on the cause of the current situation in the ministry of CEFSA which Osmer (2008: 10) calls this “the interpretive task”. The interpretive task reviews learning’s from the descriptive task and looks at the reasons for the current situation. Getting to the point of seeing this takes wise judgement (Osmer 2008: 80). In this chapter the research will look at what was learnt about CEFSA in the previous chapter. We saw that one of the major issues concerning the ministry was a lack of contextualized teacher training and material. We saw that different ministry programs were successful in some areas but not others and that although evangelising children was reaping rewards, the faith formation of children was neglected. This chapter will also look at the main areas of ministry that CEFSA are currently involved in and the reasons for this. Reflection on the areas that they are not as effective in and the reasons for this is included here. In this chapter the researcher will seek to find the correct diagnosis and reasons for CEFSA finding itself in the position it is in. This chapter will look for important issues faced by CEFSA and draw on theories that will assist in understanding the issues. Things that need to be considered in this chapter will be the contextual challenges that CEFSA face, the role of CEF as a Para-Church organisation in South

Africa and their effectiveness. It will also look at the CEFSA staff and the dynamics within the organisation.

### **3.2 The contextual challenges of CEFSA**

South Africa is an extremely diverse country. Keats (2021: 2) says, “There are few more accurate reflections of the cultural diversity of South Africa than its list of official languages. South Africa has 11 official languages, making the country having the second-largest number of official languages next to Bolivia and India”. This does not include the numerous cultural tribes (Zulu’s, Tsonga’s, etc) within these groupings. Considering this it is fair to say that as a country there are numerous differences between individuals in South Africa. Swarts, Arogundade and Davis (2014: nl) argue that “Both Colonialism and Apartheid were systems where a small minority has dominated, subordinated and oppressed the majority. This state of affairs, while politically reversed in 1994 during South Africa’s first democratic elections, has yet to lead to full economic and symbolic transformation”. The dominance by these minorities caused great inequalities between race groups. There are wide gaps in society between the “haves” and the “have nots” which causes tension between race groups. The white minority have always seemed to have the upper hand and that is where the term white privilege comes in. White privilege as described by Colling (2018) as “having greater access to power and resources than people of color [in the same situation] do.”

Some of the contextual challenges to consider are the uniqueness of the demographics of South Africans, this is the reason for where different people stay in South Africa. The economical differences, this takes into consideration the differences between the rich and poor and how it impacts ministry, and also the cultural and language barriers that CEFSA has had to grapple with in their work and ministry.

### 3.2.1 Demographics of South Africa

Who and where people live in South Africa plays a huge role in the daily lived experiences of South African citizens. The apartheid government and previous governments used various racist laws, such as pass laws and the Group Areas Act of 1950, to forcibly remove people from their communities. The lives and livelihoods of millions of people were disrupted and uprooted for the pleasure and comfort of the minority. It was as a result of these apartheid laws and acts that contributed to the current make up of South Africa today. The Helen Suzman foundation (2008) under the heading “Key legislation in the formation of apartheid” explains some of these apartheid laws saying, the population registration act of 1950 required people to be identified and registered from birth in four different racial groups. People were classified as either: white, bantu, coloured or other. The pass laws and land act of 1913 required black South Africans to carry a pass book where ever they went. This book had all the individuals’ personal information such as where the individual lived and worked. Blacks needed permission from their employers to be in a particular area. Dubow (2012: 45) notes that,

“In the period of post-war reconstruction (1902-10) and, even more, in the post-Union (1910-48) era, Afrikaans and English-speakers found common cause on the colour ‘question’. The creation of the new South Africa as a white man’s country entailed that blacks be subjected to unprecedented ideological and political scrutiny...The concept of segregation, which now entered general political discourse, was duly presented as the appropriate answer.”

A consequence of the abovementioned segregation was the group areas act. The Group Areas Act of 1950 assigned each race to its own area and with this South Africa had different communities based on race. Field (2001: 11) gives first-hand accounts of individuals who were forcibly removed from their homes. He says that, “Between 1913 and 1983, it is estimated that at least 3, 9 million people were forcibly removed in South Africa Government used these laws to benefit the white minority and in so doing, they removed non-white South Africans from areas that were of superior economic value and handed these areas over to whites. The trauma that this caused for many was devastating on so many

levels. People lost their dignity, property and many of their belongings and were forced into uncomfortable living conditions. The living spaces allocated to black, coloured and Indian people was far too small for the number of people allocated to the land. Adhikari (2013: 51), writing of the accounts of coloured people in Cape Town says,

“Coloureds responded in various ways to their eviction. In Sea Point and Rondebosch respectively, two coloured men committed suicide, preferring death to dispossession. According to virtually every removee many older people died just before or just after moving. Survivors blame this on the trauma of eviction.”

The Group Areas Act and the Bantu Education policy affected the church and missionary endeavour’s as well. The Group Areas Act put limitations on where people could live. The missionaries also played a huge role in educating the black people with the mission schools that had been established. With the Bantu education policy coming into effect, much of the missionaries control over the schools was taken away and given to the power of the white Afrikaner government. Khumalo & Mji (2014) argue that,

“The problems related to infrastructural development were inherited from the apartheid era. In that system, all developmental issues related to African people in particular were either minimal or non-existent in many areas of life. This means that those who were in rural areas, including schooling, were even more neglected by that system. In fact it is pointed out that most problems experienced in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa are traceable to the apartheid system.”

Thus far I have argued that the apartheid system heavily impacted the lives of people in South Africa. Access to health care and other social services were also limited. It was in these segregated and poverty-stricken environments that the international missionaries worked. Education was an area that missionaries put much focus on.

The apartheid government later rescinded many of these missionary schools resulting in the management thereof being placed under this White-Afrikaner led system. Most of the gains the missionaries had made in the education of non-whites was eroded through the racist laws and behaviours of the new teachers in the schools. Hale (2010)

“Perhaps no single legal measure proved more traumatic in the history of missionary endeavours in the Union of South Africa than the Bantu Education Act of 1953. This legislation effectively compelled most missions and denominations, which largely depended on public funds to support their schools, to relinquish them to the state. This governmental control of black education (or training) soon became one of the principal social foundations of apartheid.”

As an organisation that aims to reach the unreached children, CEFSA ministry takes place in different communities. International missionaries worked with children in schools as well as churches and with children who lived close by to them. As mentioned above, international missionaries would work in communities of different races and trained local people to continue the work in the community. In most communities the missionary was seen as someone who had the knowledge and resources and the locals were to receive this from the missionaries. Local missionaries today join the organisation because they recognise a need in their community or surrounding areas. Full-time local missionaries promote the ministry of CEFSA in local churches and hope to attract the interest of congregants. When congregants show an interest in reaching children with the gospel, they are trained and assisted in working in their community. Therefore, most of the workers and many of the most impactful workers in a particular community are of the same race as the children they teach and work with. Very rarely do you find a worker of a different race working with children from another race. In many of the non-white communities and schools today, white missionaries or Christian workers are welcome as they are still seen as superior to other races, however it is extremely rare for a person of colour to work among white children. The education of the apartheid government had a huge role to play in this. Whites were afforded the opportunity to receive superior levels of education to that of non-whites. McKeever (2017) says that,

“Using data from the early 1990s, I show that while there were extensive quantitative differences across respondents in different racial categories, qualitative differences still existed. Race did matter: The minority White population was consistently able to achieve both more and better education.”



With the better education that they received and the better jobs they had, they had a higher standing in society and therefore perpetuated the view that non-whites are inferior. Macdonald (2006: 7) argues that, “white supremacy long preceded the advent of apartheid in southern Africa, originating in the Cape colony – the site of the first white settlement – in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and spreading in the nineteenth century to the interior of what in 1910 became modern South Africa.” The Bantu Education policy confirmed that white supremacy started in the schooling system. Education was a means of social control. What non-whites were taught was different to that of the white children in order that white children could have an advantage over non-whites. Johnson (1982: 1), in an article for the department of Africana studies at Livingston college quotes the administrator of the Transvaal of 1961 saying, “We must strive to win the fight against the non-White in the classroom instead of losing it on the battlefield.”

By the time CEF had come to South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter referred to as DRC), a white Afrikaans church was the dominant church in South Africa. Religion was an important aspect of Afrikaner identity and when CEF, a fundamentalistic Christian evangelical organisation arrived, they did not hesitate at the opportunity to work with them. Most Afrikaners were members of the DRC in South Africa, a strict and conservative Calvinist church. Leaders in the church held the view that promoted the belief that the Afrikaners were the “chosen people” to whom God had given South Africa. The Afrikaans community accounted for a very small portion of the population of South Africa and therefore CEF in South Africa was unable to grow rapidly as a ministry to other areas of South Africa. For a long period CEF remained confined to white Afrikaans speaking people as the communities were separated by the Group Areas Act. It was through the foreign missionaries, some from TEAM and possibly other organisations, that the ministry was taken to other communities.

CEF has been in operation for just over 70 years in South Africa. It remains an organisation that ministers to a small percentage of the country’s population. This could be as a result of the strong Afrikaans influence that still exists within the ministry.

### 3.2.2 Language and culture

Cultural and language barriers can have an impact on the ability for a ministry to work and grow. Rani (2016), argues that, “A communication barrier is anything that prevents us from receiving and understanding the messages others use to convey their information, ideas and thoughts.” Cultural and language barriers were potentially a major stumbling block for CEF in South Africa. Cultural barriers have existed for hundreds of years, and have been displayed in many ways. There are examples of this even in the Bible. A clear illustration of this is found in John 4: 5-26 where the author, John, gives an account of Jesus having a conversation with the woman from Samaria meeting at a well. Jews and Samaritans did not have a friendly relationship. They did not have good relations and culturally were very different. Samaritans were often referred to as half-breeds. After Israel’s fall to the Assyrians, the Israelites began to intermarry with the Assyrians and this was against what the scriptures taught in Deuteronomy 7:3-5. It is for this reason that the Jews hated the Samaritans and referred to them as dogs or half-breeds. Half-Breed is a derogatory term used today to identify coloured people or people who are mixed in race. When Jesus begins a conversation with the woman, she is shocked. The woman shows her disbelief that Jesus, a Jew is even talking to her when she says in John 4:9 saying, “Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “how is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (NKJV). Jesus was not interested in what tribe or race the woman was from. Jesus was interested in the woman’s spiritual well-being. He looked past who she was physically and concentrated on what was important. To Him, the woman’s understanding of who God is was of utmost importance and He put everything aside to share this with her. It took bravery and boldness for Jesus to be different, to go against the norm, and to do what was right. This is a biblical example of the need to break down cultural barriers in ministry today. I am of the opinion that it is this type of radical boldness that was and is needed in the ministry of CEF.

CEF had similar troubles with cultural difference in South Africa. CEF began their ministry working with the DRC and among the Afrikaans speaking people for a long period of time. Moving into different people groups became difficult for CEF for various reasons. Language and cultural barriers hindered the work as well as the above-mentioned apartheid rules and

laws. Interaction between blacks and whites was restricted and this impacted the ability of the ministry to grow. The pass laws meant that blacks could not enter white areas, unless they were working or looking for work. It was not common (taboo) for white people to be seen in a black area. They would be ostracised for interacting with blacks. They could even possibly be locked up for being possible spies for the opposition party at the time the African National Congress (ANC). Hale (2010) reflects on how this affected the work of the missionaries by noting that, "Christiansen related an incident in which a commercial traveller on a train had criticised him and missionaries in general for educating young blacks and thereby making them more competitive in the labour market". So even the white Christians who desired to reach other races with the gospel it was extremely difficult for them.

Despite these tense barriers in the country at the time, the ministry of CEFSA began to grow in predominately Afrikaans speaking coloured communities in the south of Johannesburg. Afrikaans as a language is believed to be started by coloured slaves who worked for the Dutch settlers. Afrikaans is a mixture of different cultures and languages. Tsholofelo Wesi (2015) in an article for The Citizen states that;

"Historically, it has been acknowledged that coloured people were integral to the creation of creole language that mixed Dutch, Malay languages and African languages which came to be known as Afrikaans. Today, coloured people, together with black and Asian people, comprise the majority of the language's mother-tongue speakers."

The coloured people could speak Afrikaans. So amongst them did the ministry infiltrate and grow. As a result of this much of the ministry taking place now is in predominately Afrikaans communities. The ministry has also impacted communities with different languages, but not to the extent that Afrikaans has.

The majority of the population is and was black South Africans, who speak various different languages. According to Historical Papers Research Archive (2016), In 1970, of the 21.3 million people in South Africa, approximately 69.9% were black. Only 17.8% were white. This percentage is a combination of English speaking whites and Afrikaans speaking whites. Very few of this large number of black South Africans spoke Afrikaans and lived in the areas

that were reached by the local CEF workers. Statistics South Africa (2021) showed that in 2020 Mid-year population estimates that approximately 80.8% of the South African population is black, 7.8% white, 8.8% Coloured and 2.6% Indian/Asian (2021). The problem for CEF was that they were unable to reach the majority of the population. In Johannesburg, where the ministry began to grow, the main African language was isiXhosa. As noted earlier neither the international missionaries nor the local South African workers could speak this language and could not enter into the communities of the black Africans. This put a great stranglehold on the ministry of CEF in South Africa and in a huge way hindered the growth of the ministry in the early years.

The political landscape of South Africa began to change. According to the U.S. Department of state archive (20 January 2001),

“Apartheid, the Afrikaans name given by the white-ruled South Africa's Nationalist Party in 1948 to the country's harsh, institutionalized system of racial segregation, came to an end in the early 1990s in a series of steps that led to the formation of a democratic government in 1994. Years of violent internal protest, weakening white commitment, international economic and cultural sanctions, economic struggles, and the end of the Cold War brought down white minority rule in Pretoria.”

