

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A Biblically Based Parenting Style in Anglican Church Arochukwu**

by

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The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents from the Anglican Church Arochukwu South East, Nigeria who participated in a twelve-week training event on Biblically based parenting style.

The problem addressed by the research was the disconnect between the Church teaching her members biblical parenting styles and the actual practice of this in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The growing rate of ignorance and neglect of the word of God by many parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu with regards to the fundamentals of child upbringing has resulted in child delinquency and lack of the fear of God. This ignorance has further led to child abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, stealing, and other crimes or violence being perpetuated by these children who have no Biblical and Godly parental upbringing. To say further, the Anglican Church Arochukwu is also lacking in terms of teaching her members to be grounded in the faith and knowledge of Biblical parenting style. This could be seen in the lifestyle of so many children who though their parents go to church have themselves lost interest in the things of God while the parents often are at dilemma when confronted with the attitude of their children.

Thus, the Anglican Church Arochukwu needs to pay serious and urgent attention through adequate teachings on Biblical appraisal of parenting styles to help parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu know the Biblical standards God has laid

down for them to bring up their children. The work is, therefore, focused on the instructions of the Bible for parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu to help develop within their children the need to respect God and mankind to improve the growth of the Anglican Church Arochukwu and the development of the Society.

The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents from the Anglican Church Arochukwu South East, Nigeria who participated in a twelve-week training event on Biblically based parenting style. The data gathered from this project produced significant findings on the matter of Biblically Based Parenting Style in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The findings may be relevant to any Christian church which is open to Biblically based parenting style. Some of the findings includes: sound Biblical teaching is very important in the training of children and Biblically based parenting is a very good method in the upbringing of children. However, the teaching act requires methodology to be effective and result oriented. Christian parents and the church as a body must prioritize sound Biblical teaching in order to train up our children morally and spiritually. The Biblically based parenting training done among parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu has the capacity to increase the effectiveness of biblical parenting and produce changes in the attitude, knowledge, and behavior of the participants

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by

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter gives a general overview of this project starting with the person of the researcher and how the problem addressed in the work was conceived. It presents the purpose of the project and the research questions as well as the rationale for the work. The chapter gave an insight into the methodology to be adopted in the project and reviewed literature to situate the research within contemporary scholarship.

Lastly, this chapter defines the research type, participants, data collection methods, data analysis, and generalizability which was used in the research study.

### **Personal Introduction**

In my first year in the secondary school, my mother took me to an Anglican church. After the service, as we were being greeted by the pastor, I told my mother that I would like to be a member of the church and that I would love to join the choir. My mother told me that we are Anglican and that I was baptized as an infant in the Anglican Church. This was how I discovered that I was an Anglican from birth. I also discovered that I had been baptized as an infant with a Christian name. Years later, I was saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit in our local church. I have also been disciplined in Anglican family, children Sunday school, and youth ministry since I was saved. I served as a Field Evangelist in the Anglican Church. With zeal and determination and through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, I pioneered a local congregation of the Anglican Church. I attended and graduated from our Anglican Seminary at St. Francis of Assisi Theological College Wusasa in Zaria, Nigeria and was ordained a Priest of the Anglican Church. I have served as Cathedral chaplain and parish priest. I have also been involved in

discipleship training, Mission safari and outreaches to rural areas, and children and youth ministry.

I was elected, consecrated, and enthroned the first Bishop of the Missionary Diocese of Arochukwu/Ohafia, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Since then, I have been serving as the Diocesan Bishop of Arochukwu/Ohafia. As the pioneer Bishop, a lot of sacrifice has been put in to help me do the work. Being a rural Diocese made up of peasant farmers, elderly men and women (mainly retirees, widows, and widowers), and children (mainly orphans and school dropouts). I am involved in preaching, teaching, healing, and deliverance ministry. This ministry has helped in liberating many people who were once in satanic bondage.

As a servant of God, my focus has always been on mission, evangelism, and soul winning. As a Bishop and a leader in God's Church, I have invested in human development and capacity building to ensure better performance of those I am leading. As the administrative head of the Diocese, I give direction in leadership and preside at the various administrative and diocesan meetings. I appoint the diocesan officials, ordain clergy, and commission evangelists for the Diocese. For the future of the Anglican Church, I have strived to make sure that the upbringing of our children is biblically based. I am impassioned to study why many parents in the Anglican Church are struggling with the upbringing of their children resulting in child delinquency, school dropouts, poverty, lack of the fear of God, and all other vices that draw our children away from the church and God.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The researcher observed over the years the growing rate of ignorance and neglect of the word of God by many parents with regards to the fundamentals of child upbringing in our society especially from a Biblical point of view which has resulted in child delinquency and lack of the fear of God. This ignorance has further led to child abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, stealing, and other crimes or violence being perpetuated by these children who have no Biblical and Godly parental upbringing. For example, the researcher is familiar with a number of children who are into various crimes due to bad parental upbringing. A case at hand is a child who was caught stealing money from the offering bag. While others were giving their offering in church, this child dipped her hands into the offering bag with the pretense that she wanted to give her offering but stole some money from the offering bag instead. When she was caught, she said her parents sent her. Peculiar also with such children is their habit of misleading other children who are vulnerable. The researcher is concerned about the growing rate of immorality and violence among children and the harm this type of upbringing is causing to the psychological and spiritual lives of our children who will eventually become leaders of our society.

The church is also lacking in terms of teaching her members to be grounded in the faith and knowledge of Biblical parenting style. This downfall could be seen in the lifestyle of so many children who, though their parents go to church, have themselves lost interest in the things of God and the parents often are at dilemma when confronted with the attitude of their children. The researcher believes that issues such as this needs serious and urgent attention on the part of the church through adequate teachings on Biblical

appraisal of parenting styles to help parents know the Biblical standards God has laid down for us to bring up our children.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu.

### **Research Questions**

To find the patterns of biblically based parenting which was used in the biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu, the research was guided by the following three questions:

#### **Research Question #1**

What were the participants' knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding biblically based parenting before the class?

#### **Research Question #2**

What were the participants' knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding biblically based parenting after the class?

#### **Research Question #3**

What did the participants identify in the biblical parenting class as most impactful/influential/effective?

### **Rationale for the Project**

The first reason this study is important is that the Anglican Church seems to have a disconnect in terms of teaching her members to be grounded in the faith and knowledge of Biblical parenting style. This could be seen in the lifestyle of so many children who,

though their parents go to church, have themselves lost interest in the things of God while the parents often are at dilemma when confronted with the attitude of their children. This research project will explore the disconnect between the church in teaching her members and the actual practice of Biblical parenting styles in the Anglican Church in Arochukwu.

The second reason this study is important is to promote a more Bible centered approach to parenting. If children are to grow spiritually as well as morally, a way to emphasize the power of the Bible over the power of the words and talents of parents alone must be found. If Christians truly believe that the Bible is able to bring children to salvation (2 Tim. 3.15, NKJV), then the Bible must be the foundation of what is taught the gospel message is presented. Likewise, if Christians believe that the words of Scripture originate from God himself and the Bible is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3.16), parenting from any other source does not carry the authority of the inspiration of God, weakens the parent's appeal, and further exposes the parent's ignorance. More so, Jesus himself quoted the Bible and stated, "it is written" (Matt. 4.4, 7) as his authoritative response when he was confronted by Satan in the wilderness. Lastly, Christians must acknowledge that the Bible was chosen and inspired by God to accomplish "teaching, reproof, correction, and training for righteousness" (2 Tim. 3.16); therefore, not using the Bible in our parenting when striving to disciple and train our children would be irresponsible.

