

Christian Parents' Role in Faith Development of their Children: A Case of Parents in Kayogoro Free Methodist Church Parish

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to analyze the role of parents in the faith development of their children in the Kayogoro Free Methodist Church community. The study sought to determine the extent to which Kayogoro parishioners participate in the faith development of their children. Parents or guardians play a significant role in their children's faith development because they spend substantial time with them. Parents' challenges in this role include lack of time, family conflicts, lack of biblical home teaching/devotions, and lack of skills to teach the word of God. Other factors hindering children's faith development include ignoring their parents' religious instructions and family prayer meetings and lacking Bible teaching at home. This study also recommends the following initiatives for Christian parents in promoting children's faith development: Sunday school classes, family prayer groups, daily home devotions, Christian parental models, regular church attendance, easy access to Christian parents by children, and a Christian environment.

Keywords: Christian Education; Parenting; Faith Development; Children; Free Methodist Church Burundi.

Introduction

The development of a child's faith has been debated among scholars.¹ Faith development is an intentional process of growing believers in their relationship with God and changing their lifestyle to conform to the likeness of Christ.² It is a lifelong process that involves

¹ M. Dettoni J., "What is Spiritual Formation," in K. O. Gangel & J. C. Wilhoit. *The Christian Educators Handbook on Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 24.

² J. Avenant, "Geloofsvorming (Faith formation)," in M. Nel & Z. van der Westhuizen (eds.), *Skokkend positief: Bybelmedia*, 2015), 63.



participation in God's work of grace.³ Fowler defines faith as "a universal quality of human meaning-making." He opines that faith development has up to seven stages (Stage 0 to Stage 6).⁴ In each stage, a child may suffer the trauma of losing their familiar way of being in faith before adopting the succeeding style. The child develops the faith content from each previous stage, which is carried over and reworked by the different structures of thinking and relating to the new phase of faith.

Arand sees development as a process of growing and changing physically, cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually to understand one's faith.⁵ One's faith develops with one's relationship with God through the influence of relationships, such as family, friends or members of the same congregation, pastor or catechist teacher. Faith development is a collective responsibility. Quoting Martin Luther, Charles P. Arand noted that in faith development, there must be a partnership between pastors, government officials, and parents to take responsibility for teaching and training the children who are part of their faith communities.⁶

Scholars have documented the role of parents in the development of the child. As cited by Marsulize Van Niekerk and Gert Breed, Sigmund Freud alluded to the importance of parental support for children's faith development when he noted that many adult symptoms of anxiety are rooted in childhood experiences. Therefore, a child's development will eventually influence their behaviour as an adult. Their actions may be related to something. In his theory of ego development, Erickson confirmed that the ego, the centre of each person's individuality, cannot be understood in isolation from childhood experiences.⁷

The role of parents in developing their children's faith is demonstrated by the children's interaction with their parents. It ultimately forms the foundation upon which the child builds their developing faith. If this foundation is not laid correctly, misbehaviour may occur later in the child's faith development. Horace Bushnell emphasizes the power of a godly

³ J. Avenant, 65.

⁴ These stages are as follows: Primal or Undifferentiated Faith, Intuitive-Projective Faith; Mythic Literal Faith, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, Individuative-Reflective Faith, Conjunctive Faith and Universalizing Faith. James Fowler. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 32.

⁵ Charles P. Arand, *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms* (St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 2000), 94.

⁶ Arand, 94-95.

⁷ Marsulize Van Niekerk and Gert Breed. *The Role of Parents in the Development of Faith from Birth to Seven Years of Age* (Rhodes: North-West University South Africa, 2003), 87.



home and godly parents.⁸ However, he takes the argument too far and argues for what he calls the "hereditary character of faith." This paper examines the parental role in the faith development of their children in the Kayogoro Free Methodist Church parish.

Literature Review

This section deals mainly with the biblical perspective of parenting in the Old and New Testaments and the authors' perspectives on relevant aspects of psychology. It also presents the scholarly approach to faith development and the results of a field study conducted by researchers in the Free Methodist Church of Kayogoro.

Parenting in the Bible

In the Old Testament, the parental role is prominently featured in the Shema,

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut 6:4–9, ESV).