With all the struggles that the Afrikaner led government faced, they were forced into conceding power to the African National Congress. The minority rule could no longer survive by oppressing the majority. The rules and laws were abolished but the scars remained. These scars are still evident in 2020 where things are still unequal in society. Wallace Chuma (in Mutsvairo 2016: 202) says that, “the country remains largely divided across class and race, and these divisions impact on citizens’ participation in the full spectrum of what democracy has to offer”. The inequality of the apartheid led education system hindered many from competing in the labour market. Non-whites seldom had secondary and tertiary education which kept them out of large portions of employment opportunities. Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012) suggest that in recent years,

“There have been real improvements in average years of schooling of South Africans and especially among those who were previously disadvantaged. However, these improvements have not yet seen a significant increase in people with complete secondary schooling and there has been no increase in people with tertiary qualifications. It is most unfortunate therefore that the demand for labour has moved in such a way as to strongly favour only those with complete secondary schooling and even higher levels of education. Thus, most South Africans who have been trying to enter the labour market have not been well educated enough to gain employment or, if employed, to earn decent wage. Only those who are very highly skilled have been able to move into the labour market and to move up the earnings distribution”.

The income differences in South African households is just one of the ways that the scars from apartheid continue to linger and hinder the growth of South Africans.

The way people were treated really caused great anger and animosity among different race groups. When the ANC government took over in 1994 and the apartheid laws were abolished it was in a sense a release from captivity for the majority of South Africans. The white minority also did not know how to deal with the change and racial tensions remained. It was difficult for the whites to give up their power and there was great uncertainty among the white community. To some degree they didn't know how to submit to a “black man” who had for years been a slave to them, and viewed as someone with very little worth. Kruger and Van der Merwe (2017) write:

“The DR Church whose members are predominantly Afrikaners was deeply affected by the political transition after 1994. Prof. J.A. Heyns mentioned this fact during his speech at the church's General Synod of October 1994. According to him, radical political and social changes were the source of collective social anxiety and insecurity and of the loss of purpose amongst the church's members. Why would that have been the case? To begin with, they lost their political power. And as a result, the year 1994 was a shock to the Afrikaner”.

South Africans were unsure how to relate with one another. Those that had power were unsure how things would unfold. After being in leadership for a long period, all they knew was to lead and oppress. Now on the other hand, there were people who were used to being oppressed, who were not used to leadership roles, who were placed in position of power. The change was difficult for all, and therefore no one really knew how things would pan out. The

fact that things had changed so drastically brought about the difficulties for people to communicate. Without good lines for communication, the message of Jesus Christ cannot be spread efficiently. Bechtle (2006: 126) says that, “God will draw atheists to himself through people who care and build relationships with them.” Relationships are vitally important in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and these relationships were not there. There was no trust and fear gripped people because of all the uncertainty. This no doubt impacted the ministry of CEFSA and its attempts at spreading the gospel to children around South Africa. For children’s ministry to prosper, parents needed to trust the missionaries and volunteers. Missionaries and volunteers therefore need to invest time in building trust with parents before parents would release their children into their care.

### **3.2.3 Religion in South Africa**

This section will highlight three important aspects of religion in South Africa. It will look at South Africa’s stance on Christianity, the impact that has on the work and ministry of CEF as well as looking at the need for CEF in this environment.

South Africa does not have an official state religion as the South African constitution states that everyone has the freedom of religion. Christianity was however first introduced to South Africa in the 1600s when large numbers of Christian missionaries began arriving from various countries. South Africa’s religious composition was (and continues to be) deeply shaped by the arrival of these missionaries. Today, the majority of South Africans identify as Christian (84.2%).

On CEF’s arrival in the country, they were met by a pro Christian government. This government, as mentioned earlier, was heavily influenced by the Dutch Reformed Church. This meant that CEF was not hindered in their efforts to evangelise boys and girls with the gospel of Jesus Christ, as is the case in other countries. South Africa falls outside of the 10/40 window, an area that is commonly known as resistant to Christianity. CEF therefore had a wonderful opportunity to work freely in an open country.

Although the country is open to Christianity and there is very little hostility towards Christians and Christianity in the country, CEF is still needed. As mentioned above, 84.2% of the country identify as Christian, but according to the evangelical view taken in this research, many of these people do not fall into the category of born again. Considering this, the need for child evangelism is essential and desperately needed.

### **3.3 CEFSA leadership and Missionaries**

The key to any organisation is the strength of the team. The staff that are not necessarily working directly with the children and the teaching staff are important for the functioning of a non-profit organisation. In this instance, CEFSA are reliant on those who will go out and reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the full-time and volunteer workers, this ministry will not fulfil what it desires to fulfil. The work of CEF is to bring children to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul says in Romans 10:14 (NIV) “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them. Although the majority of South Africans identify as Christian, this statement needs to be understood correctly. As a fundamental evangelical organisation, CEFSA only considers those who have received Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour to be a Christian. Considering this, there are not many South Africans who fit into this category of being Christian. With this in mind, CEFSA believes that there are many unreached children in South Africa. In Hazyview, this is true as well as many profess to be Christian but on further inquiry it is established that they do not understand what it means to be a Christian.

Considering this, CEFSA places emphasis on unreached children that may not get the opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. The child may have no one else to teach him/her God’s word, so often the teacher stands between the child and the voice of God. How then has the staff and teachers assisted CEFSA in fulfilling its objectives in South Africa?

### 3.3.1 CEFSA Leadership

In an online article by “Third Sector Company” (2020) titled, Nonprofit Leadership Development: The Importance of Leadership in Nonprofit organizations, says,

“There is a huge importance of leadership in nonprofits, and there are some unique elements associated with leadership in the non-profit sector. A primary difference in non-profit leadership is that it takes both paid and unpaid people to fulfil the mission. Most for-profit organizations and most governmental organizations engage their people initially through employment while most non-profits engage their people initially through voluntarism. A non-profit leader must operate from a different definition of equity than a business owner.”

Leadership in a non-profit organization is complex, there are a number of factors that one has to take into account, as seen above, leadership in non-profit organizations are different. Non-profit organisations operate to provide a service to their particular target. CEF has a particular market in the area of evangelism. CEF targets children and wants them to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Non-profits leadership make-up is different for a number of reasons and for CEFSA these are that they deal with 1) unpaid workers, 2) Christian workers, 3) Christian workers with the same doctrinal view point. To put these aspects together, along with the racial differences and challenges that a country like South Africa faces is very difficult, and in this section the researcher will explain the role leadership has on where the ministry is currently.

According to the official CEFSA reports CEFSA reached 147,352 children in 2019 with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is only 6.8% of the total children reached in the region (Southern Africa Indian Ocean). There are 15 countries in the region. Considering that CEF has been in the country for over 70 years, and that South Africa is one of the most developed and economically stable countries in this region, CEFSA should be able to do more. Finances are often a hindrance for non-profits, but considering South Africa’s economic standing, CEFSA should not need to struggle in this area. Grimm (2011) says, “South Africa is the economic



powerhouse of the entire continent, with around a quarter of the Sub-Saharan GNI produced in the province of Gauteng (home to Johannesburg and Pretoria) alone.” With this in mind I believe that they would have liked to be more active and be reaching many more children in South Africa. According to CEFSAs structures; the responsibility of reaching children in a country lies with the national leadership. It is the leaders’ responsibility to see to it that the right people are working in the right areas and are bringing across the right message. In the July 2017, the acting National Director Louis Van Tonder made an appeal to South Africans saying, “In South Africa we need to reach the 16 million children with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only 18% of children are going to church. We at CEF have EVERY tool to reach children. Our biggest challenge is workers. Will you please help us?” (Van Tonder in Haller, 2017) His appeal to Christian South Africans was for workers that would join or partner with CEFSAs and reach children for Christ. The South African church desperately needs people to see the need of evangelizing children. Unevangelized children generally become adults who see no relevance of Christian faith to real life, make no contact with a church, and who live and die without knowing that Jesus offers eternal life. Considering the great need for children to hear and be taught the gospel and considering the need South Africans have for employment, CEFSAs has a huge opportunity to draw people into serving God.

There are however standards that one must meet in order to serve with CEF and the International manual (version 3) goes on to say that, “Standards should be high and at least comparable to other full-time Christian missionaries in the country. Usually Bible school training should be expected, unless there are special circumstances like spiritual maturity or experience that you feel eliminates its necessity.” The ministry of CEFSAs seems to struggle because of the inability to attract the correct standard of workers it desires to have working for the organization. Very few full-time missionaries in South Africa have Bible school training. Anna Wishart, a graduate of Ethnos360 Bible institute writes an article titled “Why Is Bible Training Important in Becoming a Missionary?” and in the article she states that “If the missionary desires to tell unbelievers about this abundant life that Jesus promised, then being trained in the Word will be key to his preparation for the task”. Being trained and thoroughly equipped in the things of God is important for Christian workers, and unfortunately not many CEFSAs missionaries have the privilege or opportunity to pursue these studies. CEFSAs

does however provide good comprehensive children's ministry training for the workers that can assist with the lack of theological training, however it cannot be a replacement.

A stumbling block for the National Director is that CEF does not pay employees. It relies on volunteers who will raise their own funding as salaries. CEF expects all full-time workers to raise their own funds to support their ministry with CEF. Full-time workers are required to speak to churches, friends and family to support them financially in their service to God through CEF. Bowers-Du toit (2019: 4) points out that, "A common challenge was that although donors were prepared to fund direct project costs, they did not like to fund salaries and other indirect costs". Bowers-Du toit argues that donors are often willing to support direct project costs but not salaries. This causes many potential missionaries opting not to join the organisation. In a country like South Africa, with its huge inequalities and poverty, people are seeking a "job" where they can provide the basics for their families. South Africa has a massive problem with unemployment. According to Stats SA (2020) 7.1 million people were unemployed in South Africa in the first quarter of 2020. This figure accounts for people who are actively seeking employment but are unable to find any. CEFSA could tap into this pool of people. It is the job of the National Director to recruit suitable men and women to join the team and assist the organization to reach its goals. The International Ministries Manual (version 3: 103) says that "One of the main responsibilities of the National Director is to expand the ministry, and to do so requires a foundation of co-labourers. They will not usually come on their own initiative; they must be sort." The National Director needs to seek the correct people to be part of the team that will go out into the field and reach children for Jesus Christ. Amongst the Christian church in South Africa there are many people seeking employment and these can be used in CEFSA's effort to reach children with the gospel. A person who has invested time and money into attending Bible school and attains a qualification wants to use that qualification to find a job that will reimburse him/her for the time and effort put in to studying which CEF is unable to do at the moment. It is also for this reason that not many younger people with good training and education join CEFSA. Missionary funding is a problem for many different organisations. Many missionaries leave the mission field because of funding and some choose not to enter because of funding. ABWE editorial staff (2018) in an article titled 'The Single Reason Most Missionaries Don't Last on the Field' argue that, "The single greatest reason that these missionaries returned was not

a disqualifying sin or a health problem. It was lack of funding. The single reason most missionaries do not last on the field is because they are not able to sustain their support". Missionary funding is not a South African problem, but one where many struggle.

South Africans have become accustomed to missionaries from foreign countries coming to South Africa to teach and instruct. These missionaries come from their countries with financial support and are able to care for themselves in South Africa. Local missionaries operate differently. CEF desires to have local men and women working in their country of birth and reaching the people closest to them. This is a wonderful initiative from CEF as there have been problems caused by foreigners imposing on cultures and customs of different people. South Africans are not used to the idea of financially supporting a Christian worker or missionary. Tithing or giving of offering in church is not a problem for many, because it is taught from the scriptures, but to give to an individual is something that churchgoers are not used to. This makes it extremely difficult for local missionaries to raise the required funds to serve with CEF. The other problem that missionaries in South Africa face is that their support base is unequal because of the great inequalities in the country where there is great wealth on one side and extreme poverty on the other, it is difficult for some to raise the required support. An individual who grew up in an affluent community and has a wealthy family will find it much easier to raise funds than an individual who comes from a poor Township. Churches in the suburbs have many working members, many of whom are business owners or who are in high paying jobs. A missionary in this church and community has access to far more money than their counterpart on the other extreme. A missionary in the township attends church with many unemployed members or members who are possibly on the minimum wage and sometimes even lower. In these settings there is very little available money, people struggle to make ends meet and are unable to assist even if they desire to assist. The trouble with this is that both missionaries, the one in the affluent suburb and the one in the Township, are expected to do the same work. Both missionaries are judged by the same standards and yet their environments and needs are so different.

CEF however does assist in a small way those who cannot raise the required support through a program called Sponsor A National (SPAN). The International manual (version3: 116) says that SPAN is a programme that exists to help when there is still a shortfall in necessary support

after the financial policy and procedures have been followed. SPAN is given at the discretion of the National Director. This money assists those who are really in need. So one of the reasons that CEFSA find themselves in a situation where they are currently is possibly because of a recruitment drive that may not be suitable for the South African context. One of the ways forward CEFSA needs to reconsider is its understanding and recruitment of volunteers and its funding models.

Besides the fact that CEF does not compensate, another difficulty for the National Director when trying to recruit workers for CEF is that the workers need to sign the Doctrinal Protection Policy of CEF. The international ministries manual (2015: 19) says,

“A person may participate in leadership or teaching responsibilities in CEF only if he can sign the statement of faith and doctrinal protection policy without reservation and abide by all of CEF policies. If a person is working with CEF and is aligned with a church that does not teach the Word of God as outlined in CEF’s Statement of Faith, he cannot ask the children reached through CEF ministries to attend that church.”

This is very important for a ministry such as CEF in the context of Christianity in South Africa. South Africa has been plagued by many bogus churches and pastors who exploit people for self-gain, often by teaching false doctrines and doctrines that are far removed from what CEF teaches. CEF has a very conservative evangelical fundamental background as looked at in the previous chapter, and they will not want this to be eroded by allowing individuals to come into the ministry with alternate doctrines that go against the Statement of Faith. Conservative evangelical churches are not popular and therefore the pool of potential missionaries and volunteers is also small.

An area of difficulty for CEFSA is that there have been frequent changes in leadership positions. In the last 10 years, CEFSA has had five different National leaders. Many of who were in an acting capacity. This does not bode well for any stability and continuity for the ministry. Fischer (2003: 119) argues that “To qualify as a leader, FNP (Faith-based Non profit) managers must be described as those who change their environment, motivate others to capture the vision they are communicating, manage and resolve conflict, and effectively meet

the goals of the FNP". A leader has ideas and areas of interest, a direction that they would like to take the ministry, and when changes are made so frequently, the staff and workers are unable to grasp the vision of the leader or the organisation. Vacaretia (2020) argues that, "one of the first definitions of leadership styles belongs to Newstrom who conceptualizes the leadership style as a manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people."