A third reason this study is important is to help struggling parents in the Anglican Church in Arochukwu. As a leader in the Anglican Church, I have seen many parents struggling with the upbringing of their children due to the rate of ignorance in the word of God that has led to deficiency toward effective and sound biblical parenting. This

ignorance is a major factor in why our society is full of delinquents. The influence of wrong doctrines and lack of moral standards which appear to characterize the society today is a matter of concern. Many parents are failing in the upbringing of their children due to some of these wrong doctrines and the lack of moral standards. The careless attitude of some parents towards the upbringing of their children has further worsened the fear that the future generation may be in trouble. This work is, therefore, focused on the biblical parental instructions which help develop the need to respect God and mankind within children in order to better the growth of the Church and development of the Society. Constant pressure exists to come up with the technology and creative ideas to keep up with good parenting. Many parents need to learn methods which let the Bible be the main focus of their parenting and not feel they have to match the parenting method of other successful parents. Creativity, speaking talent, and technology could be added to help in the communication, but parents should know that the Bible has the power of transforming the life of the child.

Furthermore, the Bible is the key to the upbringing of our children, because the Bible will help parents go back to the biblical standards of child upbringing that instills virtues such as love, patience, morality, faith, discipline, fear of God, and wisdom within their characters. By adapting these principles, parents will have positive and successful outcomes to many parental needs.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Biblically Based Parenting:** The basics of biblical parenting involve more than simply raising a child. Parents are directly responsible to God for providing more than food, shelter, and protection. When Christians adopt God's standards as their own, they

produce quality character that is different from a child's natural inclinations. Proverbs 22.6 emphasizes the significance of biblically based parenting: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." As parents turn to the Bible for instruction, they are able to open up channels in their children's lives so that God's grace can flow in.

### **Delimitations**

This project is focused on the parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The participants for this study were a few selected parents of children who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. I chose parents that would be considered successful using a stable family growth parameter which is the common measure of parenting success in the Anglican Church Arochukwu.

To keep the subject pool for this study focused, parents who are not members of the Anglican Church are not included in the study to make sure the study is not too broad and to ensure the project does not try to solve problems that are not controlled by the Anglican Church. Furthermore, although my research shows that this issue spreads beyond Arochukwu, the Anglican Church in Arochukwu has over forty churches with a total number of about 1,700 members in three selected Anglican churches in Arochukwu. This sample size will allow me to choose a sufficient pool of participants for my study.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

The literature review for this project started with a description of and strategies of different parenting styles. Description and strategies for parenting from scholars Darling Nancy and Steinberg Laurence as well as challenges to parenting from Nsamenang and others are presented.

The biblical foundations section includes an analysis of how parents of the Old and New Testaments used the Scriptures as their basis of authority in the upbringing and training of children. Old Testament parents were charged to teach the biblical text to their children (Deut. 6.6-8; 11.19-21, Ps. 127.3-5, Prov. 22.6). Parents were not only to teach the Old Testament to their children, but they were called to expound, explain, and apply the text to people who were separated from the original recipients of the text (2 Chron. 17.7-9, Neh. 8.1-8).

In the Gospels, Jesus used the parenting of Old Testament Scriptures to address his disciples who were preventing the children from coming to him (Mark 10.14) and showed that just quoting Scripture without the proper understanding and application of that Scripture was insufficient (Matt. 18.2-6). In Colossians, Paul's warning to fathers (Col. 3.21) is examined. Furthermore, Timothy, who was brought up by her mother and grandmother, is examined for his Godly and biblical upbringing (2 Tim. 1.5; 3.14-15). Finally, the Apostle Paul's instructions on marriage, Godly family, and biblical parenting (Eph. 5.22-33; 6.1-4, Col. 3.18-21) are presented and analyzed.

The theological foundations section starts with Augustine's confession about parenting, moving on to John Calvin's commentary on Psalm 78 about the importance of passing on God's word to the next generation. The section continues with the parenting advice of John Wesley's sermon on Colossians 3.20. The section concludes with an analysis of the theological issue of the authority and power of the Scriptures as the basis for parenting and how this view of Scripture lends itself to a biblical parenting method.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Type of Research**

This project was a mixed method, pre-intervention study which researched the present style of parenting that parents in Anglican Church Arochukwu use and proposed ways to increase Biblically based parenting. Both the quantitative method of a survey and the qualitative method of a semi-structured interview were used to collect data to ensure balanced and well-rounded research. Primary parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu were the subjects of all the research.

The research was done to find out what parenting methods parents in Anglican Church Arochukwu use and what reasons they may have for their parenting method. The biblically based parenting training was done among parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Participants were asked to comment on why they used the methods that they did and why they either used or did not use the biblically based parenting method. Suggestions for increasing biblically based parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu were developed from this research and the information from the literature review.

### **Participants**

The participants were Parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. They were Parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Sixty-seven parents from the one-hundred parents in the Anglican Church Arochukwu responded to the survey. Of that group of sixty-seven, thirty-one volunteered to take part in the Parenting Interview from which ten were randomly selected.

## **Instrumentation**

The Parenting Survey was used as a quantitative method, gathering data about parenting patterns and methods in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The Parenting Interviews were used as a qualitative method to dig deeper into why parents in Anglican Church Arochukwu used the parenting methods they do and why they do or do not use biblically based parenting methods.

The Parenting Survey was used to answer research questions number one and number two to identify parenting methods of parents and also to identify how parents were influenced by their parental training in the biblically based parenting class. The Parenting Interviews were used to answer research questions number one and two and also to help devise answers to research question three by digging deeper into why parents chose the parenting methods they used and identifying barriers to biblically based parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu.

## **Data Collection**

Quantitative analysis in the Parenting Survey was done first to identify parenting patterns and general attitudes toward biblically based parenting and to furthermore identify what the participants remembered and applied from their training at the biblically based parenting class in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The survey was designed by the researcher. After reviewing the data from Parenting Survey, the qualitative analysis of the Parenting Interviews was performed to find the principal data and explore the underlying reasons for the issue at hand. The purposive sampling method was used to derive a set of parents for the study; parents were chosen from a pool of parents who

participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. An interview questionnaire was designed and subsequent interviews were performed to show either a connection or a disconnection between biblically based parenting methods and actual parenting practices in homes and families. Furthermore, the interview process was devised and performed to collect data on why parents use their particular methods and why they do not use the biblically based parenting method.

The interviews were performed in a semi-structured format and consisted of eight questions. The interview questions were designed by the researcher, and the interviews were administered by the researcher either in person or by phone.

### **Data Analysis**

For this study, the biblically based parenting method was considered the best method of parenting for parents who wish to parent biblically. The data from the Parenting Surveys and Parenting Interviews was compared against the biblical standard of parenting, and the data was analyzed to show the connections and disconnections of the parents' methods of parenting with the biblically based parenting method. In addition, the methods of parenting of the surveyed/interviewed parents and their rationale for them were analyzed for reasons why they thought their methods were better than biblically based parenting methods in practical terms, such as lack of time. The methods were also qualitatively analyzed against biblically based parenting methods for effectiveness as well as biblical faithfulness.