God wanted the Israelites to be very careful about keeping the law of the Lord and how it was taught to their children from generation to generation. Children are central in God's agenda in every generation because He wants a word-based education to be the foundation of children within a family. The expression "God is one" is emphasized in continuing education. According to this verse, education is an ongoing role of parents. Children should be well-equipped and rooted in the law of the Lord at the family level. The emphasis in this verse on parental role, children's faith development and family context is critical. Children who ended up rebellious were to be punished,

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear (Deut 21:18–21, KJV).

⁸ Lilly Park, *Book Review: Christian Nurture* by Horace Bushnell, (55), February 21, 2011.



Verse 19 shows that both (father and mother) should take the stubborn and rebellious son to the elders and declare him unwilling to obey them and allow his death. The parents shall testify to the elders that they have effectively fulfilled their role, even if the son refuses to obey. In such a case, the death of the stubborn son will not fall on the head of his parents; the son would be responsible for his disobedience. What does this mean? Parents' role in raising children is crucial since they are responsible for training their children well according to the law of the Lord.

Severally, the book of Proverbs encourages children to heed the teachings and rebukes of their parents, for parents do this for their own good, "My Son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." It is the role and responsibility of a father and mother to instruct, educate, and train a child (Prov 1:8, KJV). Also, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Prov 13:24, NIV). Similarly, Proverbs 29:15 instructs, "A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother."

From these passages, children are advised to follow their parents' instructions, and parents are to instruct their children how they should live, including enforcing discipline when necessary. Proverbs 29:15 indicates the importance of this good training for the good of the children and the honour and respect of the parents in the community. From the Scriptures, we can identify ten reasons parents why are called to care for their children's faith development. First, parents must teach their children because fearing the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. "The fear of the Lord is beginning of Knowledge" (Prov 1:7, ESV). Second, parents must educate their children based on Scripture because wisdom is from the Lord, "The Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:6, ESV). Third, parents must show their children that our God deserves honour with and for everything He blessed us with; "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prov 3:9–10, ESV). Fourth, children must understand that parents' punishment is not bad; instead, it's a way of correction; "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov 3:11–12, ESV).

Fifth, parenting children with a Scripture-based approach gives them self-control; "He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself" (Prov 6:32, ESV). Sixth,



children will understand that telling the truth is an effective weapon to overcome transgressions; "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Prov 28:13, ESV). Eighth, biblical-based parenting will help children build strong relationships with God and others; "Do not forsake your friends and your father's friend, and do not go your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away" (Prov 27:10, ESV). Ninth, children will understand that God encourages hard work rather than laziness; "A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame" (Prov 10:4-5, ESV). Finally, godly children will be people of compassion within the community; "Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him" (Prov 14:31, ESV).

In the New Testament, parental responsibility for children's education and nurture is upheld. The education style and perspectives should be oriented and determined by the Christian identity. There are several objectives of Christian education; first, the objective of Christian parenting is all about bringing believers to the fullness of Christ; "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" (Eph 3:13, NIV). Second, Christian parenting is driven by love; "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud..." (1 Tim 13:4-7, NIV). From this verse, parents are expected to be patient in the parenting journey. Third, Christian parenting must bring children to obedience; "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect..." (1 Tim 3:4-5, NIV). Fourth, a good parenting model should be exemplary; "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, he denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8, NIV). Fifth, good parenting should not traumatize and trouble children; "Fathers do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged" (Col 3:21).

Looking at all these select biblical references from the Old and New Testaments, the biblical-oriented education approach to parenting is a good model for everyone and every community, especially for Christians. Christians confess the Bible as the reference book for life and the primary source of development and strength. The same Bible should be the main source of inspiration in parenting.



Faith Development Theory

This section examines the faith development theory by looking at James William Fowler's seven stages of faith development. Fowler III (1940–2015) was a theology and human development professor at Emory University, known for his work *Stages of Faith*, published in 1981 to develop an idea of a developmental process in "human faith."⁹ These stages range from 0–6.