The National Director is the one who leads, guides and directs the work, and missionaries of CEF in an entire country. Appointing of National Directors is a complex operation because of the different processes and considerations. When a country finds itself without a National Director, the National board will consult with the Regional Director a prospective candidate. The candidate will then be requested to apply for the position. If the board and Regional director are satisfied they will extend a call to the individual and the board will request the Regional Director to present the applicants name to the international ministries committee for consideration. If this is approved, the applicants name will be presented to the full board of International trustees for final approval and the National Director can be assigned. Weber (2015: 3) says, "One of the challenges imposed by mission organisations to Africa has been that they have not taken the cultures of the local people seriously". The appointment of the National Director needs to consider the people and culture of the people he/she will be serving especially in a country like South Africa. South Africa's diversity and inequality means careful consideration must be given when making an appointment. In the choosing of a National Director the Regional director has a huge influence on who is chosen for the position. This is because very often the international ministries committee has no idea of who the person is being presented to them is. They will have a Curriculum Vitae and an Application form, but they will not personally be aware of who the person is and the cultural background of the applicant. They trust the judgement of the Regional Director and very seldom is the Regional Director's preferred candidate rejected. The Regional Director is trusted because it is assumed he/she understands how the ministry works and functions in their area of leadership. The Regional Director is the one who is known by the international ministries committee. The Regional Director has the power to accept or reject the national boards' recommendation for the position. CEFSA has certainly suffered as a result of the constant changing of leaders. Previous leaders have been moved to different portfolios or

have resigned from the ministry. Each leader has a different way of leading and to get each worker to buy into your leadership vision and way of working takes time and effort. If leaders are not afforded the space and time to implement their preferred methods, it could possibly result in confusion and discouragement of the workers.

CEFSA's struggles to reach the majority of South African children could be as a result of the lack of leadership transformation. In 70 years that CEF has been in South Africa, there has not been a single black South African leading the ministry. A person who would understand the cultures and needs of the majority of the people you are trying to reach is of great importance. CEFSA needs a person who can contextualise the ministry. Hendriks (2004: 73) explains that "Inculturation is viewed as a way of contextualising theology and is a relatively new word referring to the accommodation or indigenisation of the gospel in a particular culture". The leadership roles of CEFSA have been dominated by white Afrikaans speaking individuals and this culture, whether directly or indirectly has been enforced throughout the ministry. Scripture Union, another para-church organization that has been in South Africa since the 1800's also struggled to minister to black South Africans but they made a decision to change the way they operated and it brought about results. Prest (1988: 189) says, "In 1977 a decision was taken to appoint a staff member to develop the black primary schools work. A couple of years elapsed before John Nthane took up such a position. His impact was immediate." There are a number of possible reasons for this immediate impact that was made, but certainly the cultural and language clarity could possibly have been a major advantage.

Even though CEF has not reached their potential in reaching children in rural areas, (areas that do not have the same kinds of municipal services as the residential area such as running water, sanitation and electricity which is not freely available), there has been no indication that there is a desire to change the leadership makeup to persons with a closer cultural and traditional value set as the children CEFSA would like to reach. In the residential area of Hazyview, many of the children who school here travel in from the surrounding rural areas.

The issue is the senior leadership roles where strategic decisions are needed to be made, are not made with the large majority at heart. Having leaders in place who can directly

relate to the majority of children in the country is what will best be suited for a country like South Africa.

### **3.3.2 CEFSA missionaries and volunteers**

In this section the research will look at the missionaries and volunteers. These are the men and women who are working daily with children in their different communities. The National board and National Director very seldom, if at all, interact with children. They are responsible for the governance of the organisation. The missionaries and the volunteers however work with children daily. This section will deal with their role and influence in the organisation.

CEFSA's full-time missionaries are currently made up of 8 males and 15 females of different ages and races. Missionaries and volunteers join the ministry as they are made aware of the ministry. As mentioned earlier, invitations are made during promotions at churches for individuals to join. Most missionaries join through word of mouth as full-time workers are encouraged to recruit new workers. These workers each have their strengths and weaknesses and therefore their successes and failures are different. CEF's missionaries are true servants as they join the ministry for what they can give and add to the Kingdom of God. CEF offers great children's ministry training and lesson material to the workers that allow them to reach the children in their communities and this is a great help to the workers.

An area within the ministry that has stunted the growth of CEF in South Africa, is the turnover of workers. Over the years many workers have joined CEF and left for various different reasons. In most cases, financial issues cause workers to seek alternative employment keeping in mind that CEF does not pay any salary. In a country like South Africa, this is an area that needs serious consideration as much time and energy is spent by the workers trying to raise ministry support and this can be wearisome for many. If the ministry has tired workers or demotivated workers it is difficult for them to be encouraged to go over and above for the ministry. Hunsberg (2021: 1) mentions four major reasons why missionaries leave the field. She mentions spirituality, relationships, inadequate training and lack of support. These are important issues to consider as they can be avoidable and mission

organisations can benefit from retaining their missionaries. It is important for mission organisations to consider these factors and assist missionaries in the areas that they feel most neglected so that these missionaries grow in experience and continue to play a role in the development of new missionaries.

### 3.3.3 Missionary Qualifications

The first and most important qualification for a missionary is for the individual to be a child of God. This is required of CEF and with good reason. A child of God is one who is described in John 1:12 (NKJV) “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:” This person has put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. They have received the free gift of salvation offered to them by God the Father. There is a misconception that because God created mankind, that all are His children, but here the verse shows that being a child of God is reserved for those who have received and believed. Harvey (2019: 1) in an article for the “Messenger” magazine title “We’re all children of God” writes,

“Not everyone is a “child of God” as the Bible uses the term. The phrase “children (or sons) of God” is part of a large and rich group of New Testament terms that describe people who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. It is synonymous with some other familiar terms, like saying someone is “saved” or “redeemed.”

This point cannot be ignored, and is something very serious for various reasons. Many mission orientated churches arrange mission trips for different groups in the church. When this happens many are excited to sign up and join the mission outreach. However, mission trips are sometimes tough and uncomfortable and encroach on people’s lives and preferences. This can cause unhappiness and can lead to quarrels among the group or between individuals. It is only the Holy Spirit that can work in the hearts of people to help them through these difficult times. If a person or persons who are on the mission trip are not children of God and do not have the Spirit of God, then these quarrels can be unresolved and cause great disunity and strife among the group. These disagreements can ruin the testimony that the



group was trying display to the community it was trying to reach for Christ. As they go out they are to let their light (Christian testimony) shine so that the lost (the unbelieving people) may see their works and turn to God.

The Bible gives us an example of two great servants of God who disagreed about a mission trip. In Acts 15:36-41 we see a heated argument between Paul and Barnabas over the involvement of Mark. This argument was so heated that the team split. It was not a pleasant splitting. The positive of this situation was that it took place before the trip had taken place and that this disagreement was not witnessed by the people they were going to visit and encourage in the things of God. If this argument had taken place in the presence of young believers it would have caused great damage to the witness that Paul and Barnabas had in the area.

Missionaries have a tough job to in reaching the unreached and what needs to be on display at all times, is their Christian witness. They can make no impact in the world if their lives don't bear witness of what they believe. This is especially important for children workers. Children often don't understand everything that is said, but they can see and mirror the things that workers do. Acts 1:8, (KJV) "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The second qualification for a missionary is to be called into the work. Defining what it means to be called is difficult as it is personal. Pitt (2012: 8) however gives this clear definition of what it means to be called into ministry. He says,

"In his classic definition of the call to ministry, the theologian H. Richard Niebuhr speaks of the call as a "secret." Niebuhr, best known for his serenity prayer, describes the call as "that inner persuasion or experience whereby a person feels himself directly summoned or invited by God to take up the work of the ministry." This call is not the general call to discipleship that all Christians might claim or the ecclesiastical (or congregational) call that serves to confirm, rather than initiate, ones belief that they are to engage in the work of the ministry." The "secret call" is a crisis moment where the response is unrelated to the promise of either future benefits (e.g.,

eternal life) or current ones (e.g., a paycheck). Instead, the response should be one of obedience and a spirit of duty to God – the source of the charge.”

Being called into ministry is something that is difficult to describe. As seen above, it could be termed as a secret because others around you don't see it or understand it. Often one can understand being called by determining that this is what they want to do even if there was no reward for doing it. Missionaries do not receive a salary, they do not join a ministry for what they can get out of it, but rather what they can contribute through what God has gifted them with. Missionaries serve in obedience to God with joy.

Thirdly and according to the CEF International manual missionaries should be exemplary. The manual (2015: 103) says, “Standards should be high and at least comparable to other full-time Christian missionaries in the country. Usually Bible school training should be expected, unless there are special circumstances like spiritual maturity or experience that you feel eliminates its necessity.”

Missionaries need to have the correct understanding of the scriptures. CEF has a hermeneutic that is used to interpret the scriptures, and missionaries need to understand this method of interpretation. The correct methods of dealing with children are also crucial if they are to be effective in their ministry. Many Christians are passionate about teaching children, but if they are not equipped with the necessary knowledge they could cause great harm and can turn children away from the scriptures instead of to the scriptures. Missionaries and children workers need to be trained and taught how to interact with children just as school teachers are trained. The training will not be the same, but the need for the training is imperative.

In order for a missionary to be useful, he or she needs to have the necessary skills to be able to teach. The CEF Instructor of teacher's level 1 manual (pg.30) in describing what teaching is says, “Teaching is stimulating, guiding and helping the student to change, to be transformed according to an ideal or given pattern. In Christian teaching, the Word of God is the standard, the Lord Jesus Christ is the ideal, and the Holy Spirit is the one who transforms.”

Missionaries need to know how to do this. How does a teacher excite or stimulate the hidden need of the child in a step by step manner for the benefit of the child. This needs to be taught

to the teacher. It is for this reason that in order for a missionary or children's teacher to be successful in what he/she desires to do, they need to be trained.

### 3.3.4 Missionary Fundraising

CEF being a non-profit organisation that originated in the USA it has implemented practices that work and are effective for their context. One of these practices is ministry fundraising. Missionaries are required to raise their own support for the work that they do in their own home country, whether they serve in their own country or abroad. And as mentioned, this is a practice that those in western countries are accustomed to and have had success.

The Bible has various examples of individuals fundraising, Kunhiyop (2008: 176-177) gives a few examples of biblical fund raising. Here are just five examples of fundraising in the scriptures. Moses raised funds for building the tabernacle, king David raised funds for building the temple, Nehemiah raised resources for building renovations, and the reconstruction of Jerusalem. The apostles needed funds for their benevolent ministries, Paul raised funds for relief ministries. There are many other instances when money was raised for the work of the ministry and so for missionaries to raise support to fund their ministries is not uncommon or unbiblical. However, the methods and criteria for fundraising need to be altered to the context of a particular country or place. The South African context is vastly different to that of western countries. Kunhiyop (2008: 187) says that,

“Fund-raising should be done in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. The techniques and means employed should not conflict with clear biblical guidelines such as voluntary giving, giving to honour God and investing for eternity. ‘Christian fund-raising, in all its activities (including marketing and advertising), should present nothing but the truth. Word and action, promises and delivery, must be the same.’”

Ministry fundraising is not a new idea or one that is unbiblical, however there are factors that influence the effectiveness of ministry fundraising in different countries and areas. If South

Africa and the United States of America (USA) are to be compared we will see vast differences. One of these differences is the different average income. According to the United States Census Bureau, the USA has a median (average) household income of \$68,703 in 2019, an increase of 6.8 percent from the 2018 median of \$64,324. This translates to a 2019 household income of R1,021 606, 74 as of the 8 February 2021. On the other hand, Lungelo Matangira in an online article written in 2019 titled “Average salary in SA is R 6, 400 per month and it’s not enough to live on” says that the average salary in South Africa was R6, 400 per month, which translates to R76 800 per annum. Although this is not a household income and rather an individual, the number of individuals are often not more than two per household. The vast difference between the two countries income shows just one indication of the struggle South African missionary’s face.

Missionaries in South Africa struggle to raise enough support to care for their families. One of the reasons for this is that South African households do not have much disposable income to share with their brothers and sister in Christ. This scenario can also be looked at through another lens. The diversity of South Africa and the results of apartheid have left much of the country’s wealth in the hands of a small minority. Unathi Nkanjeni, writing for Times Live newspaper on the 18 November 2019 says, “Stats SA's latest report has confirmed that the country is still one of the most unequal in the world. Inequality Trends in South Africa, released on November 14, showed that white people earned three times more than black Africans on average, two decades after apartheid.”

This is an economic problem, but it affects the missionaries in South Africa. According to the International manual (V3: 52), “while the direction and principle from God’s Word are clear, the method of collecting is left to each individual, to each local church, and to each organisation to be done as God directs.” This demonstrates that each missionary is responsible for their own income. Missionaries are to speak to churches, friends and family about the work and ministry they are involved with and ask them to contribute. Often those around the missionary, their friends, family and churches are in the same economic situation as they are. If you are in a wealthy community, your friends and family tend to be wealthy and in a position to support the work. The reverse is applicable for those in rural low income areas.

This is difficult for the majority of non-white missionaries in South Africa. Because of the results of apartheid, and the great differences in income between black and white South Africans, their support base (friends, family, churches) have very little disposable income to part with. On the other hand, a white missionary in South Africa have a support base that has a lot more income and are able to give more.

In creating unity and fairness, Para-church organisations in diverse, unequal and developing countries like South Africa, could copy the patterns of some mainline churches. Many mainline churches offer their priests a salary or stipend that is paid not by the individual church that they serve at but rather from a National or Regional office. The Methodist church is one such church that operates in this manner. Local churches will contribute to a central fund, and stipends or salaries are paid from this fund. Although this is not a method of payment that is without fault, it in many ways brings equality to the members of the organisation. A document compiled by the Doctrine Ethics and Worship Committee of the Methodist Church in July 2004, Titled "Stipends within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa" says,

"To begin with, we must state that scripture does not provide any simple proof texts regarding the form that financial structures should take within organisations. Douglas Meeks correctly states: "There is,... no scientific economic theory in the modern sense in the Bible, even though the Bible is centrally concerned with economy." However, he continues, "even if the Bible cannot be immediately translated into economic theory and policy..., faith in the God of the Bible has economic implications that derive from who God is and from God's own redemptive history with the world."