The analysis of the Parenting Survey involved demonstrating patterns of parenting methods in the Anglican Church Arochukwu, identifying common attitudes towards biblically based parenting methods, and examining the connection between biblically

based parenting training and practice. The analysis of the Parenting Survey led to the in-depth qualitative Parenting Interviews which showed the feelings and intentions behind parenting approaches and why these approaches did or did not line up with their training. The survey also analyzed the reasons why parents parent the way they do.

### **Generalizability**

The importance of this study is to help parents have the right foundation in their children's upbringing through the use of a biblically based parenting style. This research will contribute in helping both parent and child develop in their relationship with God through constant study of the Bible. The research will also serve as resource material that will help the church and parents overcome the problem of bad parenting. More so, this research will help to expose some of the wrong parenting styles in our society today. Finally, the research can serve as a reference material for further studies.

### **Project Overview**

Chapter 2 of this study demonstrates the biblical foundations of parenting styles as well as review of literature on various parenting styles to show the arguments for the biblical parenting method. Chapter 3 presents the research design, methods of research, and data analysis methodology. Chapter 4 shows the results of the research and analysis of the collected data. Chapter 5 offers the interpretation of the research findings as well as observations and suggestions for improving sermon preparation and delivery practices.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter first shows the biblical foundations of parenting as the basis of authority in the upbringing and training of children. The second section will provide a theological overview of the authority and power of the Scriptures as the basis for parenting and how this view of Scripture lends itself to a biblical parenting method. The third section will present the arguments for following the biblical mandate to “train up a child,” as well as arguments for other parenting styles and how these arguments are answered by the biblical parenting arguments. The final section will review the emerging resources that address the description and strategies of parenting styles.

#### **Biblical Foundations**

Before examining the relevant literature to this project, reiterating the stated definition of biblical parenting and emphasize that biblical parenting involves more than simply raising a child is important. Biblical parenting starts with a principle which is the basis for the method in general. Parents are directly responsible to God for more than providing food, shelter, and protection. When adopting God's standards, producing quality character in children that is different from a child's natural inclinations is required. In the book of Proverbs, the Bible emphasizes the significance of biblical parenting: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22.6). As parents turn to the Bible for instruction, they are able to open up channels in their children's lives so that God's grace can flow in. Thus, biblical parenting can be explained as a philosophy that guides the parent to find and apply the

word of God in their children and create a taste within them to know Him in ways that are appropriate to their ages and personalities. When they mature, their spiritual heritage will remain a part of them.

Biblical parenting style is established and maintained throughout the Bible. Moreover, the Bible itself argues for the use of Scripture as the basis of authority in the upbringing and training of children (Deut. 6.6-8; 11.19-21, Ps. 127.3-5, Prov. 22.6). The following section will show the use of biblical parenting in the Old and New Testaments and the arguments for biblical parenting style.

### **Old Testament View on Parenting**

In the Old Testament, the family is an important concept as far as parenting is concerned because successful parenting and child upbringing takes place within the framework of the family. According to D. Williams (1997), no Old Testament word exists, “which corresponds exactly to the modern family of mother, father and children” (166). Yet, he went on to observe that family might also mean tribe or nation. However, the understanding of family as presented by Williams “As a unit of society and consist of husband, his wife, children, slaves and also various dependents such as servants” was adopted (Ibid, 168). In support of this view, M.I Okwueze (2003) refers to family “As the primordial society – the society at its minute level” (69). While there could be couples without kids, such as in the case of infertility, generally in a family of a husband and wife there should be a child or children.

The family in the traditional setting and in the Holy Scriptures was based and structured along the lines of father, mother, and the children. The concept of family in traditional religion and in Holy Scripture also recognizes siblings and other close

relatives as part of the family. In this sense, the family is comprised of both the nuclear and extended family. In the Old Testament, family ties were regarded as being so highly sacred that God warned the Israelites not to pollute themselves with unlawful sexual relationship with family members (Lev. 18.6-20). In traditional African settings, such an act is also seen as a taboo and capable of inflicting disaster on the entire community.

In traditional African life, the family is very vital in having a proper comprehension of the role of parents and community in the upbringing of the child. The traditional childrearing practices favor a communal system that operates within the context of the extended family system or lineage, and the duty of raising children are not borne solely by the biological parents. A close knit group of relatives commonly share the responsibility of rearing children in terms of emotion, time, finance, and other material support since all the children together comprise the strength of the lineage. In agreement to the above, U. C. Isiugo-Abanihe (1985), R. E. Fapohunda, and P. M. Todaro (1988) explain that the ubiquitous and cohesive nature of the extended family structure in traditional societies is the pillar supporting good parenting. However, Wusu and U. C. Isiugo-Abanihe (2003) observed that emerging indications of transformation exists in the African family caused by response to general social, economic, and political changes in different countries and societies. This change is also evident in the Jewish society as A. Dashefsky and I. M. Levine comments that “the evolutionary changes of the Jewish family require an understanding of the dramatic transformations of Jewish social and communal life across nearly four millennia of history” (163) M. Sklare (1971) further argues, thus: “This system of identity-formation is currently on the decline. The emerging

crisis of the Jewish family in identity-formation is in part due to the newer limitations on the family as a socialization agent – limitations that affect every Jew.” (99)

These transformations undoubtedly influenced the Jewish family and their modes of parenting. Furthermore, the evolution of the Jewish family is congruent with the evolution of Jewish society throughout the history of the Jewish people. That history can be divided into two halves: the Biblical period and the even more important post-Biblical period. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971) argues that while it is not possible to present an accurate sociological description of Jewish societal and familial life in Biblical times because of the absence of hard data, an examination of literary passages of the Bible can provide a rough idea of family life (1172). Whatever one’s own religious and theological views are, understanding the Hebrew Bible or *Tanakh* is important. As a literary, the Hebrew Bible sees Jewish history as a Trinitarian relationship among the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and the religion or law of Israel as embodied in the keeping of the precepts of the *Torah*. For a long time, these three elements were not synchronized, that is, the Jewish people were not living in the land and observing the *Torah* and in view of that, the central idea of family was affected.

Jewish family life was rooted in the culture of the ancient Near East and as such was patriarchal, patrilocal, matrilineal, polygynous, and endogamous. Their history, beginning with the patriarch Abraham, reveals a view of Jewish life as rooted in a pastoral nomadic or semi-nomadic existence but not anchored on any independent political state. These wanderings across Western Asia took place between 2000 and 1500 BC. These migrations included the sojourn in Egypt, the Exodus, and the subsequent conquest and occupation of Canaan. With the conquest is palpable transformation of

Jewish societal life from nomadic shepherders to sedentary farmers. Ultimately, these farmers formed an independent nation with an urban population in cities such as Jerusalem as revealed in the stories of David and Solomon who established the first Jewish commonwealth about 1000 BC. This Jewish commonwealth survived civil war, insurrections, and partial conquest by the northern kingdom of Assyria until the Babylonian occupation and destruction of the Temple (the center of Jewish religious life), terminating the exile of many Jews, such as the Prophet Jeremiah. Note that many of these stories emerged as part of the Hebrew oral tradition and were recorded centuries later and included in the Old Testament.