Stage 0: Primal or undifferentiated faith (Birth to 2 years old): This stage is characterized by early learning of the safety of their environment. If consistent nurture is experienced, one will develop a sense of trust and safety about the universe and the divine. Conversely, negative experiences will cause one to distrust the next stage, which begins with integrating thought and language, facilitating the use of symbols in speech and play.¹⁰ Thomas Armstrong compares this stage to Jean Piaget's sensori-motor stage of cognitive development, where thinking occurs through the body.¹¹

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective faith (age of three to seven): This stage is characterized by the psyche's unprotected exposure to the unconscious and is marked by a relative fluidity of thought patterns.¹² Thomas Armstrong adds that this stage aligns with Piaget's stage of pre-operational thinking (lacking consistent logical-mental structures).¹³

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith: This stage brings a belief in justice and fairness in religious matters and a sense of reciprocity in the workings of the universe. Example: Doing good will result in a good result; doing bad will cause a bad thing.¹⁴ The next stage 3, Synthetic-Conventional faith (Age 12 to adult), is characterized by identifying the adolescent/adult with a religious institution, belief system, or authority and the growth of a personal religious or spiritual identity.¹⁵ Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith (Ages Mid-Twenties to Late Thirties): This stage is often characterized by angst and struggle as the individual takes personal responsibility for her beliefs or feelings. Religious or spiritual beliefs can take on

⁹ Nancy Evans and al., *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice* (San Francisco, California: Jessey-Bass, 2010), 196.

¹⁰ Joann Conn Wolski, *Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 226-232.

¹¹ Thomas Armstrong, "The Stages of Faith According to James W. Fowler America." *Institute for learning and Human Development*, June 12, 2020.

¹² Wolski, 226-232.

¹³ Thomas Armstrong, "The Stages of Faith,"

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.



greater complexity and shades of nuance, and there is a greater sense of open-mindedness, which can simultaneously open up the individual to potential conflicts as different beliefs or traditions collide.¹⁶ Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith (Mid-Life Crisis): A person at this stage acknowledges paradoxes and the mysteries attendant on transcendent values. This causes the person to move beyond conventional religious traditions and beliefs.¹⁷ Stage 6: Universalizing Faith (or Enlightenment): Individuals rarely achieve this stage. A person at this stage is not hemmed in by differences in religious or spiritual beliefs among people in the world but regards all beings as worthy of compassion and deep understanding.¹⁸

These stages assume a gradual development that starts from stage 0. Apart from knowing the process of a child's growth and development, Christian parents must apply the biblical approach to give their children a sound education from a young age.

Overview of Parenting Styles

In his theory of cognitive development, Jean Piaget, the pioneer in child development and psychology, describes how children represent and reason about the world. He shows that this period consists of the sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete, and formal operational stages.¹⁹ Parenting styles also influence how children grow, as demonstrated through the following survey of parenting styles.

Authoritative Parenting Style

This parenting style is restrictive and punishment-heavy, where parents make their children follow directions without explanation or feedback and focus on the child's and family's perception and status.²⁰ For biblical-based parenting to be successful, it must go beyond cultural limitations and values. Conrade and Robert argue that mothers may use a more authoritative style when they parent their daughters. Mothers may spend more time reasoning with their daughters while still tending to favour their sons.²¹ This is certainly unbiblical. According to the Scripture, there should be no gender favouritism in parenting. Parents should exercise the same parenting principles with their children regardless of sex or gender.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ White Hayes and Livesey D. *Developmental Psychology: From Infancy to Adulthood* (New South Wales: Pearson Education, 2005), 101.

²⁰ John W. Santrock, 78.

²¹ Conrade & Ho and Glenys & Robert. "Differential Parenting Styles for Fathers and Mothers." *Australian Journal of Psychology*, February 2, 2011.



Parents should discipline both sons and daughters together in the same way, and this type of discipline should not be aggressive or authoritative. It should be geared toward bringing up the children in the right way of life. Berger S. Kathleen observed that children raised by authoritarian parents tend to be conformist, highly obedient, quiet, and not very happy and that these children often experience depression and self-blame.²²

Indulgent or Permissive Parenting Style

Hendrik Ronsch observed that this parenting style has few behavioural expectations for the child. "Indulgent" is a style of parenting in which parents are very involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them.²³ Hamid Masud et al. state that such parents are nurturing, accepting, and responsive to the child's needs and wishes. Indulgent parents do not require children to regulate themselves or behave appropriately. As adults, children of indulgent parents will pay less attention to avoiding behaviours that cause aggression in others.²⁴

According to Maryann Rosenthal, permissive parents try to be "friends" with their children and do not play a parental role. The child's expectations are very low, and there is little discipline. Permissive parents also allow children to make their own decisions, giving them advice as friends. This type of parenting is very lax, with few punishments or rules.²⁵ In addition, permissive parents also tend to give their children whatever they want and hope they are appreciated for their accommodating style. Other permissive parents compensate for what they missed as children, giving their children both the freedom and materials they lacked in their childhood.²⁶

Neglectful or Uninvolved Parenting Style

Monika Arora noted that parents are unaware of what their children are doing, and if they find out, they feel indifferent towards them.²⁷ Ritika Dhaliwal states that sometimes parents can be neglectful because of stressors they are experiencing in their own lives.²⁸ Some of these

²² Kathleen, 274.

