

The background of the slide is a blurred image of a library. In the foreground, an open book is visible with a black pen resting on its left page. The book's pages contain some handwritten text. In the background, several bookshelves filled with books are visible, creating a sense of a vast library.

01.

THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS

At The Vine, we believe that God desires for all humanity to be in restorative relationships with himself, between each other, and with His creation. The demonstration of these relationships is reflected across scripture, from the story of creation, to the reconciling work of Jesus, to the future renewal of all things promised through Christ.

As we personally experience this restoration in our lives, God calls us to turn that transformation outward by caring for our neighbour's physical needs (Luke 10:25–37, Mark 12:30–31) and drawing them to Him through discipleship and evangelism (Matthew 28:16–20). These actions form the foundation of our approach to missional and justice efforts which seek the total transformation of our lives to align with God's purposes.

All Christian mission is grounded in the nature of God himself who redeems and restores all things through Jesus Christ, the self-sacrificing missionary sent from heaven to earth. Our missional efforts are used by God in the redemption and restoration of broken relationships between Him and His creation.

OUR APPROACH

Our approach to missions and justice work is based on recognising the intrinsic value and dignity within humanity and all His creation. By acknowledging this we also recognise that any thought or action which diminishes or violates those principles should be seen as a sinful distortion of God's intention.

When we capture the true value and dignity of His creation, our response should be to reject activities that undermine God's original intention and work towards correcting the violations which distort it.

Our response in the face of injustice is to cry out as the Israelites did in the past. Our biblical mandate is to proclaim freedom for the captives, to care for the vulnerable, and humble the oppressors. Our desire should be for people to experience the full restoration of a redeemed relationship with their Creator. That desire is what underlines our approach to missions. Living missionally is our response in recognising that God created us with this purpose, and, that His creation exists to glorify Him.



A photograph of two young children sitting on a wooden bench at a playground. The child on the left is wearing a white shirt and bright green shorts, and is laughing with their mouth open. The child on the right is wearing a white shirt and khaki shorts, and is looking down at the first child with a gentle smile. The background is a blurred view of a playground with colorful equipment and trees under bright, sunny light.

02.

CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

In this Pathway, we look at a group of people who are a central focus of God's heart – children. Throughout scripture, we encounter stories, parables, and commandments that illustrate the paternal and maternal characteristics of our Creator who desires for children to be cared for and part of loving family – based relationships. He longs for all His children to be in spiritual and physical families, brought up under the nurture and protection of parents, grandparents and community.

Jesus in His earthly ministry – expresses joy in ministering to children. In Mark 10:13–15 when His disciples attempt to clear children away, He calls them out and reinforces the special role they have in His Kingdom. In John 6:1–13, we see how He uses them in expressions of His divinity and later on as a model that illustrates the posture for us to follow in our relationships with each other and with Him (Matthew 18:1–5)

Children flourish when they can live in a family environment that protects, nurtures, and supports their development. As we approach Childhood Development from a Missional perspective and explore its connection to our faith we have the opportunity to learn how we can best support children in their growth and development.