In the Biblical metaphor, God is viewed as the parent who punishes the child (the people of Israel) for not obeying the law of Israel and exiled them from the land of Israel. Reflecting on this view of God as the Father, the Jewish family in Biblical times was patriarchal in structure. In this period, the epics are pastoral in nature, mirroring the nomadic or semi-nomadic existence of the patriarchs who tended their flocks. Marriage as seen in the Old Testament was for the purpose of companionship and procreation and was fundamentally monogamous, as in the story of Adam and Eve, even though polygamy appears under extenuating circumstances or among the upper class. In view of this, *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971:1170) says: “Integral relationship is an essential part of the family as can be seen in the rabbinic writings where it is said that whosoever, bring disrepute upon himself brings disrepute upon his whole family” (Num. R. 21:3) and that “a family is like a heap of stones, remove one, and the whole structure can collapse” (Gen. R. 100:7).

In Judaism, much like Christianity, marriage and the family were (and are) praised. According to Rabbi Hillel cited in *The Encyclopedia Judaica: Marriage and family life is seen as full of joy and blessing. “He who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness”* (1971:1171) Scripture says, “and thou shalt know that thy tent is peace” (Job 5.24).

Hillel, in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, also expresses the significance of the family in the traditional life of the Jews:

The content insistence upon the value of the family as a social unit for the propagation of domestic and religious virtues and the significant fact that the accepted Hebrew word for marriage is *kiddushin* (sanctification), had the result of making the Jewish home the most vital factor in the survival of Judaism and the preservation of the Jewish way of life, much more than the synagogue or school. (1971:1172)

Through the various sayings and stories, legends and folklore, the rabbis traditionally instructed Jews in the basic values of Jewish family life which was so closely intertwined with Jewish religion that these values stayed with them in their wanderings. Conversely, in traditional African settings, the extended family structure is comprised of generations of close relatives (rather than a married couple and children) who live either in the same house, compound, or in a close and continuous relationship. G. K. Nukunya (1992) observes that the extended family is a “social arrangement in which an individual has extensive reciprocal duties, obligations and responsibilities to his relations outside his nuclear family” (47). Within this framework of family structure, R. E. Fapohunda and P. M. Todaro (1988) maintain that a series of childrearing practices are

maintained right from birth (571-594). This scenario shows the communal nature of the family and the level of interpersonal relationship involved. Such practice lessens the emotional burden that a nursing mother goes through during the early period of childbearing, and by extension, encourages high fertility goals in the society.

Likewise within the ambit of parenting in the traditional system, U. C. Isiugo-Abanihe (1985) comments that children are sometimes transferred from their biological homes to other homes – the homes of uncles, aunts and cousins – where they are raised (53-72). The strong family ties existing among brothers, sisters, and cousins even when they are married, facilitate this transfer and sharing of children. Childrearing costs is commonly totally transferred or shared within the extended family system through this traditional mechanism. Furthermore, through this common practice, couples are encouraged to pursue high fertility goals since the emotional, material, and financial cost of raising children are shared or nearly completely transferred to others. Within this system, sometimes young wives and children remain back at home while their husbands and fathers go off to the city to work. At such times, the practice became mandatory for extended family members to share the burden (or cost) of sustaining such a woman (regarded as a wife to all in the family) and her children. An important element of the extended family structure is polygamy; a structure that allows men to marry two or more women at the same time. In addition, the traditional African society is patriarchal in nature as is the Jewish family where men enjoy supremacy over decision.

In recent times, changes are gradually taking place in the family structure. The major source of this change is modern civilization where emphasis is gradually shifting to a couple and their children although uncles, aunts, and grandparents remain members of

the larger family of which the couple is considered a part. Another source of this change includes an increase in urbanization and employment opportunities outside the extended family. However, most of those who have left for the urban center maintain regular contact with extended family members back home. The family is still pivotal for a cohesive society.

### **New Testament View on Parenting**

The New Testament material on parenting must be viewed within its historical and cultural setting. J. M. Gundry and J. B. Marcia (2008) noted that in Greco-Roman antiquity and Judaism, children were both appreciated in some aspects and viewed negatively in other aspects (143-176). Children had no rights of their own and were legally subject to their father who had almost absolute power over them. Childhood was viewed largely as a state of immaturity to outgrow. On the one hand, parents loved and took pleasure in their children; they valued children as necessary to their economic survival and well-being and as heirs in whom they would live on after death. On the other hand, children were considered fundamentally deficient and not yet human in the full sense. Children were physically small, underdeveloped, and vulnerable.

The value of teachings on biblical parenting can also be found in the New Testament. However, most of the teachings on biblical parenting in the New Testament are done by Jesus and the apostles who are not just expounding on the Old Testament, but their teachings were inspired by God to later become the New Testament. Jesus was himself the Word (John 1.1) and came to earth to bring God's truth to the world (John 1.9, 14). The apostles were witnesses of Jesus and his resurrection (Acts 1.21-22), and they taught what they heard during their time with Jesus. Paul was "chosen" by Christ to

be His witness (Acts 22.14-15). The study of the New Testament helps us find examples and principles that apply to those who have the task of parenting (Eph. 2.20, 2 Tim. 4:2)

According to J. M. Gundry, (2008:162) five main ways exist in which the significance of children is underscored in Jesus' teaching and practice:

- He blesses the children brought to him and teaches that the reign of God belongs to them;
- He makes children models of entering the Kingdom of God (Mark 10.13-16; Matt. 18.1-5);
- He calls his disciples to welcome little children as he does and turns the service of children into a sign of greatness in the Kingdom of God (Mark 9.33-37; Matt. 18.1-2; Lk. 9.46-48);
- He gives the service of children ultimate significance as a way of receiving himself and by implication the One who sent him.
- He is acclaimed by children as the "Son of David."

The inspiring and tender account of Jesus blessing the children is found in three of the four gospels (Matt. 19.13–15; Mark 10.13–16; Luke 18.15–17). The three accounts vary slightly. Matthew reports that Jesus "laid his hands on them" (Matt. 19.15). Luke does not record Him blessing them. Only in Mark's account is found this tender experience: "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10.16). Some Scholars have suggested that the Jewish custom of bringing children to the elders or scribes for blessing and prayer following the Day of Atonement lies behind this scene although this is not attested to in the New Testament but only in the *Talmudic tractate*.

In Mark 10:13-16, Mark adds a tender story of Jesus' loving concern for little children. This account is the other side of his stern words about the sanctity of marriage in the preceding verses. First, marriage, then children; the sequence is logical. Unlike many "moderns" today, the Jews of that day looked on children as a blessing and not a burden, a rich treasure from God and not a liability (Ps. 127, 128). To be without children brought a couple both sorrow and disgrace. A customary practice was for parents to bring their children to the rabbis for a blessing; therefore, bringing the little ones to Jesus was reasonable. Some were infants in arms (Luke 18:15) while others were young children able to walk, and he welcomed them all. Some overlap exists in the teaching of Jesus between the event where he places a child in their midst (Matt.18:1-14; Mark 8:33-37; Luke 9:46-48) and the time when people bring children to Jesus although these events are treated as distinct and separate incidents in the three Gospels (Matt.19:13-15; Mark10:13-16; Luke18:15-17). Jesus freely and deliberately chooses a little child as a way of challenging and illuminating the disciples 'theological discussion' about the kingdom.