This document was a response to the injustice of stipend payment differences. The committee compiled a document to challenge the status quo and to give reason for fairness and justice to prevail in the payments of stipends. This is taking into consideration the past inequalities that South Africa faced. Payments made to priests are regulated by a national body. These payments can be in the form of different subsidies or in salary.

For a Para-church organisation such as CEF, this method of payment could be a solution to the difficulties that some missionaries face. On one side there are missionaries who have good

support and others who really struggle in raising support. There would need to be strict regulation on how the funds are distributed and the work done in raising the support, but with good guidance and following practises that other organisation have in place, it could work for CEF.

Missionary fundraising is an important part of the missionary's work. Without support they cannot fulfil their family commitments and struggle to live. This is not only a problem for missionaries but also for some pastors in struggling churches. The result of this is that the ministry struggles. A struggling ministry can cause great psychological problems for a pastor and could even move on to his family. London & Wiseman (2003: 47) comment on this and say,

“To meet or solve financial burdens, the pastor often becomes bi\_vocational, or his wife goes to work. This means the couples struggles to find time for the church responsibilities and for each other. Her commitments at work can also hinder the family's ability to move to a new assignment, so some pastors continue in current pastorates well after their work is finished. In the struggle of being locked in, they become more bone weary, lose their challenge or self-destruct emotionally.”

If a Para-church organisation wants to get the best out of their missionaries and workers, they will ensure that they are financially stable and that they are not burdened by the concern of providing for their family.

So in concluding the section on missionary fundraising, we see that there needs to be a system in place that can assist those who are from rural and lower income areas. Also for missionaries who are away from their home cities or provinces and are in areas where they are not familiar with many people or churches. Proverbs 30:7-9 says,

“Two things I ask of you, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.”

Missionaries main goal is to serve and please the Lord, finances are the last thing that they want to cause them to shame the same Lord and Saviour that they go out to proclaim each day.

### **3.4 CEF's relationship with churches and organisations**

CEF is a Para-church organisation. In this section the researcher will look at different aspects of a Para-church organisation. The first aspect that needs to be addressed is what is a Para-church organisation and is there a need for Para-church organisations in the Christian community today?

#### **3.4.1 CEF as a para-church organisation**

A good para-church organisation is an organisation that works well with those around it. Often there has been tension between local churches and the para-church movement. This is unfortunate but has resulted because of the two bodies not being able to understand and work with each other. "Para" which means alongside shows that the para-church organisation is to work alongside the church and assist the church. The para-church organisation is not a church and does not function as a church. CEF requires its missionaries and volunteers to be active members of a local church. In relation to working with churches, the CEF International manual version 3 states (2015: 25),

"The success of the CEF program in all nations depends upon close cooperation with other evangelical groups. For most part, national missionaries come from the missions and churches. On the other hand, children brought to Christ through the CEF outreach are channelled into these churches. In working to reach the unevangelised children, CEF seeks to avoid duplication of effort and endeavours, in cooperation with existing Christian work, to initiate and carry on its own program in neglected areas."

A good para-church organisation is one that understands the role that it plays in the Christian community. One that does not encroach on the business of the church but one that assists the church in what it desires to do. The para-church organisation works alongside the local church to assist the church in reaching the people in the community. The para-church is involved in one particular area of church ministry and does not take on the role of the church. This is a crucial relationship as both the church and para-church organisation have set goals in mind. The local church has the responsibility to minister to all members of society. Part of the responsibilities of the church is to minister to children, but for various reasons may not be able to do so. The para-church organisation is a “specialist” organisation and therefore they want to reach a particular group, in this case children. If the church and the para-church organisation both have the same goal, the two can work in partnership to reach the goal of reaching children for Christ and training them for Godly living. Daleng (2016: 41) in his doctoral dissertation titled “The partnership between churches and Para-church organizations in Nigeria, commenting on the relationship and partnership between the church and Para-church says,

“The concept of partner cooperation applies the local church and the Para-church organization as in a partnership. Partner cooperation is referred to as a strategic alliance where the strategic objectives of partners are achieved through inter firm cooperation. One virtue that is crucial in partner cooperation is confidence. Confidence in partner cooperation as a firm’s perceived level of certainty that its partner firm will pursue mutually compatible interests in the alliance, rather than act opportunistically.”

If the two entities trust each other, if they have confidence in the abilities and motives of the partner, and they work together the results will follow suit. The goal of both the church and the para-church is for the salvation of the individual (child in this case) and the faith formation of the child. Both partners want the child to be more like Jesus, and therefore a successful partnership will see this being materialised.

### **3.4.2 The role of para-church organisations**



The local church is responsible for equipping its members (young and old) for the work of the ministry. Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV) says,

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Wiersbe (2007: 608) comments and says, “The gifted leaders are supposed to “equip the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ”. The work of the local church is to equip its members to minister to others in the work of the Lord. This includes all aspects of life. The Bible is sufficient for Christians to live a life in obedience to God and is not just a book of doctrine. Ball (2015: 67) speaking of the Bible and its sufficiency for Christian living says, “It is an authority which extends equally to the formulation of doctrine by the Church and to the regulation of the life of the individual believer. For Puritans, the two cannot be separated.”

Pastors are a gift to the local church. In the passage of scripture in Ephesians, the apostle Paul states that Christ Himself gave these gifts to the church. Christ knowing what is needed by the church, He gave gifts for the benefit of the church. The pastor is to therefore teach and equip the congregants how to live in accordance to the word of God. Churches and pastors are to assist the parent to minister efficiently and effectively to the child. Churches and pastors are to assist its congregants regarding all aspects of life. If this is done as it should be done, then there would be no need for Para-church organisations. However, for various reasons, churches are failing to fulfil the role that they are called to. This leaves Christians unable to live in a way that is acceptable to their calling as Christians and to fulfil the roles that God desired for His children. This leaves a void in the body of Christ for Para-church organisations. Individuals or groups of people who have a particular calling in a certain area, see the struggles of the church and seek to fulfil this by forming a Para-church organisation.

Para-Church organisations or movements are now important to the Church of Jesus Christ in that often churches and pastors are not equipped, or do not have the skills

and assistance to provide the needed service to a particular group. Bunge (2009: 99), in contributing to the book *Toddling to the Kingdom* by Collier says,

“... Many congregations offer weak religious education programmes and fail to emphasize the importance of parents in faith development. The curricula and lessons of many religious education programmes are theologically weak and uninteresting to children and qualified teachers are not recruited and retained.”

Para-church organisations come into the wider picture of Christianity because of the struggles of the church and parents to do what they were called to do. Sin has caused the church to move away from the Lord and therefore away from the ways and methods of the Lord. Churches are to teach parents to understand the importance of Christian education. Deuteronomy 6 tells us that parents should teach their children to know God’s laws. Ephesians 6:4 says that fathers should train and instruct his children. Furthermore Paul says that parents must bring up their children in discipline. The word for discipline used here is “paideia” which means “training, learning, instruction”. Parents are struggling to teach and minister to their children because they are out working, seeking ways to survive in this world. Parents no longer have the time to demonstrate Christian living to their children because they don’t get to spend enough time together. If parents and churches were fulfilling their roles in society, there would be less need for Para-church organisations.

### **3.4.3 Para-Church organisation Leadership**

The leadership of any organisation is very important. Although a ministry such as CEF is not a church, but a ministry that works alongside the church endeavouring to assist the church, the leaders need to be held to same standard as church leaders. Kretzschmar (2005:106) says,

“Leaders are people who inspire, guide and influence others, for good or ill, and they often exercise power over other individuals or groups. Leaders enable others to envision and achieve what they may not even have dreamed of, if left to their own devices. At times leaders have had massive impact on human history, either positive or destructive. The nature of leadership

and how it functions has exercised a fascination for many over the centuries as well as within the present day.”

Leadership can potentially make or break an organisation and as we look to the scriptures we see the standards and qualifications that are set for the leader of the church. 1 Timothy 3:2-7 gives a detailed description of what is required for a man to lead the church. David Worcester in an online article titled “15 qualifications of an elder in the church” uses this portion of scripture and gives a list of 15 qualifications for an elder. He says the elder must be, above reproach, faithful to his wife, self-controlled, live wisely, have a good reputation inside and outside the church, enjoy having guests, able to teach, not a heavy drinker, not violent, gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy, manages his family well, his children respect and obey him and he must not be a new believer.

The primary importance for every church is that their leaders be qualified to teach and to set an example of Christian holiness. These are two vitally important aspects of leadership. In a Para-church organisation this is just as important. The example that the leadership set for the rest of the workers is crucial.

In the church the leaders need to be able to teach the scriptures, in an organisation the leaders need to have a good understanding of what they want to achieve. CEF being a Christian organisation needs leaders that are spiritually mature and yet continuing to grow. Kretzschmar (2005: 107-109) in describing leadership, he says that some of the characteristics of a good Christian leader is that they are servant leaders, that they are ethical leaders, that they are able to use power well and also train others, that they are accountable and that they are able to offer spiritual leadership.

These leadership traits are important for a leader in an organisation such as CEF in South Africa. As referred to earlier, South Africa is a diverse country and there are different ways that people work and think. A good leader understands the members of his/her team and is able to relate to each person individually. Leaders of Para-church organisations need to be godly and qualified. With the cultural and ethnic differences in a country such as South Africa, it is important that the leaders understand how to unite a team of many cultures.

South Africa's history of apartheid has caused disunity and mistrust and for people of different races and this needs to be addressed. During the apartheid years, the minority ruled over the majority harshly, many of the scars are still evident in South Africa today. In areas of dominance by one race group, reform is important to gain the trust of those not part of the former dominant group. People want to know that their needs and feelings are now considered. In 1994 the African National Congress (ANC) government replaced the National Party (NP). The NP was founded in 1914 and disbanded in 1997 and during its rule promoted Afrikaner interests in South Africa and neglected the majority of South Africa. However, when the ANC replaced the NP in governing the country, change took place. The ANC brought new laws that addressed areas that previously excluded the majority. In leadership it is important that the needs and interests of all members are addressed and met. In order for this to take place, the leadership team needs to be just as diverse as the members of the organisation. It cannot be that the minority are making decisions and choices for the majority. The organisation will suffer as it will struggle to get to the heart of the issues that the children they are trying to reach face. Weber (2017: 5) in an article titled "Decolonising youth ministry models? Challenges and opportunities in Africa" says,

"One of the challenges imposed by mission organisations to Africa has been that they have not taken the cultures of the local people seriously. Youth ministry that takes the social needs of its young people seriously include those cultural experiences within African communities that these youth encounter daily."

CEFSA although it has South African leaders, the leadership is still heavily represented by the Afrikaans community. Therefore without reform, as Weber says, CEFSA will not be able to understand the serious needs of the majority of South Africans. Therefore, para-church organisations need to transform to understand the context of the country.

#### **3.4.4 CEFSA and local churches**

CEF works with churches in different ways. CEF assists churches with their children's ministry or Sunday school in that they provide Sunday school teacher training. CEF trains existing and

new teachers to be more effective in their ministry to children. CEF also provides literature to churches who have completed the CEF training or who are in the process of completing. In South Africa this is a huge help to many churches, especially to the churches where funds are not readily available to purchase children's material that are usually costly. CEF also runs church based Good News Clubs. A church based Good News Club is no different to a community Good News Club, it is just held at a particular church. Most times this club is organized and funded by the church and a CEF missionary or volunteer will assist the church by facilitating the club. In South Africa however, statistics are not good. CEFSA is only involved in 92 churches around the country. In these 92 churches they reached 1711 children with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is an average of 18 children per church. This is only 4.2% of the total children reached through church based Good News Clubs in the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Region. The region is reaching 40,697 children through church based Good News Clubs. With the large number of churches in the country, mainline churches and informal churches, this small number of churches should be a concern for the organization.

South Africa has a large number of informal and formal rural churches. Most of these churches are independently run and some of these churches have pastors who have little or no biblical training i.e. Bible college training. Yet they have a burning desire for their communities to know Christ and to have a relationship with Him and to worship Christ in their cultural way. South Africa is also plagued by many "bogus" churches. These are churches started by individuals or groups to seek only profit from people in the community.

CEF does not seem to have invested enough time and energy into rectifying the injustices of the past and to mend relationships. Building strong relationships with the rural evangelical churches in South Africa will result in them having access to a larger population of people to minister to. As a result of apartheid, the relationship between black and white South Africans is strained. There is very little trust between the two groups as supported by West (in Bongmba 2015: 2).

"When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we (Blacks) had the land. The white man said to us, "Let us pray." After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible. This anecdote has been and is told regularly in African contexts. African land and the

Bible are integrally related in Africa, with the contours of their relationship following a similar pattern.”

As a result of thoughts like these, many hold bad feelings towards not only the whites, but also to Christians. There are some black people in South Africa that want nothing to do with Christianity because they associate their poverty and struggles to that of the Christians. They believe that the colonisers used Christianity to blind them and steal their land and belongings. In an online article titled “How Christianity was used to exploit Africans” Chiwanza (2021: 1) writes and says,

“The early Christian missionaries and missionaries worked hand in hand with the colonizers. At most times, the missionaries were sent to negotiate treaties that would put the Africans under subjugation. The Bible followed the gun. And thus, the influence of Christianity in the colonization process had a devastating effect on the Africans...However, not all missionaries were bent on advancing the interests of the colonial masters. Some were of a genuine conviction (at least according to them) that the Africans really needed Jesus as their Saviour. Even though missionaries came with the good intention to evangelize Africa; the timing was bad. Missionaries came into Africa along with colonial administrators and traders with the plan to introduce Christianity, commerce and civilization.”

This is a big problem for the Church in South Africa. The stigma that is attached to Christianity by many is not appealing at all, and as Chiwanza says, there were some genuine missionaries who did their best to show Africans their need for a Saviour. But because of the missionaries without any conviction (they may have been good Christians, but were afraid of falling out of favour with the ruling government), they let the Church down by falling prey to evil. The behaviour of these missionaries caused a breakdown in trust that the people may have had for the church.