²³ Hendrik Ronsch. "Effectiveness of Laws and Policies governing Permissive Parenting in Pursuit of the Reduction of Severe Abuse in German." *Children and Youth Service Review*, December 2020.

²⁴ Hamid Masud et al. "Parenting Styles and Aggression Among Young Adolescents: A Systematic Review of Literature." *Community Mental Health Journal*, August 2019.

²⁵ Maryann Rosenthal. "Knowing Yourself and Your Children." August 24, 2014.

²⁶ Ibid,

²⁷ Monika Arora. "The Impact of Authoritative and Neglectful Parenting Style on Educational Performance of Learners High School Level. *Internal Journals of Multidisciplinary Research*, November 2014.

²⁸ Ritika Dhaliwal. "Parental Neglect and its Effect." *White Foundation*. September 21, 2018.



parenting styles fall short of what the Bible teaches. For instance, if a permissive parenting style encourages parents not to put many controls on their children while the Scripture commands training of children in the ways of the Lord (Deut 6:4–9), children educated in these two streams will not have the same outcome in terms of fear of the Lord.

Methodology

Methodology refers to the general research strategy that outlines how research is undertaken and identifies the methods, means or mode of data collection and how findings will be analyzed and presented.²⁹ In the qualitative research, the Kayogoro Free Methodist Church participants were interviewed based on the research objectives. The data were analyzed and presented in tables and percentages. The study population was 304 adults from Kayogoro Free Methodist Church. Out of this population, 32 were considered as the sample for the study. Those considered for the research had children under their parental responsibility.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data from the field answer the two specific questions of this study: First, what are the challenges Christian parents face in the Kayogoro Free Methodist Church regarding the faith development of their children? Second, what strategies (on financial needs, cognitive domain, affective domain, and spiritual dimension) can Kayogoro parishioners use to address their children's faith development?

Demographic Data

This section deals with the gender, age, educational level and membership experience of Kayogoro Free Methodist Church respondents.

Table 1: Demographic information

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	56.2
	Female	14	43.8
Total		32	100
Respondents' Age	13-19	6	18.7
	20-29	10	31.3
	30-50	12	37.5
	51 and above	4	12.5
Total		32	100
Respondents' Educational Level	Primary School	16	50
	Secondary School	12	37.5

²⁹ Kathryn E. Howell, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology* (London: Sage Publications, 2013), 27.



	University	4	12.5
Total		32	100
Respondents' membership years	1-3	1-3	15.6
	4-6	4-6	21.9
	7-9	7	12.5
	10 and above	16	50
Total		32	100
Economic Status	Poor	4	12.5
	Middle class	20	62.5
	Rich	8	25
	Total	32	100
Total			

Table 1 shows that 56.2% of respondents were male, and 43.8% were female. According to respondents' age, 18.7% were under 13–19 years old, 31.3% were 20–29 years old, and 37.5% were 30–50 years old. Finally, 12.5% were categorized as 51 and above years old. The Table shows that half of the respondents had a primary school education (50%). It becomes a problem when parents cannot read the Bible to their children because of being illiterate. Some interviewees confirmed that the low literacy capacity hinders reading and interpreting the Bible. Participants with secondary education were 37.5%, whereas 12.5% had university education.

By considering respondents' membership years, Table 1 indicates that 15.6% of respondents identified themselves to be a member of KFMC³⁰ aged between 1–3, while 21.9 % of the respondents were aged between 4 and 6, 12.5% were aged between 7 and 9 and 25% of the respondents were aged between 10 and above. Concerning the economic level of the respondents, 12.5% of the respondents considered themselves poor, while 25% considered themselves rich. Finally, 62.5% of the respondents identified themselves as middle class. The data shows that parents have to juggle so many duties to survive. As a result, they lack time to be with their children and talk about God's words.

³⁰ Kayogoro Free Methodist Church.