Mark 10:13-16 states,

And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

For C.E.B. Cranfield, (1963) this event is a pronouncement story which in the course of tradition has lost all details of time and place. This event's connection with the

preceding section is probably topical – a story of Jesus blessing children seemed to follow suitably on a section concerned with marriage. *Προζέ Θερον* is an indefinite plural. The verb *προζθέρειν* can mean ‘bring’ without any idea of carrying. Though usually, this term denotes a young child. The Luke parallel has *βρέφη*, means ‘infants.’ Jesus is often described as touching the sick or being touched by them. Here, the idea of those who bring the children is that Jesus should bless them. *Ἐπεηίμηζαν* possibly means the disciples wanted to save Jesus from being troubled.

The variant *ηοις προζφέροσζιν* is clearly due to the desire to get rid of the ambiguity of *ἀνοιοῖς* which grammatically could refer to the children themselves. The masculine *ἀνοιοις* suggests that Mark did not think of those who brought the children as being necessarily the mothers. In both Matthew and Luke, the reference to Jesus’ indignation, *ἠγανάκηζεν*, is omitted. Mark’s use of an asyndeton before *μή κωλύεη* has the effect of suggesting Jesus’ impatience. *Την γάρ ηοιούηων ἐζήν ή βαζιλεία ηοσ Θεοσ* — the genitive here is possessive, the meaning being that the kingdom ‘belongs to such’, not that it ‘consists of such.’ The Kingdom of God belongs to little children and to other weak and insignificant ones — not because of any merit of theirs but because God has willed to give it to them. The reason why the Kingdom of God belongs to children is to be found in the fact that they are weak, helpless, and unimportant and in the fact that God has chosen ‘the weak things of the world’ (1Cor. 1.26ff). The reference in *ηος παιδίον* again is not to the receptiveness, humility, imaginativeness, trustfulness, or unselfconsciousness of children but to their objective littleness and helplessness. The emphasis is on the status, not on the qualities. To receive the Kingdom as a little child is to allow oneself to be given it, because one knows one cannot claim it as one’s right or

attempt to earn it. *Καηεσλόγει*, as in *καηαγελαν* (Mark 10.40) the force of *καηά*, seems to be intensive — he blessed them fervently in no perfunctory way.

Mark 9.33-37 states

And they came to *Caper'na-um*; and when he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.

The paradox of “whoever wants to be first shall be last of all and servant of all” is significant when Jesus places a child “in their midst” and then takes the child into his embrace. Jesus’ poignant action introduces the child as the “least one” in family and as the society who needs to be “received,” all intended as a pointed answer to the self-aggrandizing thoughts of the disciples. This demonstrative action finds its astonishing interpretation in Jesus’ final saying which makes some sense of Jesus’ paradoxical saying in Mark 9.35.

In Luke’s rendition of this story, the argument of the disciples is out in the open and does not need to be uncovered by the question of Jesus. The action of Jesus involves his taking a child and placing the child alongside himself, a demonstration of his solidarity with the little child. The climax of Jesus’ pronouncement is provided a rationale, allowing Luke to begin and end the story with the issue of greatness. The

argument of the disciples about greatness which initiates the story is settled by Jesus as he offers a new definition of greatest. The least one among them, embodied in the little child at the side of Jesus, is the greatest. The second episode is narrated in Luke 18.15-17 and resembles closely Mark's story, yet in Luke's narrative this second story loses its close association with the earlier episode in Luke 9.46-48 because of the extended journey section that intervenes. Moreover, Luke's version differs from Mark 10.13-16 in three striking ways. First, Luke's version includes in the opening verse a Greek word *βρέφη* that means 'infants' rather than the word *παιδίον* that designates children older than infants yet below the age of puberty. Second, Luke's story does not mention the 'indignation' of Jesus in reaction to the disciples rebuking those bringing the infants. Third, Luke 18.15-17 concludes with Jesus' double saying containing no description of Jesus' compassionate action of taking the children into his arms and blessing them.

Matthew 18.1-5 states, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" R.T. France (1985) notes that this question, undoubtedly posed with the Matthean community in mind, prompts Jesus' action described in Matthew 18.2a "He called a child, whom he put among them..." and then his extended speech began in Matthew 18.3:3-5:

Truly I say to you, if you do not turn and become as the little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever will humble him/herself as this child, this one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me.

Matthew also includes the second story of Mark (Mark 10.13-16) in Matthew 19.13-15 but he omits Mark 10.15 ("Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, will never enter it") because he has inserted an altered version of that

saying of Jesus in Matthew 18.3. Whereas Mark's version focused on the receiving and embracing of a little child in Jesus' name and thus the embrace of Jesus himself and even God (Mark 9.37) and God's kingdom (Mark 10.15), Matthew's rendering in Matthew 18.3 accentuates the need to repent (literally, 'turn') and become like the little children as the way to enter the kingdom. Matthew 18.4 further clarifies that greatness in the kingdom is equated with 'humbling' oneself like a little child. Concerned with the destructive effect of arrogance and pride in the church, Matthew orders the material in Matt.18.1-14 to warn his community of any action that scandalizes or any attitude that displays contempt for "the little ones," probably a designation for the members whose faith was probably fragile or whose status in society demanded no respect (Matt.18.6, 10, 14). In his editing of Jesus' sayings, Matthew is communicating what the apostle Paul exhorts in Romans 12.16 "Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly."

Matthew's presentation shapes Matthew's version of Mark 10.15 to concentrate on the personal conversion and the childlike posture of humility needed in disciples. Luke's version of Mark 10.13-16, given its placement directly after Luke 18.14, also interprets Jesus saying about receiving the kingdom "like a child" as tantamount to humbling oneself before God. In the words of J.L. Bailey, (1995) this accent on humility before God as the "childlike" characteristic needed for entrance into God's kingdom has invariably been imported into Mark 10.13-16. As a result, Christians have failed to hear the kingdom saying in Mark 10.15 as Jesus' challenging invitation into solidarity with "the little child," the epitome of vulnerability, as a way to experience God's kingdom. At first glance, Matthew's version of Jesus' kingdom saying in Matthew 18.3-5 seems to convey a message contrary to Mark 10.15. Whereas in Matthew Jesus' saying focuses on

the disciples and the childlike qualities the disciples are to assume, such as humility; in Mark, Jesus focuses on the vulnerable little child with whom the disciples are to be in solidarity. If the use of the verb “to humble” in both Matthew 18.5 and Luke 18.14 is interpreted to mean “to make oneself small” (or “low” or “weak” or “vulnerable”), then in Matthew and Luke the stress is on the disciple’s conscious action of assuming the posture of the small, weak, poor, and even exploited (like the vulnerable position of little children) in the eyes of others and before God. This invitation to humility is a call to recognize one’s place, not a call to a type of psychological self-flagellation in some modern sense. The call to humility, particularly for the sake of identifying with the “little” or “weak ones” in the Christian community (Matt 18.1-14), is in continuity with Mark 10.13-16, especially if a contemporary and naive notion of childhood is not superimposed on the biblical texts.

The Gospels give account of the relationship of children and childlikeness to the Kingdom of God in Mark 10.13-16 cf and Matthew 18.1-5. The welcoming of Jesus (Mark 9.33-37 and Matthew 21.14-16) presents children declaring their knowledge of Jesus. For J.M. Gundry, (2001) the backdrop for this teaching and practice is Jesus’ rebuke of those who were bringing children to Jesus and the disciples’ attempt to hinder them alongside the debate about who is the greatest (37). For him, the indignation expressed by Jesus underscores the seriousness of excluding children from the blessings of the Kingdom. Not only are children recipients of the Kingdom of God, children are also models of entering the Kingdom as seen when Jesus stated “whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a child will not enter it” (Mark 10.15).