This is a barrier that needs to be overcome before anything spiritual can be shared with the black South Africans. I can confirm from ministerial observation that this barrier of mistrust still exists today and is going to take a lot of work and effort to eradicate. CEF needs to build a strong relationship with the churches in the countries it works in. CEF needs churches because they are the source of teachers and volunteers. Operation Mobilization; an

international mission organization working in South Africa says on their website ([www.om.org](http://www.om.org)) that “Our purpose in South Africa is to build relationships with local churches, and through these relationships to disciple and send workers into communities. Our desire is to see transformation take place locally and throughout the nations.” CEF on the other hand, rely on the work of churches and pastors to raise up men and women who will have a passion for the children in their community. Often newly saved believers have a great desire to serve God and want to be involved in the work of their Saviour. This is great, but there needs to be a level of spiritual maturity and understanding of the scriptures before a person can teach others. Rosenberg & Koshy (2012: 28-29) say, “A true disciple is a person who actively seeks a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and has a passionate commitment to know Him, love Him, follow Him and obey His Word, no matter what the cost.” Before going out and getting involved in different activities, believers have to actively seek Christ and know Him. No one will get to a point where they know everything about God, as the apostle Paul says in Philippians 3:10(NKJV) “That I may know Him...” placing emphasis on his desire to gain a deeper knowledge and intimacy with Christ. However there needs to be a level of biblical knowledge that one can pass on to the person you desire to reach. These are the people that CEF would like to work with and be associated with. Christians who have a deep desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of God are perfect for reaching others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. CEF welcomes these individuals to do their specialised children’s ministry training and encourages them to use their enthusiasm to reach children for Christ.

Some rural churches seek assistance for their ministries but are struggling to find it since many have not had children’s ministry in the past. CEF, offers training to churches without costing the churches, it is ideal for these churches and this should be looked at with great urgency. If CEF can contextualise their training material, and make use of the correct personnel it can be effective in assisting these churches.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher looked at various areas to point to why CEFSA is in the situation it is today. This chapter interpreted the current state of the ministry, using the information

from the previous chapter. Here, the researcher pointed to the impact apartheid had and still has on the ministry of CEF in South Africa. Apartheid affects many aspects of the ministry such as where ministry takes place, how ministry takes place and who can minister in which area. Even though South Africa has been free from this racist system, the impact it had on the people of South Africa remain.

The chapter also looked at the leadership makeup of CEFSA. Here the researcher highlighted the struggles the ministry faces because of the constant changing of leadership and how this affects the workers. The chapter also touched on the difficulties faced by the missionaries in regards to their education and also their remuneration which can be burden and hinder the progress of the work. Finally this chapter looked at the relationship between the ministry and churches. CEF as a para-church organization needs the church and here we saw how CEF needs to improve its relationships with churches by becoming more diverse in their leadership makeup and programs. In the following chapter, we reflect on what a practical approach to children's ministry within SA parachurch movements like CEFSA should consider.



## **Chapter 4: Practical approach to children's ministry**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this fourth chapter of this research the writer will look at what should, or ought to be happening in children's ministry. What is the ideal for a ministry such as CEF operating in South Africa? Osmer (2008: 4) calls this the normative task. CEF as an international children's ministry in South Africa needs to look and be different to CEF in Ireland, Sweden or Uganda or any other country for that matter. The reason for this is each country is uniquely different. The population is different, the climate is different, the economy is different and therefore the ministry too, needs to be different. This chapter will look at the biblical perspectives of children's ministry, the child in ministry, ministry to children and having a missional approach to children's ministry. We also explore what faith formation of children in South Africa could look like.

### **4.2 Biblical perspectives**

#### **4.2.1 Varying perspectives on children in the Bible**

How are children viewed in the Bible? The Lausanne movement (2010: nl) says,

“Children are precious in God's sight. Some Christian leaders think the Bible says very little about children. However, as we begin to read Scriptures with the child in the midst, we are seeing that children are not just present, but prominent in Scripture. Indeed, there are more than 1500 references to children and childhood (including orphans, parenting and training). Very often children and youth are found playing important, even crucial roles in the outworking of God's plans”.

Jesus uses various scriptures to show the value and importance of children. CEF uses a literal historical grammatical hermeneutic. This approach to the scriptures strives to understand the writers original meaning. The use of scripture in this research is based on this biblical

hermeneutic. Matthew 18 is one example where Jesus puts the child in the middle of a theological argument. In doing this, Jesus highlights the value of children. He calls on the adults to become like children. Children are naturally humble, teachable and trusting, these are the qualities Jesus was calling the disciples to have in the face of their pride and arrogance. This was unusual, but it demonstrated Jesus' affection for children. Jesus depicts children as models for adults of entering the reign of God, as models of greatness and vehicles of divine revelation. Matthew 19:14 (NIV) says, "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven". This verse is often viewed as one showing the vulnerability of children in the Bible. After being refused access to Jesus by the disciples, who believed that adults were greater and deserved the attention of Jesus, Jesus calls them to Himself and again demonstrates their importance. Bunge (in Grobbelaar & Breedt 2016: 102) says, "Scholars are finding that children are depicted in a host of ways in the Bible: not only as victims or in need of instruction and discipline, but also as gifts of God, signs of God's blessing, and social agents themselves". In an environment where men usually had little contact with children and especially girls, Jesus acted quite differently. Grobbelaar (in Grobbelaar & Breed 2016: 48-49) says,

"God used children at various times and in different ways to communicate some theological truths to God's people. The exact content of this communication differs in the different contexts. Although it often had a connection with change or transformation or liberation, each different children-related interaction described in the Bible shines light on God and God's kingdom from a different angle".

Children were viewed differently in the Bible, on the one hand there is evidence to show how lowly men viewed children and on the other hand there is God exalting children to the highest position in the kingdom.

#### **4.2.2 The family as the primary sphere of ministry**

What does the Bible say about children and ministry to children? It is this question that the research hopes to answer in this section. CEF is a fundamentalistic conservative evangelical Christian organisation, and in this respect, they view the Bible as their final authority.

Therefore, looking at a literal interpretation of what the Bible has to say about children and ministry is important. It is primarily through this lens that this section is discussed.

CEFSA believes that the Lord Himself gave parents; not schools, youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, or anyone else, the primary responsibility for the nurture and admonition of children. He meant for parenting to be a full-time job, with no off time. Morgan (2015: 135) says, “No organization can replace the role of the family – not Child Evangelism Fellowship, or even the Church. In both the Old and New Testaments, godly dads and moms are given the primary job of raising spiritual champions. From the creation of the world, God ordained the family as His chosen environment for the nurture of children”. The Bible calls for parents to be the driving force of a child’s Biblical education and faith formation. However, it is unfortunate to note that Christian parents are dropping the ball regarding their children’s spiritual well-being. Murray (2021: n1) says that “even good Christian homes struggled to build spiritual formation into the daily rhythms of life.” The apathy or unwillingness of parents to disciple their children shouldn’t be ignored. Parents need to be the driving force in the faith formation of their children”. There are several scriptures that point to the importance of parents instructing their children in the ways they should live and how to conduct themselves. This is seen both in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the book of Deuteronomy was the primary curriculum in the religious education of ancient Israel (Christensen 2001:143). Doherty (2014: 10) says it is important to remember the circumstances under which Deuteronomy was given. Deuteronomy was given after the 40 years of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness and coming into the Promised Land. He goes on to say that “Their (Israelites) future would depend upon the generation of children who would grow up in the Promised Land”. This scripture is extremely important for the nation of Israel. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV) says, “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” On these two verses MacArthur (1997: 260) says;

“The people were to think about these commandments and meditate on them so that obedience would not be a matter of formal legalism, but a response based upon understanding.

The law written upon the heart would be an essential characteristic of the later New Covenant. The commandments were to be subject of conversation, both inside and outside the home, from beginning of the day to its end.”

What is being implied is that parents need to be the primary teachers of God’s Word to children. Teaching children the things of God were not designed to be the work of missionaries or Sunday school teachers but for parents. It also was not designed to be a momentarily learning exercise. Teaching and learning is to be on-going, it is to be a way of life. These commandments need to resonate within the hearts of parents. Parents need to obey them and make them personal. These commands should be their daily practices and in living these commandments out, the teachings will be passed on to the children.

Another popular Old Testament scripture used to show the importance of parents teaching their children is Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Rinehart quotes Miller in an article for [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com) titled “What does it mean to train up a child in the way he should go?”

“This is not a promise to parents who raise their children properly but a warning to those who allow their adolescents to grow up without guidance, who raise them to go their own way.” Children left to their own way are not likely to change; they’ll become adults who go their own way... the wrong way.

Joshua, in his plea to the nation of Israel says, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”. Joshua points out that firstly he will serve the Lord, and there after ensure that his family follows in his way. Parents have the great responsibility of showing children the right way, which is too Christ.

Moving to the New Testament, Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” The Apostle Paul is instructing fathers to lead their children towards the Lord and not away from Him. The behaviour of the father is in the spotlight in this scripture. Culturally fathers were known to be domineering and, in some cases, harsh to their wives and children. Apostle Paul here is commanding them not to behave in this manner but to instead behave in a way that will draw

their children to follow the ways of the Lord. MacArthur (1997: 1814) also comments on the usage of “fathers” in the verse saying “The word technically refers to male parents, but was also used of parents in general. Since Paul had been speaking to both parents (vv 1-3) he probably had both in mind here. The same word is used in Hebrews 11: 23 for Moses’ parents.” The English Standard Version Bible comments on the same verse as saying, “Parents play a crucial, God – ordained role in the discipleship of their children “in the Lord”.

The Bible has various other examples showing who should instruct and teach children in the ways they should live. What we see from this is that the parents have this responsibility. Children are gifts from God to parents and He leaves them in the care of the parents. Not only is it their responsibility to love and care for the children placed in their care, but they too should lead their children to the ways of the Lord. Holland (2008: 218) in an article for ‘The Masters Seminary Journal’ says, “Parenting can be wrongly interpreted as a process of keeping our children good and pure. The truth is that every child is born sinful. The goal is not to keep children from becoming messed up by sin; instead, it is to see their inborn sin covered by the gospel.” This illustrates the need for parents to understand that children are sinful and lead them to Christ. This is not merely done by speaking to and instructing children, but also by living as a godly example. The way in which parents live, demonstrate what they truly believe. What they truly believe is what children will follow and obey.

CEF places a greater emphasis on unreached children. Unreached children are children who do not have Christian parents or family to lead and guide them in the things of God. CEF does not want to replace the role of the parent in leading children to Christ, but their aim is to be of assistance to children who could possibly grow up without knowing God and His desires for Christian living. In concluding this section of who should be teaching and instructing children in the ways of the Lord, scripture is clear that this is the role of the parents. However, because of the way the world is moving and turning away from God, many parents do not have the time to teach and instruct their children as they just don’t spend enough time with their children. With both parents out at work each day, and children are sent to school, and the job of raising and teaching of children is left to the school teacher or the Sunday school teacher. This is not the way God intended it to be. Fathers and mothers are God’s constituted home authority (Prov. 1:8; 6:20–22), to nurture children along godly paths and to admonish them

away from ungodly ones. Fathers and mothers who do not discipline their children are parents who are themselves undisciplined and disobedient to God's will.

### 4.3 The child in ministry

What role do children play in ministry and how should they be learning the truths of the gospel are two questions that will be answered as we take a look at the role of children in ministry. CEF is a children's organisation that has a desire to reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Morgan (2015: xiii) says, "This is the mission of Child Evangelism Fellowship, taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to ... Every Child, Every Nation, Every Day". Children are central to this ministry. Without children there would be no need for child evangelism, but there are approximately 1.92 billion children in the world and because of this, child evangelism is important for the Christian community.

Grobbelaar (2016: 3) encourages child theology as an important lens through which we understand the child. Haddon (in Collier 2009: 23) says,

"Theology is thinking and talking (logos) about, from, towards and with God (theos). Not all religion involves theology. Even if the talk about child development, for example, uses religious language and categories but makes no mention of God, then it is not theology. Child theology takes the view that theology is important and should be worked at, even though talking about God can never substitute for God and theology as talk is not a substitute for faith in action".

The goal of child theology is to understand the child in its context. When the child is understood methodologies can be put in place to minister to the child in a way that resonates with them. It is therefore imperative for an organisation like CEF to understand the Bible through the lens of a child. In so doing the ministry will engage with theologies involving children. Bunge in Collier (2009: 33) says that child theology, "Builds on theologies of childhood but with a broader task, looking at doctrine and practice as a whole; Re-examines fundamental doctrines and practices of the church using the "lens" of the child; Provides new

insights into central themes of the Christian faith". As mentioned previously, the church has continuously ignored children and ministered primarily to adults expecting children to understand the scriptures and learn in a way that adults do. Child theology desires to change this flawed view and instead look at how Jesus places the child in theology.

Many churches neglect children. Many churches place high importance on adults and often forget about children. This is seen in the way churches are built and designed. Very few churches have appropriate seating for children. They are expected to use chairs or pews that are designed for the comfort of adults. The needs of children are hardly considered, and this is a hindrance to the ministry efforts to children. Reflecting on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on United Kingdom churches, Holmes, Murray, Price, Larson, De Abreu and Whitehead (2021: 6) remind us that, "children's ministry was not prioritised as highly as adult focused ministry, and was often overlooked during this time of crisis". Children's ministries need to understand the child, take the child seriously and find ways that will allow the child to learn and grow in the best possible way. In African churches this is no different. In some instances there has been little or no value placed on the immediate child. Children have been viewed as having future value. Children are valuable when they honour the family and produce off-spring, but with regards to the Christianity they have been left behind. This leads to an understanding that the church does not need children. African churches believe that church is for adults and in many rural areas and communities, children's ministry is non-existent. De Beer in Grobbelaar and Breed (2016: 215) illustrates this saying,

"Children, particularly in vulnerable urban areas, are often regarded or treated as non-persons, not fully human with full rights in various spheres, and therefore systematically excluded. This is not dissimilar in the church where children are often made acutely aware of being 'non-persons' until a certain age or ritual, or until they finally are allowed access to a certain sacrament."

The church should learn from Jesus. Jesus reached out to children, when everyone else disregarded the children, Jesus welcomed the child. Grobbelaar (2016: 79) says,

"We need children as God's agents and guides on our journey through this life. We need them to open our eyes to understand more and more about God and God's kingdom, to enrich and

even improve our theological grammar. We need them to remind us over and over again that only children enter the kingdom of God. We need them to avoid the danger of becoming too important in our own eyes, of seeking more and more status and power. We need them to take our hands and lead us along the road into God's kingdom. We need them to help us to communicate the gospel to the world in a better way."