Research Question 1:**Table 2: Challenges faced by Kayogoro Free Methodist Parents regarding Faith Development of their Children³¹**

	A		SA		DNK		D		SD		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Born in a non-Christian family	13	40.6	12	37.5	2	6.2	1	3.2	4	12.5	32	100
Busy to take children to Sunday School classes	2	6.2	3	9.4	2	6.2	11	34.4	14	43.8	32	100
Lack of skills to teach children God's words	17	53.2	13	40.6	2	6.2	00	00	00	00	32	100
Children ignoring their parents' religious instruction	1	3.2	5	15.6	00	00	10	31.2	16	50	32	100
Disregard family prayer sessions	18	56.2	11	34.4	2	6.2	1	3.2	00	00	32	100
Family conflicts	5	15.6	25	78.2	00	00	2	6.2	00	00	32	100
Separation of children and parents during sermon sessions	13	40.6	12	37.5	1	3.2	6	18.7	00	00	32	100
Faith is inherited from biological parents	11	34.4	8	25	1	3.2	10	31.2	2	6.2	32	100
Lack of home biblical teachings	15	46.9	11	34.4	1	3.1	3	9.3	2	6.2	32	100

Source: Field Survey Information

From Table 2 above, 78.1% of the respondents confirmed that being born in a non-Christian family slows children's spirituality because of lacking prior orientation to Christian life and duties. Also, 15.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, but 6.2% had no information about the statement. Further, the majority of the respondents (78.2%) did not believe that being busy is a reason hindering them from taking them to Sunday school.

Lack of Skills to Teach children God's Word

In Table 2, 93.8% of the respondents agreed that parents of Kayogoro Free Methodist Church lack the skills to teach their children the word of God. Compared with Table 1, according to the educational level, 50% of parents had a primary school, and they didn't know how to read correctly, which led to disadvantages.

³¹ A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree; DNK: Do not know; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree; Nb: Number



Ignoring Parents' Religious Instructions

Table 2 shows that 81.2% of the respondents did not confirm the statement that children ignore their parents' instructions, thus hindering their faith development. However, 18.7% of the participants asserted the statement. In addition, some of the Kayogoro church leaders interviewed disagreed that children deliberately disobey their parents' religious instructions. They affirmed that parents do not spend time with their children at home teaching them God's word.

Disregard Family Prayer Sessions

Furthermore, 90.6% of the participants asserted that children's disregard of family prayer sessions slows their faith development, whereas 3.2% disagreed; 6.2% did not respond. In addition, through an interview with church leaders, most argued that children do not get a chance to pray together with their parents before they sleep because sometimes devotions are conducted when most children are sleepy.

Family Conflicts

In Table 2, 93.8% of the respondents thought that family conflicts are hindrances to Kayogoro children's faith development, whereas 6.2% disagreed. The present researcher spoke with church leaders via interview, and one of them commented,

When children see their parents quarrelling or insulting each other, they do the same to their peers or colleagues. They are good imitators; they copy what their parents are used to do. One day, I attended Sunday school, and the Sunday school teacher was teaching children that fighting each other or beating a person is a sin and that God does not love a child who insults another. Surprisingly, a child who was around five to 6 years old stood up and said: 'No, I saw my father beating my mother. He also slapped her on the cheek, and my mother cried.' So, it became difficult for the teacher to make the child understand that fighting each other is a sin since he always saw their parents do so. Hence, family conflicts are serious hindrances to Kayogoro children's faith development.

Lack of Home Biblical Teachings

Concerning the above Table, 81.3% of the respondents opined that the lack of home biblical teachings discourages children's initiatives regarding faith, while 15.5% of the participants opposed that view. Also, 3.1% of the respondents had no answer regarding this question. The church leaders pointed out that failure to undertake biblical home teachings like praying together, reading the Bible together, and helping children memorize some biblical verses prevents children from enhancing spirituality. A child will practice praying and reading the



Bible through family prayer. Children are good imitators; thus, they listen to how their parents pray to God.