This occasion is one of the very few where Mark records that Jesus was indignant, and the cause is indeed interesting. One might have thought that other matters were more important than the spiritual welfare of children, but Jesus valued them and often uses children as examples. The disciples probably thought they were doing Jesus a favor by helping him protect his time and conserve his strength in turning away the children. In other words, the disciples did not consider the children to be important. Their attitude was strange, because Jesus had already taught them to receive the children in his name and to be careful not to cause any of them to stumble (Mark 9.36ff).

Mark 10.13-16 must be seen in light of Mark 9.33-37. Both of these references to a child are built on a child's social status in the first-century world as opposed to assumed characteristics of children. Children shared the social status of the poor, the hungry, and the suffering whom Jesus called "blessed" in the Beatitudes. Children's vulnerability and powerlessness seem to lie at the heart of Jesus' extension of the Kingdom of God to them. W. J. Keith (2008) points out that one distinctive of children is their universality; not everyone is poor, a woman, or black, but every person either was or is a child (353-373). The idea of 'child' is associated with growth and development, and, therefore, with hope. Jesus puts them forth as models of entering the Kingdom of God though there is nowhere in Jewish literature where children are put forward as models for adults. The key to entering the Kingdom of God is a matter of lowly status corresponding to the child's. Throughout his ministry, Jesus accepts a lowly status and deliberately acts with humility. W. J. Keith further states that children are in a real sense God's language in and through which he reveals his true nature and, therefore, the nature of his kingdom. Christians enter God's kingdom by faith, like little children helpless, unable to save ourselves,

totally dependent on the mercy and grace of God. Jesus calls all to enter the sphere of the vulnerable child (the one often exploited by adults) and discover the Kingdom as an experience of God's graciousness for the weak and vulnerable. Jesus' speech and action in Mark 10.13-16 are especially challenging in light of the plight of many children today in our society and around the world; this plight often involves parental violence against a child within the secrecy of the family circle, patterns of domination that are maintained and psychically enforced, and exploitation of children because of their vulnerability and dependence on adults. F.C. Grant and H.E. Luccock (1993) note that the discovery of the child as a person with certain inalienable rights has been a long, tragically slow process and in many places has scarcely begun. O.E. Alana (2011) further argues that Jesus did not allow the less recognition given to children to overshadow his sense of judgment. Jesus did not agree with his disciples that children should not have been brought to him in the open. All that the Evangelists have left us to grapple with is Jesus' open invitation to his disciples and all those who aspire to be members of his kingdom to strive to be like these 'little ones.'

Christians are expected to emulate Christ in giving loving attention, affection, and recognition to children. Children should not be pushed aside as nonentities, rather they are to be treated as individuals with potentials. Christians are to embrace and bless children and live an exemplary life that they can emulate. Parents should be examples of Christian life and conduct, caring more for the salvation of their children than other things. D.C. Stamps states that giving children the upbringing that prepares them for lives pleasing to God is the responsibility of parents. Parents are to encourage as well as correct and punish only intentional wrongdoing, instruct with patience, and dedicate their

lives in love to their children. Both formal and informal training must be given to children to empower and equip them to face the challenges of life. Adults must learn from Jesus' teachings to emulate child-like characteristics of lowliness, trust, powerlessness, and absolute dependence on the favor of God in order to have peace here on earth and to have a place in the Kingdom of God.

### **Paul's View on Parenting**

Paul's talk on parenting is largely symbolic. Although he had no biological children of his own, he talks a lot about his role as a parent. In a number of texts, he considers himself to be a father to his followers (1 Cor. 4.14-15, 2 Cor. 6.13; 12.14-15). Paul is also a father to his co-workers like Timothy (1 Cor. 4.17, Phil. 2.22), Titus, and Onesimus (Philem. 10). In these texts, Paul mentions the roles of a parent (in this case the father). In 1 Corinthians 4.14-15, Paul reminds the Corinthians that he writes to them as his children pointing out the duty of a parent as admonishing children when they go the wrong way. The Greek word Paul uses for admonish is *νουθετων* and implies the corrective role of parents towards children. In defining the term, Rogers Jr. and Rogers III say, "Parents are responsible to reprimand, admonish and correct their children" (1998, 355). Thus, Paul begins by telling the Corinthians that his intention is not to shame (*ντροπή*) them. CK Barrett says admonishing is characteristically the act of a father. The act of admonishing is positive and creative correction performed in love (1968:115). Paul mentions these characteristics of a father again in 1 Thessalonians 2.11 when he says, "...for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you." As a parent, Paul also urges his followers to imitate him (Castelli 1991).

Paul also believes that providing for children is the responsibility of parents. In 2 Corinthians 12.14-15 he says, "...for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children." Elsewhere Paul shows that he worked with his own hands to support himself and his ministry not burdening the followers (1 Cor. 4.12). In 2 Corinthians 12.14-15, Paul raises the same subject reminding the Corinthians that he was not a burden upon them. Rather, in line with his view of responsible parenthood (1 Cor. 4.1ff), he had worked with his own hands contrary to Greek belief of despising those who earned their living by using their hands (Hargreaves 1978:47). Promising to visit the Corinthians, Paul says he was going to continue with his practice of providing for the material needs of his children rather than depending on them.

Paul does not only view parenthood from the perspective of a father, he also talks about his motherhood. In 1 Thessalonians 2.7, he says he was like a nurse among the Thessalonians. The Greek word *τροφορως* often translated as nurse refers to one who nourishes or feeds (Rogers Jnr. and Rogers III 1998:474). Thus, this term can also be translated as nursing mother (Best 29). Motherhood points to parental qualities of tenderness. As Paul emphasizes in 1 Corinthians 4.12; 9.1ff, Paul was aware that as an apostle (a leader), he had authority and, in the words of M. Gorman could "throw (his) their weight around" (1 Thess. 2.7) even demanding financial support (1 Cor. 9) (Gorman 154). Paul and his co-workers did not exercise this right. Rather, like a nursing mother, they worked day and night not to be a burden to the believer. The word used to describe the work they did is *κόπος* (toil) referring to trouble and pain of arduous work (Rodgers Jnr. and Rogers III 1998:474). This theme of self-giving, of relinquishing a right for the welfare of others, comes throughout the letters of Paul (e.g. Philem. 26.8). Paul does not

employ this theme just for himself, his co-workers, and other apostles only but for all believers (Gorman 155). As a mother, Paul also knows the kind of food to be given to children at each stage of their growth. He said in 1 Corinthians 3.2, “I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it...”