Not only did Jesus welcome the child but He used the child to show adults who will enter the Kingdom of God. So how does the church welcome the child in our current environment? How does the child be allowed to learn and grow in a manner that they are comfortable with? These are questions that need to be answered accurately. Many children's ministry methods are based on the public schooling method. Richards (1983: 14) says that,

"Traditionally Christian ministry to children has developed within the structures of the congregations' agencies, and thinking about ministry has paralleled thinking about childhood education through the public schools. Courses in Christian philosophy of Christian education traced our nurture programs back to the same educational philosophers looked to for the roots of secular education."

Instead of looking to secular philosophers for guidance in teaching children, Christians should be looking to the scriptures on how to teach the Biblical truths. The secular system of children sitting and listening while the adult teacher stands in front of the class and instructs the children is not an efficient teaching method. The adult is the superior and the child is the inferior and must listen and receive from the superior. This is not the way Jesus Christ intended for children to learn and grow in the things of God. Weber and De Beer (2017: 4) argue that,

"Children are not passive absorbers of information but should be acknowledged as active participants within their families, churches and societies. They have individual interests that intrigue them, and both their interests and individual personalities inform their thoughts, feelings, concerns, perceptions and questions about God."

Adults need to understand that children play an integral part of God's story. They need to be engaged and understood. They need to be active in the learning process.



So how do children learn is the question we need to answer? What is the best way for children to see the scripture in a way that relates to them instead of how adults feel children need to see the scriptures? Firstly churches and Para-church organisations need to become like parents in a sense that they are always thinking of children. Para-church organisations need to consider what is best for the child instead of what is best suited to the teacher. Missionaries and teachers are allocated roles in children's ministries because of what they can bring to the ministry, but very seldom are the children taken into consideration. Nel, in Grobbelaar & Breed (2016: 185) says,

"Inclusive congregations (Para-churches) become like parents: They (children) are just always on your mind, even subconsciously so. And because of that we do not miss them in our rational process and planning. Some say our subconscious determines up to 70%+ of our so-called rational behaviour. Children and other youth are then in our minds. On our mind and in our minds, one could say."

Nel (2016: 185) argues that churches that are serious about children think of them and work out ways to get the best for them, just as a parent does. He also says that they consult children and lastly think like children. Children come into the world and change parents, and so it should be in ministry. What children need to grow in Christ is a holistic approach to ministry. Grobbelaar (2016: 254) says that

"A holistic approach to children's ministry addresses all four developmental categories of children: spiritual, socio-emotional, cognitive and physical. Those adults caring for children have to strengthen the whole child by ensuring that these four developmental categories are integrated with one another, but they also have to understand that holistic ministry is much more than this. It also has to strengthen the broad ecology around children."

Children need to be taught in a holistic manner. Children need things to be integrated together. CEF has three important aspects of their Good News Club, each lesson includes singing, Scripture memorisation and a Bible lesson. In all three aspects, children have very little input as to the way they will learn and grow in their faith. Adults express themselves and teach

verbally, logically and argumentatively. Children are unable to engage in this manner, instead children express their feelings through play. Landreth (2002: 17) says,

“It (play) is a medium of expressing feelings, exploring relationships, and self-fulfilment. Given the opportunity children will play out their feelings and needs in a manner or process of expression that is similar to that for adults. The dynamics of expression, and vehicle for communication are different for children but the expressions (fear, satisfaction, anger, happiness, frustration, contentment) are similar to those of adults.”

Children’s ministries need to engage children in a way that will allow them to express themselves, feel comfortable and also learn at the same time. Play allows children to do this and therefore missionaries and children’s workers need to formulate ways to present the Bible in a way that is enjoyable for the child. Play is also not the only way to communicate with children. Coetsee & Grobbelaar (2013: 811) says, “Play is not the only mode of communicating with children. Stories, music, humour, touch, protection, encouragement – in short activities reaching out to the hearts of children showing respect and fulfilling their needs – are all expressions of love that strengthens relationships and enhance growth.”

Missionaries and children’s workers need to understand the value of relationship. Strong relationships with children allow for them to express themselves and for the teacher to be relievable by the child. Because of the trust the child has in the teacher or missionary, learning will take place in a natural process.

In concluding this section of the chapter it is important to realise that children were previously neglected and discarded and possibly still are today in society and the church. We see that in order for this to change there needs to be a change of mindset by churches and Para-church organisations in order to welcome children as Jesus did.

#### **4.4 Ministry to Children**

What does ministry to children look like when children are included. Lausanne Movement (2010: nl) says, “There is an increased realization that while the future of the church begins

with child evangelism, it is accomplished by discipling and training children as ministry partners today and developing them as the Christ-following leaders of tomorrow. Relationship development between children who are new in their faith and Christians who are further along the path is a key to this process". The lessons that children and adults can grasp from one another through normal activities are priceless. Swart & Yates (2012: 2) argue that "To enhance children's participation and citizenship in society does not only entail capacitating children with resources to voice their opinion, but it also implies that adults need to listen to the voices of children in such a way that they are committed to doing more than just to hear what children are saying". The relationships between children and adults are enhanced when learning and communication between the two parties are mutual. Historically, children were seen as less than and this perception allowed adults to talk down to children. As seen in the previous section, Jesus undid this perception and in turn showed how adults should rather be learning from children. Beckwith (2004) speaks of the traditional children's ministry teaching methods where children sit down and are instructed by an adult. Sometimes they may be called upon to assist by doing an activity, but the general picture is of the adult speaking to the child. How then should children be taught Bible stories? Beckwith (2004: 131) says, "... we need to always make our Bible stories about God, not about a political, theological, or moral agenda. We need to explore Bible stories with children in the whole context of God's story, asking why it was so important to God that humans know this story, we need to let them explore the story itself, asking, 'What does this story tell us about God and God's plan for creation'? children learn in various ways and adults need to embrace these different learning methods. Children learn by playing, by drawing and interacting with people and therefore ministry to children needs to understand the holistic child when attempting to share Jesus Christ with them.

#### **4.5 Towards a missional approach to children's ministry**

This section of the research will look at child agency, the context of the child and also justice as part of being missional. Matthew 18: 14 says "In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish". God the Father is interested in the

eternal well-being of the child and not the existence of the local church or denomination. Local churches and denominations rise and fall but the bride of Christ, the Church, will not fail. Matthew 16: 18b says, "... I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it". The church and para-church organisations need to view children with a missional approach. Children and youth have often been referred to as the church of tomorrow or the future church. Nel (2018: 195) says that "The survival of a particular denomination has often been the purpose of a (children's) Ministry". This points back to what was addressed earlier in the chapter showing that children are not taken seriously. They are only important for the future of the local church or denomination. They are not seen through the eyes of God. CEFSA is a parachurch organisation which relies on local and international missionaries. A missional approach to children's ministry takes evangelism to children and the continued faith formation of these children seriously. It also takes the contexts of these children seriously. This section motivates that a practical theological approach to children's ministry includes being missional among and alongside these children. April, Greener (ed's) (2016: 40) say "The dimension of mission "to" children-at-risk is the most direct approach to addressing the problems of children: when adults use their power or influence to directly intervene and provide for the needs of children". when adults use their authority to help and assist the agenda of God in bringing children into a relationship with Him, they are being missional minded.

#### **4.5.1 Child's agency**

Previously it was seen that children can very easily be taken for granted and their ability to partake in the things of God brushed aside. Weber & De Beer (2016: 2) argue that "Children are not passive absorbers of information but should be acknowledged as active participants within their families, churches and societies. They have individual interests that intrigue them, and both their interests and individual personalities inform their thoughts, feelings, concerns, perceptions and questions about God". Grobbelaar (2012: 83-84) adds by saying, "Children are fully human beings, with their own spiritual experiences and they are equipped with the Holy Spirit to bear fruit and to practice the gifts they receive from the Spirit". Adults must come to terms with the reality that God takes children seriously. White (in Collier 2009: 159)

says, “Jesus is clear that there is a risk of his disciples missing out on the Kingdom all together if they do not heed the sign of the child but subsequent church history does not suggest we have heeded his action, teaching or warnings seriously”. Churches and para-church ministries need to view children as a way in which they too can learn and grow. It is not just a matter of ministering to children but also allowing the organisation to learn from the child. For this to happen, intense observation of the children needs to take place. There needs to be a concerted effort placed on seeing ways in which adults can understand scripture through the lives of children. Bunge and Willmer (in Collier, 2009: 117) state that “God is working in, for and through children. What are children right now in the community? What are the skills that children can contribute? Children’s cuteness and ability to disrupt could be ministries to us. This is a rich theological concept often missed”. As adult church and para-church organisations cannot miss this opportunity to grow.

#### **4.5.2 Context of Children**

South Africa’s children are still largely absent from key documents and conversations in the country. Children remain the most vulnerable citizens in the country and in desperate need for advocacy. Malherbe (2011: 8) suggests that it is often foreigners that take the lead in reaching out to the needs of African children. In the context of the church in South Africa this runs true as well. This section will bring to light the need for children in the church to be elevated to that of a true member of the body of Christ, and not be discarded or treated as a second-rate member of the Christian society. Grobbelaar (2012: 10) says, “In our process of doing theology, the focus should be the rediscovery and realization of our identity in a specific context as a reflection of God’s missional and community-building identity.” An example of this is Jesus using a child in answering the disciple’s question about who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. In this setting, children were not known to be the greatest or have the highest authority, yet Jesus uses this as a lesson and a point of reference for the disciples to understand the reality of the child’s importance. This caused the disciples to drastically change their view of children and their standing before God. In an African context we see other challenges, Mahlangu (2016: 9) explains this by saying that,

“...the majority of children in Africa are facing abuses of unprecedented proportions. Historically and traditionally, African scholars always read and interpreted the bible with African lenses. The African bible critic and exegete should be part of the church, the body of Christ which ought to be a lotus of healing. Theologising in the context of the crisis of the ‘child’ in Africa is fairly a new development and needs to be aggressively pursued.”

The context and surroundings of the child is what determines the way in which the scripture is understood. Therefore, for western mission organisations working in Africa, a contextual adjustment needs to be made in order to assist children in understanding the scripture and for missionaries and volunteers to understand the issues and needs of the child. Malherbe (2014) says, “Churches and theologians on the African continent had been very slow in discovering its children. We may say that in many cases children have until now not even become a focal point.”

Children in large parts of South Africa do not have access to running water, electricity and basic services. These children attend schools where facilities are dilapidated, they live in homes that are unstable. Poverty, abuse and neglect are serious challenges that children in South Africa face daily. These circumstances are largely unknown to many foreign missionaries and often ministry models can become a problem. An example of misinterpreting a context is playing games with food in a community where many only have one meal a day. In this regard the context the child finds him/herself in is crucial to the way ministry needs to be done.

### **4.5.3 Justice is part of being missional**

Reflecting on how CEFSA can better contextualise its ministry approaches to the South African child’s context means that CEFSA responds to the injustice these children face daily. A few reflective questions to consider could be what would it look like if God were really in charge? Would there be injustice if society operated according to the scriptures? These questions can be debated at length but in South Africa we see a country that is in crisis with regards to

division in many aspects of society. Racism rears its ugly head at any given opportunity. Economic inequality is getting worse, and the general perception of the South African public demonstrates that the situation is far from improving. Botha and Foster (2017: 2) report that, "... South Africa is not a reconciled nation; South Africans have not moved past the pain and anger that separated their parents and they still cling to their segregated and separated identities". This is a huge problem for the church and para-church organisations. Christians are called to be just, loving and compassionate (Micah 6:8). These attributes denounce racism and inequality and fight for justice. Lines (2016: nl) says, "There is no denying that the church is clearly called to participate in God's justice and righteousness in the world; we can't read through the Bible and not agree with that at a basic level. But we might have different views on what it means to "seek justice".

Ministries to children in South African need to understand that in this context, helping children to understand their role in society going forward is extremely important. Parents, the church and para-church organisations have the responsibility to correct the failings of past generations. Hage (2018: 32-33) suggests that "Children need to be raised by adults who can talk about race. Churches need to be places where the love of God is evident for all people and where the gospel speaks to the injustices of racism, of unjust systems, and our role as participants in the kingdom of God to dismantle racism and pursue just living, to bring healing and restoration into the world". This is part of forming the faith of children. Addressing issues of relevance in the context of the child, we see the child grow understanding their specific environment. In the South African context where children in rural communities lack equal opportunities to education and extra-mural activities, CEFSA has a wonderful opportunity to reach children by offering schools and community organisations assistance in these areas. In doing this they present the love and compassion of God by showing those less fortunate that they too are important. When children see the Christ-like attribute they may be won to serve Him.

#### **4.6 Taking the faith formation of these children seriously**

Murray (2021: nl) says that "Faith formation is a 24/7 process of being formed, transformed, and conformed to be like Jesus. As a lifelong pursuit, it can't be scheduled or

compartmentalized. Reducing it to a church program or a curriculum for a family to work on at home is inadequate. Faith formation should be a pulse in the happenings of everyday life". Faith according to Cairns (2013: 80) "In the general sense faith is the assent of the mind to the truth of something of which we do not have an immediate conception; whereas knowledge is the perception of the truth of something of which we have an immediate conception". A song from CEF's lesson material says, faith is just believing, what God says He will do. When a Christian accepts the Lord Jesus as his or her Saviour, he/she has faith in what the Bible says even though they cannot see it. Weber (2014: 94) says, "As one grows in one's faith it becomes active in that it is exhibited through service. These good works are connected to a sense of calling to God and others. These works are governed by God's moral laws. An interactive faith seeks to obey these laws and God's mission". The goal of assisting children to form their faith is to see the outworking in their lives. Faith causes people to change their behaviour. This process includes developmental theories and Christian practices used by the faith community in order to promote a Christ-like lifestyle (Weber 2014). In the church and children's ministries, children need to be welcomed, affirmed and challenged towards spiritual growth through different avenues within the body of Christ. Children need to feel a sense of inclusion and be comfortable within the environment to be able to express their feelings and emotions. When a child in his/her everyday living is behaving in accordance with the Word of God, children begin to see how their behaviour affects mission and justice in society. It is in this everyday life that children need to see and learn about justice in society.