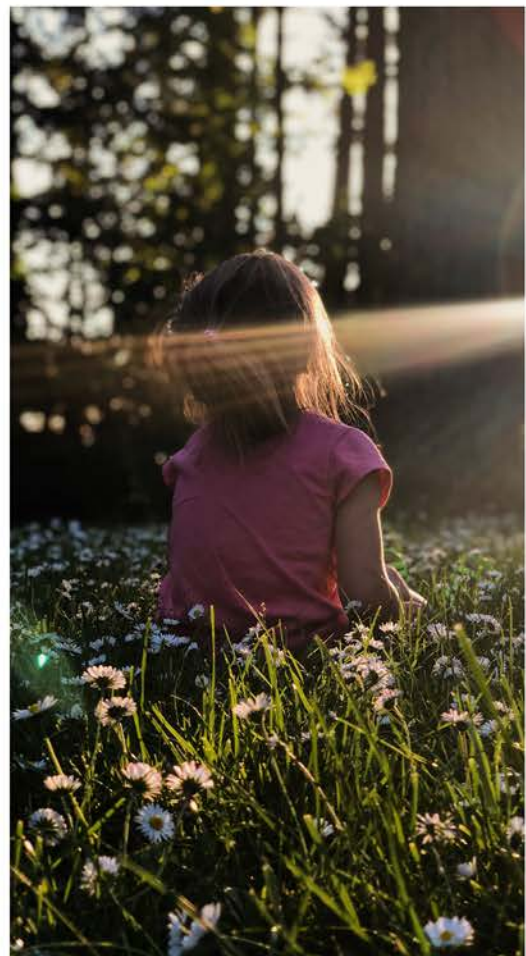
The early years of childhood are crucial moments in the development of a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Family environments which are nurturing, supportive, and where parents invest their time and energy toward their children help support the growth and wellbeing of children. Conversely, adverse environments with no support and opportunities for healing can have a lasting impact on the development of children both in the short term and the longer term. The effect from these moments lasts throughout childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood (World Health Organisation, 2018).

As our Father and Creator, God intimately recognises the needs of children. Understanding the impact from abusive and oppressive environments, God calls for His people to nurture and protect children who are in our care, as well as those in our community, including

What this calling requires, however, is not always a simple and straightforward response with easy answers. We have to wrestle with the interpersonal challenges and with systems that put unrealistic expectations on children and even seek to abuse or exploit them. Yet even in the brokenness, we recognise that God can redeem and restore both the individual and society.

For the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, [a child] should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

United Nations OHCHR – Convention on the Rights of the Child



MOSES' STORY

We see this in the story of Moses (Exodus 1–2). Under the tyranny of Pharaoh, Moses' life is spared from the infanticide against Israel's male children. As a vulnerable child, He is rescued through the compassion of an Egyptian princess who extends her protection to him and positions Moses to eventually be adopted into the royal family. By following Moses' story we see how God is at work across his life: protection when he was a baby, forgiveness and redemption despite his numerous failings, and eventual role as a leader who guides the Israelites out of captivity into God's promised land.

Our partners have many stories which show how lives can be redeemed and restored after experiencing trauma through the breakdown of families. Not all stories end in family reunions and prosperity however by understanding how we can support children and the impact it has on the individual – we can begin to approach the question of ***“what can I do to play a role in God's redemptive story?”***

COLLECTION OF RESOURCES

The issue of childhood development is complex and multi-faceted. To gain a deeper understanding of this area, its impact, and how organisations are engaging with the needs of children check out these several resources:

- Home for Good Resources
<https://homeforgood.org.uk/resources/general-resources>
- Child Development Centre
<https://www.cdchk.org/we-are/our-approach/>
- World Health Organisation – Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health
https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/child/en/
- Mothers Choice
<https://www.motherschoice.org/en/learn/>

An aerial photograph of a river meandering through a dense, green forest. The river is a dark, winding line that cuts through the vibrant green canopy. In the upper left, a small clearing shows some structures and a dirt path. The overall scene is a lush, natural landscape.

03.

**MISSIONS
PATHWAYS**

Missions was never intended to be restricted to a church ministry or special vocational calling. It is meant to permeate across all areas of our life. Each person's journey towards living missionally is deeply personal and reflective of where God is leading them. It is shaped by their skills, experiences, and passions. It allows for a personal connection between our faith and our skills to then influence systems of injustice and share the gospel.

Missions Pathways is designed to take you beyond knowing about an issue. It is a journey that empowers you to make a personal response. We do this by:

STEP 1 – COMMITTING TO PRAYERS

We believe prayer is at the core of all effective and impactful mission. We cannot effectively engage in missional efforts without continually seeking God's heart for justice and restoration while following His guidance on our involvement. We learn to fight battles through the armour and strategies He gives us. The best devised plans that don't carry God's heart will always be limited in their effect and reach.