Paul does not only use parental language with respect to himself. At the heart of the household as church metaphor is God as the father (Clarke 138). Fellow Christians as sons and daughters of God are, therefore, siblings calling to God their father (Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.6). Using Galatians, Esler discovers five major ways in which believers are siblings (131). First, believers are siblings as they all have God as their father (Gal. 1.1-3) and share in faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3.26; 4.6). Second, they are siblings through Abraham (Gal. 3.16, 29). Third, they are also siblings because they are Paul’s children (Gal. 4.19-20). Fourth, they are siblings through the promise made to Sarah (Gal. 4.21-31). Lastly, they are siblings as Paul addresses them as brothers (and sisters) (Gal. 1.2, 11; 3.15; 4.12; 5.11, 6.1). Thus, for Paul, believers are a household in the universal sense and also in the local sense of the household churches. Parenting becomes an important model of leadership since the household setting was the setting of early Christian communities. Leaders of the local Christian communities were, therefore, generally the household leaders (Moxnes, 26). As seen above, both the local and the universal church were considered households where all were siblings with God as the father. The fatherhood of God in terms of provision, protection, care, and love would, therefore, provide models to be followed by the leaders of these Christian communities.

The argument here is that parenting provides the right model for servant leadership. Servant leadership focuses on the fact that the leader is there to serve the

followers' needs in order to accomplish what needs to get done. Servant leaders place their followers first, empower them, and help to develop them to their fullest potential. The servant leader's role is to develop the follower so that they can be able to make their decisions for the good of the organization. This style of leadership is true of the role of a parent. Parents want their children to grow, be independent, and even do better than themselves. Parents take pride in the growth of their children. Therefore, the metaphor of father or parent provides Paul with a servant model of leadership. Clarke says, "...although the model of father/child, and especially at the time of the early Roman empire, a superior/inferior relation, it does not necessarily entail an authoritarian relationship, indeed, in the case of Paul, this dynamic is clearly modified by love" (145). The father-son (parent-child) relationship that Paul uses for leaders is telling because the parent-child relationship was more reciprocal than the exploitative master-slave relationship despite their similarities. Moxnes says, "...the father-son relationship had social and affective qualities that set it apart from that of the master-slave relationship" (29). Parent-child relationships even during the lifetime of Paul were characterized by concern on the part of the parents with the most central concern being provision of food (Ibid, 33). The father was considered the provider, nurturer, and care giver. Parent language underlines the following characteristics of a servant leader: authority, love, concern of the father for his children, protection, and provision.

Paul's conception of leadership through parenting is set within the context of *paterfamilias* with injunctions to obedience and submission. However, an analysis of Paul's view of parenting as presented above shows that Paul advocated for what Clarke calls benevolent patriarchalism (2008:147). Lee and Smith seem to explain Paul's

benevolent patriarchalism when they say, “when Paul uses the term father, he does not do so in order to stress authority rather to emphasize the nurturing, educating nature of a father” (122). Lee and Smith note that this role of a father was also emphasized by Greek moral philosophers and among Jewish educational settings. As seen above, Paul did not use the term 'father' to represent authority but rather to stress his concern to nurture and exhort his children.

Good parents know that children grow and mature at different rates; they have different personalities, skills, abilities, and interests and so they treat them accordingly. Good leaders should do the same. From this observation, Clarke should, therefore, be right in insisting on the hierarchical structure of leadership in Pauline communities (148). Clarke thinks Paul’s use of the body metaphor in 1 Corinthians 10-12 should be understood in terms of Paul’s teaching on leadership. He says, “...leaders had adopted an abusive and disrespectful relationship in regard to their fellow church members. The solution, for Paul, was not to alter the organizational structure of the church community, but to highlight its organic qualities, emphasizing its dependency on mutuality and mutual respect” (148). Although Clarke takes the organizational structure as hierarchical, Paul, like Jesus, was underlining servant leadership. A servant leader, like a parent, is above the followers but serves them for the growth of each. Like a parent, he/she provides for the followers, working hard to provide an example. The parental and household metaphor Paul uses underlines not only the hierarchical nature of the Pauline communities but also the paternal motivations of the leaders. Obedience and submission are expected but within the parameters of moderation and the gospel of Christ (154).

The hierarchical nature of Pauline communities cannot be denied. Pauline communities were house churches as highlighted above. On three occasions, Paul used the term *κατ οικον εκκλησια* (house church) to describe a congregation formed in and around, and convening in, a private household (1 Cor. 16.19; Rom. 16.5; Philem. 2). Most likely the owner of the house, male or female, functioned as a patron and leader to the rest of the membership (Sandnes, 151; Esler, 135). Paul then used the parenting metaphor for such leaders. This parenting metaphor made Christian leadership countercultural. Unlike secular leaders who loaded things upon their followers, the Christian parent leader was a servant leader.

The metaphor of the family is used to describe the common life of the Pauline communities. In a context where the Jewish aristocracy and the Roman imperial power emphasized hierarchical leadership, the metaphor of a family provided a new understanding of leadership (Agosto, 21). In Mark 10.42-45, Jesus warned the new family not to follow the leadership style of the surrounding world. Like Jesus, Paul also used the family metaphor to describe the new community of believers. His common use of the family metaphor points to parenting as his preferred model of leadership. Paul preferred servant leadership for the community of believers. The leaders, like fathers, have to exhort and encourage the followers (1 Thess. 2.11). Leaders are to discern the right kind of food for the followers (1 Cor. 3.2) and lay up for the needs of the followers (2 Cor. 12.14-15). Paul associates leadership with acceptance of servanthood and suffering; he and his coworkers are servants to the Lord Jesus and to the communities they serve (Rom. 1.1). Not only are the co-workers servants prepared to sacrifice their

lives (Phil. 2.19-30), local congregational leaders are also called to provide service to the people (1 Thess. 5.12-13, 1 Cor. 16.15-18).

The Pauline parent leaders are, therefore, not like leaders in the secular world. The parent leaders are servant leaders. Paul advocates a form of intra-community enslavement of love, thereby redefining the concept of slavery away from its oppressive meaning current among those outsiders towards an entirely different reciprocal love relationship (Esler 138). Esler uses Galatians 5.13 – 6.10 to show that the collective honor within a family means if the members themselves fall out and fail to present a united front to a harshly judgmental public, shame ensues (124). Paul also redefines slavery in his letter to Philemon. Here Paul turns Onesimus from Philemon's slave into a brother in the Lord (Philem. 16). As Sandnes observes, "Paul has effectively pulled the issue of the returning slave out of the private sphere" (157-8). A master was solely responsible for his decision in such a matter of a returning slave, but Paul does not accept the master's power when it comes to the question of the status of a recent convert. His and Onesimus' new Christian status means that as the leader Philemon is now expected to act not as the usual master but according to the brotherhood nature of the Christian fellowship. Paul's response here shows his acceptance of the hierarchical nature of leadership in early Christian communities. However, Paul tends to tacitly, through his rhetoric, question the autonomy and sovereignty of the master on the basis of the nature of Christian fellowship (158). For Paul, the master is the parent and acts for the good of the children. The complex relationship between Paul and Philemon leads Sandnes to suggest that this could be an egalitarianism found within a structure which also embodies hierarchical relationships (162). Thus, based on what has been discussed above, the

model of leadership Paul implied throughout his letters involved reciprocity, love, sharing of resources, nurturing, encouragement, instruction, exhortation, provision, spending time together, care, and all other virtuous acts that have been associated with servant leadership. Parenting becomes the right model for Paul to demonstrate this kind of leadership.