In this regard the church plays a crucial role. Churches need to be intentional about the role and influence that children play in the church. Churches need to be intentionally intergenerational to assist children with forming their faith. An intergenerational church is a church that allows everyone to have a strong sense of belonging. Adults and children alike should feel welcome and feel that they have a role to play in the church. An intergenerational church also promotes learning and growing together. Having a small group meet regularly brings people of different ages together, involving different life experiences. These times together assist children and adults in understanding the scriptures through the lens of other people. Churches need to allow all members to serve, children and adults need to be able to play an active role in the functioning of the church. Allowing children to be part of the worship



team, or welcoming team, this gives people a sense of belonging. Intergenerational churches assist both adults and children and are vital for the holistic growth of all believers.

Therefore, as the church and para-church organisations evangelize and disciple children, they will be transformed into Christians who follow the example of Jesus Christ and pursued justice.

## **4.7 Conclusion**

In concluding the chapter that deals with what ought to be going on, the researcher looked at the biblical perspectives of children's ministry. This section deals with God's view of children and the important role that children have in the Bible. This chapter also looked at the agency of the child in ministry. This section considered the qualities that the child possess and the need for ministry networks to utilise the child in ministry and to change the narrative that children are only there to be taught and are unable to teach. Furthermore, the chapter looked at ministry to children and those responsible for ministering to children. This section considered the missionaries and volunteers as well as looking at the needs of these workers. The chapter concludes by looking at ministry with a missional approach.

## Chapter 5: A contextualized ministry approach towards the faith formation of South African children

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the pragmatic task of practical theology. Osmer (2008: 4) says, “Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the ‘talk-back’ emerging when they are enacted”. After reflecting on what is going on with children in the South African context and within CEF and CEFSa as organization; why this going on and what we believe should be going on theologically; this task calls for action and practical recommendations to CEFSa. James 1:22-25 (NIV) says;

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do”.

Hearing the word of God and not acting on it is in essence nullifying its worth. Henry (1960: 1932) commenting on James 1:22 says that “Hearing is in order to doing; the most attentive and the most frequent hearing of the word of God will not avail us, unless we be also doers of it. It is not enough to remember what we hear. Bare hearers are self-deceivers. Self-deceit will be found the worst deceit at last”. In light of this how does CEFSa respond to the question posed in this study, what does CEFSa need to do to assist the children of South Africa form their faith?

This research has looked at CEF and CEFSa and the ministry in South Africa and the role that it plays in the evangelizing of children. The research has discovered areas that need to change in order for the ministry to become more impactful and influential in the lives of South African children. This is a difficult task for a ministry that has been in existence for over 70 years. Even though an organisation may be convinced that new ways are more effective and more

efficient than the old ways, it is not easy to shed old habits that have become ingrained over time. On the other hand, helping leadership to view the ministry from another perspective and realise that things may not be correct is also often a challenge. Stanley (2012: 278-9) referring to the struggles churches face with change says,

“The changes people resist are changes associated with the way ministry is done, the model the church has adopted. The model defines the church and thus, more than anything, determines the status quo. This is how we do it here. This is who we are. Over time, churches fall in love with their models. But models are meant to be a means to an end. Models are created to support the mission of the church. Once upon a time, every existing church model supported the mission of the church. But then a generation fell in love with the model at the expense of the mission. Truth is, for most churches, sustaining the current model is the mission of the church. Staff is trained with that particular model in mind. People come to expect the programs associated with a particular model. Budgets are established around the model”.

The issue addressed by Stanley here is often also the case in para-church organisations. The ministry model controls the way in which the organisation functions. When this is in need of change, leaders are afraid of the magnitude of the task and often avoid doing what is necessary. In light of this, this chapter seeks to recap what has been learnt throughout this study regarding CEF; CEFSA and the children that are being ministered too. It will also give suggestions on how CEFSA can answer the question posed, In what ways can CEFSA provide a contextually relevant approach to assist South African children in the development of their faith?

## **5.2 What has been learnt from the research?**

In the first chapter of the research the background to the study was explained. The researcher looked at what was the motivation behind this kind of research and where the interest in contextualised children’s ministry began. Different settings require different approaches as different settings have different challenges and needs. In the researcher’s lived experience of working with children in two completely different areas he was able to see how ministry

needs to be different. The problem was that CEFSA only has one ministry model that is used worldwide. This model, although successful in reaching children with the gospel, is not having a lasting effect on the children of South Africa. This research looked at the current problems facing the evangelical churches in the country and saw the number of young people leaving the church and how generally churches have lower numbers. This raises the issue that there is a fundamental problem that starts at grassroots level. Kinnaman (2011: 9) says that “Many young people who grew up in the church and have since dropped out do not hesitate to place blame. They point the finger, fairly or not, at the establishment: you lost me”. The establishment referred to here is the church, but can also easily refer to para-church organisations that minister to children and youth. The church or sometimes the para-church organisation is seen to be the one responsible for the faith formation of the children because of the unfortunate breakdown in the family faith structures. This research examines the ministry of CEF to see if CEF as a para-church organisation is doing enough to assist children with their faith formation.

The second chapter of the research looked at what Osmer (2008) calls the descriptive task of practical theology. The descriptive task asks the question, what is going on? What is happening in the ministry? This chapter therefore looked at the functionality of the ministry of CEF. The chapter began by looking at who was the founder, how was the ministry founded and what is the purpose of the ministry. It then went on to study the ministry of CEFSA in a similar manner and ended by looking into the children of Hazyview where the researcher’s ministry is based.

The research uncovered that the founder of CEF was Jesse Overholter. It looked at his life growing up and his eventual call into ministry and his frustration in the ministry. Morgan (2015: x) says that, “Though Overholtzer had worked hard and tried his best, he felt he had little to show for his ministry”. This was a cause of deep frustration for Overholtzer. However it was through the ministry of Charles Spurgeon that Overholtzer’s attention turned to children. After seeing the fruit of his labour in ministering to children, he left the pastorate and paid greater attention to children’s ministry eventually forming Child Evangelism Fellowship. Josh Haywood (2011: 19) in his honours thesis, argues that “the parachurch movement has been a result of American individualism and the American pastime of entrepreneurship”. With Overholtzer being a successful businessman and having a strong drive for ministry despite the childhood reluctance towards children’s ministry, he pushed on

and founded a ministry that after 80 years continues to reach boys and girls with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The research also looked into the three fold purpose of CEF. CEF has three main goals, and according to the CEF international ministries manual (2015: 15) “Child Evangelism fellowship is a Bible-centred, worldwide organisation, composed of born-again believers whose purpose is to evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to establish (disciple) them in the Word of God and in a local church for Christian living.” CEF pays much attention to the evangelising of children. The great emphasis on this could come from the manner in which Overholtzer came into the ministry. He was sixty six years old and felt that he did not have much time left to live. With this he strived to get as many children to know the Lord Jesus as possible. Faith formation was not a priority for him but children coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In looking at CEFSA the research saw how the ministry was started by international missionaries. There were missionaries from CEF that worked in the country, but a great impact was also made through the work of missionaries from The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM). The link between CEF and TEAM possibly originated at Moody Church where both Overholtzer and Franson from TEAM were members, although at different times. DL Moody, the founder of a conservative evangelical fundamental church, named Moody Church set the example in his evangelistic drive which started locally and his love for children.

The research also discovered that apartheid played a huge role in the way the ministry was established. The Afrikaaner led government implemented laws that benefited the minority white population and caused much grief for the majority of South Africans. Laws like the group areas act impacted where people could stay and who could interact with each other. This impacted the ministry as well as there was limited freedom for people to get involved in the ministry and with who they could minister too. These laws also allowed precedents to be established in that some people were more important than others. The concept of white privilege and superiority still impact society today. The Dutch Reformed Church had a major role in the establishment of the CEFSA as they had close ties to the ruling government. The research also saw how the ministry grew in the Afrikaans speaking coloured communities in Johannesburg and the influence of the Dutch Reformed Mission church in this.

When teacher training was required CEFSA partnered with Petra children's institute who had a college where children's ministry training was done. The partnership allowed CEF to offer training until CEF acquired their own property to do such. CEFSA began to grow and reach different communities and eventually reach the different provinces in South Africa reaching many children each day.

Chapter 3 looked at the normative task (Osmer 2008). This task seeks to find the reasons for why the ministry is in a particular way. What are the causes for the problem that is under investigation? The research uncovered that CEFSA is potentially not doing all it can for the children of South Africa as it is currently only reaching a very small percentage of the total population of children in the country. In regards to the faith formation of children, here too much can be done to improve the ministry. There are a number of factors that played a part in this unfortunate situation.

The research looked at the contextual challenges of South Africa. South Africa is a country that is different in many ways and doing ministry in South Africa is complex. The demographics of the country play a part in the way ministry is done. When CEF arrived in South Africa around 1947 it was during the apartheid. The country was in a hostile situation and there were many laws that drove the separation of people. This meant that missionaries who were the pioneers in starting the ministry were not free to minister. They had to abide by the laws of the apartheid government. Ministry was therefore done among different race groups individually. Because the missionaries had to work closely with the apartheid government and the Dutch Reformed Church, much of the ministry took place amongst Afrikaans speaking South Africans. Language and cultural differences also made it difficult for the ministry to spread and reach the large majority of South Africans.

The chapter also looked at how the make-up of the leadership of CEFSA limits the ministry. The research saw that because the ministry was driven by Afrikaans speaking South Africans, it couldn't practically impact others who did not speak or understand Afrikaans. Amongst the English speaking missionaries, they too were unable to infiltrate the communities that didn't speak English. This situation still prevails in the ministry today. Although the ministry has spread to different provinces and into different cultures, much of the leadership remains

white Afrikaners. Because of the hostile history of the country, this caused there to be trust issues among the black community and therefore they are not as ready to receive the gospel from the Afrikaners. What was also discovered was that not many missionaries had the correct theological training. Although this is not a detrimental hindrance to the ministry of reaching children, it is something that can hinder the greater understanding of what the ministry can and should achieve. CEFSA has intensive teacher training that equips missionaries and volunteers how to teach the CEF way. CEF has developed over the years lesson material for children, and in turn CEF train the missionaries to teach this method. Furthermore, the chapter looked at those responsible for teaching children and what is expected of them. Missionaries and children's workers play a crucial role in children's ministry, but they need to be equipped adequately in order to fulfil the magnitude of the task before them. The research looked at what qualifies one to be a children's worker and the spiritual attribute that go along with this. It also looked at how the funding model that assists missionaries and children's workers to focus on the work before them. Fundraising has for many years been a hindrance for many potential missionaries and the research investigated possible solutions for this.

This section ended by looking at the relationship between churches and para-church organisations. Churches have a role to play in the faith formation of children. It was seen that often African churches fail in this department because of their view of children. This has left children vulnerable to the attacks of the evil one who seeks to destroy all in the world. Para-church organisations have tried to fill the void by reaching out to children and evangelising them, but have at times over stepped their role. Para-churches have sometimes tried to take on the role of the church and not an organisation that assists the church. CEFSA works independently from the church and this is an area that has brought reasonable success.

Chapter 4 of the research highlighted the normative task (Osmer 2008: 4). The normative tasks uses theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from good practice. This chapter was the practical approach to children's ministry. How should things be for a para-church organisation in a South African context. The chapter looked at four key aspects: Biblical

perspectives, the child in ministry, ministry to children and a missional approach to children's ministry.

CEF is unapologetic about its trust on the Bible. The Bible is what gives the ministry its primary instruction and therefore the research looked at what the Bible says about children's ministry. Different passages of scripture looked at how Jesus viewed children, ministered to children and also used children to teach others. Grobbelaar (in Grobbelaar & Breedts 2016: 134) shows how God uses children to introduce a new phase in God's redemptive involvement with Israel by starting anew with a child.

The Bible definitely leads the way in teaching and showing children's workers how to minister to children in any given context.

The chapter goes on to look at the child in ministry. It was seen that the child in an African context has largely been neglected and relegated to near non importance in the church. This is a shame as children have much to offer the church. The chapter looked at ways children learn and how children's workers need to engage with them on their level. Children's ministries such as CEF need to engage children in a way that will allow them to express themselves, feel comfortable and also learn at the same time. Play allows children to do this and therefore missionaries and children's workers need to formulate ways to present the Bible in a way that is enjoyable for the child. Play is also not the only way to communicate with children.

The chapter concluded by looking at a missional approach to children's ministry. Children's ministry must be focussed on the salvation of children, however there are many aspects to having a missional approach to ministry. The research looked at the child as an agent to missions, looked at the context of the child and justice as in part of been missional. In the South African context, justice plays a major role considering the history of the country.

### **5.3 Recommendations for a contextualized ministry approach that addresses the faith formation of South African children.**



This research asks; in what ways can CEFSA provide a contextually relevant approach to assist South African children in their faith formation? Matthaëi (2004: 57) describes faith formation as follows, “Faith formation can be described as our participation in God’s work of inviting persons into relationship with God, self, others and creation”. When an individual accepts God’s invitation into a relationship with Him, He calls the individual to be a disciple. A follower of Jesus Christ grows closer to Jesus Christ as they begin to understand their faith. The individual’s behaviour is transformed. Romans 12: 2 (NIV) “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will”. Piper (2004: nl) says, transformation is not switching from the to-do list of the flesh to the to-do list of the law. When Paul replaces the list — the works — of the flesh, he does not replace it with the works of the law, but the fruit of the Spirit”. Transformation is not a matter of leaving one thing and doing another, it is a change of mind. It is more than just a change of behaviour, but more so a change of attitude towards what is right. How does this materialise in the lives of children and more specifically South African children? Murray (2021: nl), discussing the need to develop a new plan for children’s ministry says “faith formation thrives when children and adults experience life together. We should prioritize nurturing formal and informal relationships with families over the running of programs or activities”.

### **5.3. 1 Recommendations for CEF and CEFSA**

#### **5.3.1.1 CEF and CEFSA must commit to do an audit of the context before employing staff.**

The employment of staff is a very important function of every organisation. Having the correct people serving in the correct areas brings about efficient service. The International ministries manual (2015: 80) says,

“... having a team of faithful men and women using the gifts God has given them enables you to evaluate where your leadership skills are most needed. Ask God to provide the needed co-

labourers and the confidently and passionately share the vision God has given you for the boys and girls with those God places in your path”.