Research Question 2:

Table 3: Strategies that can be applied to enhance Kayogoro Children's Faith Development

	A		SA		DNK		D		SD		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Christian home environment enhances faith development	7	21.9	25	78.1	00	00	00	00	00	00	32	100
Being friendly with FMC parents	10	31.2	22	68.8	00	00	00	00	00	00	32	100
Sunday school lessons	15	46.9	16	50	00	00	1	3.1	00	00	32	100
Easy access of children to parents	14	43.8	18	56.2	00	00	00	00	00	00	32	100
Prayer groups	17	53.1	14	43.8	00	00	1	3.1	00	00	32	100
Christian parents' models	25	78.1	7	21.9	00	00	00	00	00	00	32	100
Children's church attendance	12	37.5	19	59.4	00	00	1	3.1	00	00	32	100
Christian education teachings	17	53.1	15	46.9	00	00	00	00	00	00	32	100
Daily home biblical teachings	7	21.9	25	78.1	00	00	00	00	00	00	32	100

Source: Field Survey Information

Growing Up in a Christian Family Enhances Children's Faith Development

In Table 3, 100% of the respondents affirmed that growing up in a Christian family enhances children's faith development. During the interview, most of the interviewers agreed with the statement. One of them replied,

Family plays a significant role in children's lives. It is the key source of their children's future, meaning that children become what their parents want them to be. A child born into a Christian family will be taught the word of God early and easily develop his faith. The child will grow up knowing who God is. For instance, a child can be taught to take food every day after praying, and he will do it because he sees their parents do so every day.



Being Friendly with FMC Parents Enhances Children's Faith Development

From the Table above, 31.2% of the respondents affirmed that cordial relationships enhance faith development. Further, 68.8% of the participants strongly agreed that being friendly with FMC parents boosted children's faith development.

Sunday School Lessons Strengthen Children's Faith Development

From the above Table, 46.9% of the respondents confirmed that Sunday school lessons strengthen children's faith development, while 50% strongly affirmed the statement. However, 3.1% did not respond. During the interview, one of the interviewees replied, "Just like when they play games with other peers, children feel good when they are taught the word of God together. The child is careful to memorize biblical verses because he competes with others. A reward sometimes given to the ones who perform better encourages any child to pay attention during the session."

Easy Access of Children to Christian Parents Facilitates the Teaching at Home

Most respondents agreed that easy access for children to Kayogoro Christian parents facilitates biblical teachings at home.

Prayer groups attract Children's faith development.

Table 3 indicates that 53.1% of the respondents agreed that family prayer groups promote children's faith development at the Kayogoro Free Methodist Church. Apart from that, 43.8% of the participants strongly confirmed the statement, whereas 3.1% of the respondents disagreed.

Christian parents' Models Build Up Children's faith Development

Regarding Table 3 above, 78.1% of the participants affirmed that being a good model as a Christian parent builds up children's spirituality. The statement was strongly confirmed by 21.9% of the participants. Church leaders interviewed stated that the Christian parents' model is an effective strategy to enhance children's faith development, "Children imitate the adults. If a child always sees an adult praying before they eat, he will also do likewise before eating." Another interviewee replied, "It's believed that you give what you have. It's true that the way we behave as parents affects our children. Parents are the first to teach their children to differentiate between good and evil. Then, you do not tell your children that insulting one another or lying is bad while they always see you doing so."



Children's Church Attendance Enhances Children's Spirituality

In line with Table 3 above, 37.5% of the participants approved the statement stipulating that children's church attendance enhances children's spirituality, while 59.4% strongly agreed. A marginal, 3.1% of the respondents were unsure of the statement.

Daily Home Devotions Reinforce Children's Spiritual Growth

Table 3 indicates that 21.9% of the respondents confirmed that home devotions promote children's faith development. Furthermore, 78.1% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement. In summary, parents from Kayogoro parish (more than 80%) resoundingly affirm that growing up in a Christian environment, cordial relationships with FMC parents, having Sunday School lessons, having easy access of children to parents, having prayer groups, Christian parents' models, children's church attendance, Christian education teachings, and daily devotions is the effective strategy to enhance faith development of children from that parish. From these findings, parents can review these strategies and apply them to walk with their children in the daily journey of faith development.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of parents in the faith development of their children in the Kayogoro Free Methodist Church. Also, it determined the challenges that Christian parents from this church face in terms of economic, cognitive, affective domains, and spiritual dimensions, as well as the strategies to promote faith development. Faith development in Christian parenting is mandatory (Deut 6:4–9). The seven stages of faith development are insufficient for the Christian community to build faith. The researcher identified factors that hinder children's faith development, including a lack of skills to teach the word of God, disobedience of children, neglecting family prayer meetings and devotions, and family conflicts. For the proper development of Kayogoro children's faith, much effort must be made to recognize their needs. Faithful parents should be honoured, but God gets the glory in salvation. Paul instructed Timothy to ensure that Timothy would continue God's ministry. In short, the role of parents in the faith development of their children is a Christian duty for every Christian parent.



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