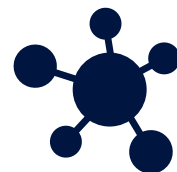
STEP 2 - BECOMING LEARNERS

The majority of broken and unjust systems that we see and experience are complex and have interconnected issues. The visible action that we consider unjust can often be just an expression of a much larger system which perpetuates and empowers that injustice. By positioning ourselves as learners we can explore the complexities and interconnected nature of injustices. Taking this posture can go against our natural desire to respond quickly however without it we may unknowingly hinder the efforts of others or even hurt the people we want to help.



STEP 3 - EXPLORE THE CONNECTIONS

The next step is to understand how the issue is interconnected across different people, industries, society, and perhaps even countries. With this knowledge we can begin to understand how we interface with it in our individual lives through the actions that we and others take on a daily basis. Gaining an understanding of the different components and our involvement will empower us to decide what we can do with our skills and resources to make a difference.



We can start this process by posing questions that are designed to understand the issue and direct future engagement. The resources highlighted in this pack are a starting point to gain a base understanding.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is the underlying issue and how does it express itself?
- Why do vulnerable people experience this?
- What is the full impact that this has on people and society?
- How does it express itself in my city? Or in my day to day life?
- What would restoration look like if this issue was addressed?



STEP 4 - PLANNING OUR ACTION

With a broad knowledge of the issue, how it is connected across people and society, and an awareness on how we interact with it personally, we are now positioned to map out our personal response. There are a wide variety of ways we can respond to an issue and often the most impacting are determined by our skills, experiences, and passions. Planning our response takes discernment and wisdom – a plan that connects our skills and experiences can lead to long term and sustainable impact. Conversely, taking actions that are difficult to maintain over a longer term can short-circuit the impact or potentially create more damage.



Planning our response could include any or a mixture of the following:

1. Making lifestyle changes like consumption behaviors and how we interact with others
2. Supporting organizations financially or volunteering with our time and skills
3. Finding opportunities for short-term projects that allow us to engage more deeply with an organisation's work and add value to their efforts with our skills and experiences

Connecting with organisations that focus on the area that we are exploring can help guide the planning and future activities.

STEP 5 – ACTION AND ADVOCACY

Bringing others into the journey by sharing our personal response to an issue is one of the most effective advocacy tools that we can use. It provides an opportunity for our friends and coworkers to engage in the process and opens up the opportunity to share the faith that drives our response.

One of our partners, Tearfund provides a range of resources that will help you in this process. You can read more about mapping out your response [here](#)



Missions Pathways also helps facilitate this process for you through both our Inspire events and Catalyst. These opportunities are created with the purpose to not only inform and equip you but also invite others into that process.



04.

PARTNERS & ORGANISATIONS

The partnerships between The Vine, external organisations, and missionaries are a central part of our church's ability to empower work that brings redemption and restoration. We believe for us to effectively partner with others in serving the vulnerable and disadvantaged, we need to be strategic in identifying and building long-term relationships that reflect where God is leading us as a church and our congregation.

In response to our first Pathway on childhood development we intentionally considered partners that engage with both family building initiatives as well as providing support for fostering and adoptive services. Our partners carry out programs aimed at prevention, intervention, and restoration. You can learn more about our partners via their websites.

Mothers Choice

Mother's Choice is a local charity that serves teenage girls who face crisis pregnancies and children who are in need of a family because of neglect, abuse, abandonment or family breakdown. They provide public education in schools as well as foster care and adoption services for families in Hong Kong. Their vision is to see every child in a loving family, and every family surrounded by a supportive community.



<https://www.motherschoice.org/en/>

Pathfinders

PathFinders values helping all children receive a fair start to life into a bright future by ensuring the most vulnerable and supported children in Hong Kong are protected. They serve particularly children with migrant mothers, especially current or former Migrant Domestic Helpers in the city by providing client services and community engagements.



<https://www.pathfinders.org.hk/en/>