CEF being a fundamentalistic evangelical organisation relies on God to send the right men and women to serve in the ministry. God is omniscient and therefore knows what the ministry needs at any given moment. Cairns (2013: 130) says, “He (God) knows all things possible, whether they ever become actual or not; and He comprehends all these things in one simultaneous act of knowledge”. Trusting God to send the right men and women to an organisation is a noble thing to do. However, fallible mankind is not always able to identify God’s will and therefore proper policies need to be put in place that will guide and direct the appointment of the correct people in the correct positions to serve the ministry.

The regional director has a major role to play in the appointment of senior positions within a country. Establishing the national board and appointing the national and education directors are some of the important appointments that the regional director needs to make. Since CEF rely on God for the wisdom to appoint, the regional director needs to be filled with the spirit of God in order to know His will. The culture of CEF point 1 in the international manual (2015: 22) says, “Importance of Godly leadership at every level. Spiritual leadership is the highest form of authority. The men and women who lead must have a personal heart for God in order to be able to discern the will of God and lead the ministry effectively. Regardless of the skill of a leader, if he or she lacks a heart for God, the work will be eroded at its very foundation”.

Godly leadership is important, but added to Godly leadership, there needs to be suitably skilled people to serve. This research has uncovered the difficult place that South Africa finds itself in. The racial tensions and the huge economic divide in the country make it difficult for one person to understand the different contexts in which South Africans live. Hazyview in Mpumalanga is completely different to Umhlanga in Kwazulu Natal. The languages people speak, the salaries people earn, and the educational facilities available are all different. Therefore the way ministry will be done in these two areas will be different. It is extremely rare to find people who are suited to all situations and contexts. Therefore along with being spirit-filled, the person who will lead a specific ministry or the country needs to understand the contexts and be able to work accordingly. It is in this regard that CEF and CEFSA do an

audit of the context before employing staff. When employing a national director in South Africa, what are some of the considerations that need to be looked at? Who will be able to identify best with the people of the country. CEFSA's leadership has been dominated by white Afrikaans speakers. This racial group speaks to a very small percentage of South Africans and does not identify well with the majority of South Africans. In terms of appointing missionaries to specific areas to minister the context should also be considered. An English speaking person cannot be deployed to serve in an isiZulu community. The best suited person for the role needs to be considered. CEFSA can find suitable people for the different roles if they conduct a survey allowing each missionary to disclose their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is referred to as a SWOT analysis. Pratt (2020: 1) says, "SWOT analysis is a framework for identifying and analyzing an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats -- which is what makes up the SWOT acronym. The primary goal of SWOT analysis is to aid organizations in increasing awareness of the factors in making a business decision. SWOT accomplishes this by analyzing the internal and external factors that can impact the viability of a decision". CEFSA could benefit from this as they would be able to get the most out of each missionary and allow each missionary to minister according to their strengths. An example of this would be finding a missionary who is skilled and equipped to run children and youth camps. CEFSA has a facility to host such events, but this facility is underutilised because a suitable candidate has not been identified to manage the venue.

### **5.3.1.2 CEFSA need to consider a fundraising model suitable for their context**

Para-church organisations and faith-based organisation rely to a large degree on the generous giving of donors. Bowers Du toit (2019: 3) says that for faith based organisations, "Sources of funding range from individuals to corporates, trusts, international donors and government". These individuals and institutions believe in the vision of the organisation and support it to fulfil its goals. CEF is an international organisation, founded in the United States. The international office supports staff and the ministry around the world through literature and other means. They require large amounts of funding. The International ministries manual (2015: 51) says,

“First, we are dependent upon the One whom we serve. We claim literally the scripture admonition, ‘... in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God’. Thus, our petitions are first and foremost to our God, who is the source of all things. As we seek His will and as we bring our needs before Him – by faith – we know that He will both hear us and grant our requests as they are in accordance with His will”.

The international office trusts God to send donors to assist in the running of the ministry worldwide. This is not an uncommon situation. Du Toit (2019: 5) also explains that FBO’s have faith in God to provide for their daily needs. South Africa follows the same directive as the international office in that they too trust God for donors. The CEFSA constitution (pg 9) says,

“Income: The income of the national fellowship shall be derived from free-will offerings, gifts in cash or in kind, legacies, sale of literature, administration fee from provincial, area and local committees and missionaries, and from other sources as deemed suitable by the national board and approved by the department of finances. Non-designated gifts which come into the national office are channelled into the national office account”.

This is the model of fundraising that CEFSA hope will fund the ministry in South Africa. However, changes in the leadership structure has resulted in area, provincial and local committees being disbanded. As a result of this, the national office does not receive any income from these committees and this reduces the national office income. It is also required for each full-time missionary to pay an administration fee to the national office. This fee is 10% of the full-time missionary’s total income for the month. Full-time missionaries are required to raise their own support locally. They are to reach out to churches, friends, families and corporates and ask them to partner with them in providing financially for the ministry that they do and for their living expenses. This is a difficult task for many full-time workers in South Africa.

The recommendation made to CEFSA is to consider changing their fundraising model. The reason for this recommendation is based on the inequality among full-time missionaries in South Africa. Much time was spent explaining the economic divide between the rich and the poor in the country earlier in the research and according to a staff writer at Businessstech (2021), “South Africa’s richest 1% currently hold about 41% of the country’s total wealth –

estimated in 2021 at \$763 billion. This is up significantly from the 35% recorded in 2019". A large part of this 1% is in the hands of white South Africans. In an article for The Conversation publication, Anwar (2017) discussing the term 'White monopoly capital' says, "In the South African context, it can be understood as the white population's extensive control over the country's economy". White South Africans wield great authority in South Africa because of the financial muscle they hold. This plays an important role in the lives of local missionaries in CEFSA. CEFSA full-time missionaries come from different race groups and live in different communities. As a result of the Group Areas Act, which forced people to live in communities with their same race, most of their friends and families are from the same race. This is the network of people that missionaries are required to raise their support from. If the white population has such a large majority of the wealth, it is highly likely that white missionaries in South Africa are capable of raising significantly more support than their non-white colleagues. With more funding at their disposal they are also able to accomplish more and give children in their area a greater learning experience. On the contrary, non-whites struggle to raise support, not because people are not willing to support, but many are just not able to.

CEFSA must not be seen as an organisation that promotes inequality, but should work to level the playing fields for all their missionaries. Equality in regards to remuneration will build moral and aid in the way colleagues interact with each other and also minister in their different communities.

The recommendation to CEFSA is to consider a financial model that allows missionaries to earn a salary. The organisation can determine a fair salary that will take the financial burden off the missionary, allowing them to focus on their ministry to children. It will place the burden on the organisation to seek church denominations, individuals and corporates to support the organisation. Bowers Du Toit (2019: 4) does caution that "A common challenge was that although donors were prepared to fund direct project costs, they did not like to fund salaries and other indirect costs". However there are professional fundraisers that can be employed to assist the organisation in this department. Gilbert (2019: 1) says,

"A professional fundraiser is an individual or employee of a company who specialises in recruiting quality donors for charities to support their cause and engage with them for years to

come. Professional fundraisers aim to secure regular giving on your behalf instead of one-off donations, through sponsorship, lottery, traditional monthly donation schemes and many other methods”.

CEFSA may not agree with all the methods of the fundraiser but as stipulated earlier, the national board can approve and disapprove of methods that do not fit their ministry. Having this model will not only assist in bringing fairness to local missionaries, it will also allow the ministry to employ suitably qualified people to minister. An area that has hindered the ministry is that there are not enough workers. This is not a something to be alarmed about as Matthew 9: 37 (ESV) says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” In South Africa however there are many Christians who are unemployed but are afraid to join a mission organisation because of the fear of fundraising.

CEFSA can also make use of their assests to generate funds to support the ministry. Lenteland is a camping facility that can generate revenue if utilised and managed correctly. Other avenues can also be investigated to assist the organisation to present a unified appearance and to operate in a professional manner that will be more effective in reaching boys and girls with the gospel and assisting them with their faith formation.

### **5.3.1.3 Adjust ministries to equip parents in the faith formation of their children**

CEFSA is a children’s ministry that evangelises, disciples and establishes children in local churches. This is the focus of the ministry. CEFSA wants to reach unreached boys and girls with the gospel of Jesus Christ, disciple and teach them to have a relationship with God and place them in a Bible believing church that will continue minister to them. This is a wonderful ministry that CEFSA is doing, however there is more to be done. Bunge (2008: 1) argues that, “Although the church certainly cares about children and young people, and offers a number of programs to serve them, there are many signs of the urgent need to strengthen child, youth, and family ministries”. The church and para-church organisations can fall into similar category. CEFSA is reaching many children with the gospel in South Africa but still there is

more to be done. CEFSA can play a huge role in equipping parents to be the leaders in the faith formation of their children. Parents of these children need to be made aware of the responsibility given to them by God. Parents are to train their children in the ways of the Lord and be the example for their children to follow. Bunge (2008: 2) further says that, “Despite the recognition of the powerful role of parents and other primary care-givers in the faith formation of children and young people, many congregations still fail to emphasize the importance of parents in their children, youth, and family ministry programs”. Bunge is arguing that although good work is being done in the church to reach children and youth, not much is focussed on equipping parents to play a front-runner role in the faith formation of children. 1 Corinthians 11: 1 (NIV) says “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”. The Apostle Paul, speaking as a spiritual father to the church in Corinth exhorted them to follow his example. He could only do this if he himself was following Christ in a worthy manner. Henry (1960: 1817) says, “It is plain that Paul not only preached such doctrine as they ought to believe, but led such a life as they ought to imitate”. The example of serving Christ Jesus needs to come from the parents and to a greater extent the father. Joshua as the father and leader in his home demonstrates this when he says, Joshua 24: 15 (NIV) “But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

As a para-church organisation, CEFSA needs to not only evangelise children, but they need to reach parents as well. This is particularly important for a ministry like CEF as the primary model of ministry is the Good News Club. This only allows for one or one and a half hours of contact time with the children per week. This is definitely not enough time for a missionary to make a holistic impact in the life of the child. During this time, the missionary teaches the child the things of God, but the child does not have the opportunity to see the missionary living out their faith. A popular scripture that is referred to when encouraging parents to teach their children the commandments of God is found in Deuteronomy 6. But this portion starts by making it known that parents first must embrace the commandments, before they can pass them on. Deuteronomy 6: 6 (NIV) “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts”. Parents need to be taught and assisted in growing in their own faith. This is

important for CEF because they aim at reaching unreached children. Children who are not from the church and therefore their parents too, are not church goers. Being a children's worker or missionary does not necessarily mean that you work with children alone, as parental education is just as crucial. CEFSA can play an integral part in assisting churches with their ministry to parents which in turn would play a significant part of children forming their faith.

#### **5.3.1.4 CEFSA to prioritize closer working relationships with churches**

As a para-church organisation, CEFSA should be the front runners in children's ministry. The organisation should keep up with the theological studies being conducted that will assist children with their faith formation. CEFSA, although having a relationship with evangelical churches, needs to grow this relationship into a more formal partnership. Currently CEFSA works with churches by assisting them with material for their children's ministry programs, doing teacher training and also organising and facilitating camps and holiday clubs. However as "specialists in ministry to children, CEFSA needs to help churches and pastors understand the necessity of faith formation practices. Churches in South Africa, as mentioned earlier, have neglected children. They have traditionally treated children as almost human and therefore do not consider them worthy of biblical teachings. Breedt in (Grobbelaar & Breedt 2016:283) says, "Children can easily be overlooked when ministering in a congregation. For instance, when there is trauma in a family, only the parents receive pastoral guidance. The children are left to their own devices. When congregation members are equipped for ministry, children are mostly not involved". This is a phenomenon that can be rectified by the correct agents and children's ministries can be the ones driving churches to children as God does. Breedt in (Grobbelaar & Breedt 2016: 285) goes on to say, "Welcoming the children of Africa means to welcome them to the grace of God, the calling to understand the diakonia of Christ and their own calling to diakonia. They should also be welcomed to the energising work of the triune God in people that serve and are served by the congregation".



Another area in which CEFSA can play a critical role in local churches is to help them understand the importance of intergenerational ministry. In ministering to churches they can make them aware of how to learn with and from children. Weber and De Beer (2016) say, "According to Villar and White, anything that is intergenerational includes members of two or more different generations having some degree of relationship developed through cooperative interaction to achieve common goals. It is important to note that the relationships are mutually influential, including the possible contributions children can make". Both adults and children in the church strive to be christlike. The desire to know God and live according to His will should be every christian's goal. Therefore, as there is a common goal, congregant, young and old need to understand that they can learn from each other. Jesus repeatedly used children to teach adults truths. Watching children practice their beliefs is one example of how adults can learn from children. however, because the church is consumed in adult ministry, there is no one advocating for children and teaching churches their responsibilities towards children. para-church organisations need to look broader than just what has been the norm and seek to be future orientated.

CEFSA can do this by encouraging missionaries to study child theology and ways in which the ministry can assist churches in different contexts. In South Africa and the African context, much needs to change regarding the treatment of children in the church. As an organisation, equipping churches and pastors with information on how they can transform their church will no doubt highlight children in the church.

Building these relationships with churches will also assist in the cooperation between church and para-church. Para-church organisations have traditionally been at odds with churches, but having a fruitful partnership will bring the two together as they work towards one goal of seeing children and adults grow in their faith.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

As a missionary with CEFSA, I have realised while doing this research that as a ministry in South Africa, CEF is not doing justice to the potential it posses. CEF has a threefold purpose in

ministry. Their purpose is to evangelise, disciple and establish children in Bible believing churches. However the research revealed how CEFSA places much emphasis on the evangelising of children and very little on the discipleship of children. This research looked at how CEF in South Africa can maximise its potential by becoming an organisation that focuses not just on the evangelisation of children but also the faith formation of children in a South African context. it looked at the current status of the ministry, why the ministry is in this way, how the ministry should be functioning and concluded by giving recommendation to the organisation.

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## Annexure



23<sup>rd</sup> August 2019

Dear Shaun Marais,

Thanks for your request to do a study like this for your Masters Degree. It is a honour for me to know that you as full-time worker of CEF South Africa wants to do this study.

We pray that God will bless you and make you a blessing during your studies and afterwards.

May God be glorified in all.

Rev. F.J.J. Janse van Rensburg  
Director CEF Southern Africa / Indian Ocean