In contexts like Africa where leadership is at the center of most of the problems, parenting indeed provides a good model of leadership. Esler's argument is that although our culture is different from that of early Christians through inter-culturalism, learning from other cultures can enrich ourselves, "In a sense, our ancestors in faith, by whom and for whom Galatians was written, are strangers whom we may yet encounter through a process of historical investigation and from whom we can learn" (1997:144). Christians are capable of inter-cultural enrichment as can be seen through the experience of the members of the Pauline house church. In our African contexts where the majority of our problems are of poor leadership, Africans can learn from Paul how to be servant leaders who lead with love, care, protection, and mutuality as parents. Beginning with a discussion of leadership theories and types, this paper proceeded to discuss leadership practices in Pauline communities. This paper then argued and concluded that Paul preferred parenting as the best approach to leadership and that this approach could be a helpful model of leadership in communities that still uphold the teaching and practice of Paul.

### **Theological Foundations**

The theological foundations section starts with Augustine's confession about parenting and moves on to John Calvin's commentary on Psalm 78 about the importance

of passing on God's word to the next generation. The section continues with the parenting advice of John Wesley's sermon on Colossians 3.20. The section concludes with an analysis of the theological issue of the authority and power of the Scriptures as the basis for parenting and how this view of Scripture lends itself to a biblical parenting method.

### **St. Augustine's Confessions**

St. Augustine is a fourth century philosopher whose groundbreaking philosophy infused Christian doctrine with Neo-Platonism. He is famous for being an inimitable Catholic theologian and for his agnostic contributions to Western philosophy. Augustine is the first ecclesiastical author the whole course of whose development can be clearly traced as well as the first whom the exact period of his career is known to the very day. He was born at Thagaste in proconsular Numidia in 354 AD to Patricius and Monica. His father, Patricius, belonged to the influential class as a member of the council; he was, however, in straitened circumstances, and seems to have had nothing remarkable either in mental equipment or in character. Rather, Patricius was a lively, sensual, hot-tempered person, entirely taken up with his worldly concerns and unfriendly toward Christianity until the close of his life. Augustine's mother was evidently an honorable, loving, self-sacrificing, and able woman; she was not always the ideal of a Christian mother that tradition has made her appear. Her religion in earlier life has traces of formality and worldliness about it; her ambition for her son seems at first to have had little moral earnestness and she regretted his Manichaeism more than she did his early sensuality. This brief background gave rise to the Confessions of St. Augustine — a book he wrote at the later stage of his life.

The Confessions of St. Augustine is a classic and is provocative to modern readers for an insistently contemporary flavor though difficult to translate into the language with which one explores the self. The Confessions are a record of a fourth-century self-analysis which does not only a recall and interpret Augustine's personal past but portrays his insights that transcend the psychological (Miles 1982). The Confessions of St. Augustine have been a personal inspiration to many readers and listeners as well for over 1600 years. The book traces the route of the famous conversion of St. Augustine. Augustine saw his conversion as a kind of a road, a road of the heart. He said as much in one of the several times that he compared himself to the prodigal son: "It is not on our feet or by movement in space that we go from you or return to you" (I, 18, 28). This implies that to turn your back on God and go off to a far place, like the prodigal son did, you do not need chariots, ships, or even feet, you just need to do it in your heart. To turn back to God, however, you do not need chariots, ships, or even feet, you just need to do it in your heart. That is what the Confessions are all about.

The Confessions was written in about A.D. 400 when Augustine was in his early forties; the last thirty years of his life are not described in it. The years after the writing of The Confessions were marked, in many ways, by great productivity, but in them Augustine also saw the deterioration and destruction of much of the objective part of his life's work in the African church. In these years, Augustine's psyche became increasingly complex and weighted with pessimism regarding the fulfillment of human life in the present. His understanding of human nature, so intimately tied to his understanding of his own process, began to be formulated in The Confessions.

By the relentless examination of human nature nearest home, his own nature, Augustine attempted to describe and account for the mysterious complexity of the “weights” of human existence: “I came to understand . . . through my own experience” (VIII, 5). The Confessions also trace the life of St. Augustine through his birth, infancy, childhood, education, and development of his faith. In His Confessions, he also stressed the roles his mother played in his upbringing and conversion — a very important lesson to learn on parenting as one goes through the confession.

In those last years of the fourth century, Augustine needed to collect and interpret his past in order to prepare himself for the demanding and hectic present life of a newly appointed bishop of the church of North Africa. The Confessions was vision of completion for Augustine in the sense of recall, reevaluation, and reinterpretation of old personal dramas (D. L. Miller, 33). Books I-IX are largely re-collections of Augustine’s past life; he describes his method in these books:

I want to call back to mind my past impurities and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them, but so that I may love you, my God.... And gathering myself together from the scattered fragments into which I was broken and dissipated during all that time when, being turned away from you, the One, I lost myself in the distractions of the many. (II, 1)

Even these recollections are constantly interwoven with moments of completion and transformation. Augustine’s confession is not only of sin and faith but also of praise. His reminiscences make sense to him only in the context of the experiences of unification which are the foundation of his understanding of himself, the world, and God. Books X-

XIII are an extended description of the cosmic setting of the individual life unfolded in the earlier books.

According to Miles, the *Confessions* is primarily a therapy in the Platonic sense of a methodical conversion from a “misidentification of reality,” to recognition of the reality, i.e. the patterns of behavior, that has been implicit but unidentified within one’s most intimate and pressing experience. The task of Platonic therapy is the construction of an articulated orientation to a final, authoritative, and implicit reality. In the light of this reality, Augustine can see himself accurately: "You [God] are the permanent light which I consulted about all these things, asking whether they are, what they are, and what weight they have" (X, 40).

A study of the *Confessions* reveals the ill manner and bad attitudes of Augustine during his early years. This attitude could be partly because of his quest to satisfy his psyche as he stated in the *Confessions*:

Near our vineyard was a pear tree loaded with fruit, though the fruit was not particularly attractive either in color or taste. I and some other wretched youths conceived the idea of shaking the pears off this tree and carrying them away. We set out late at night . . . and stole all the fruit that we could carry. And this was not to feed ourselves; we may have tasted a few, but then we threw the rest to the pigs.... I became evil for nothing, with no reason for wrongdoing except the wrongdoing itself. (II, 4)

As result of poor upbringing, later in young adulthood, even though he experienced what might have been a gratifying degree of success, Augustine describes his life as painful and unhappy: "I panted for honors, for money, for marriage .... I found bitterness and

difficulty in following these desires.... How unhappy my soul was then! I got no joy out of my learning ... I was eaten up by anxieties" (VI, 6).

Miles posits that Augustine gives a detailed description of the role of his parents in his development. Neither parent receives unambiguous appreciation from Augustine, rather he emphasizes their role in directing and conditioning the styles of his pursuit of sex, power, and possessions. From his mother, he received both physical and spiritual birth. Monica was consistently and compulsively anxious for the temporal and spiritual well-being of her son. In retrospect, Augustine interprets her warnings to him in adolescence as divine communication. Addressing God, he writes: "But though I did not know it, these warnings came from you. I thought you were silent and that it was my mother who was speaking, but you were not silent, you spoke to me through her, and in despising her, I was despising you" (II, 3). At a point, Augustine found her over scrupulous, overbearing, and a nuisance.

His father, Patricius, who died when Augustine was seventeen, was a poor but ambitious man who sacrificed to send Augustine to school. Augustine interprets this as no more than self-interest on Patricius's part, and indeed, blames Patricius for supporting the "wanderings" by which Augustine reinforced his concupiscence. He repeatedly refers to his father as "fallen," and as affirming and encouraging Augustine's pursuit of sex (II, 3). Augustine describes himself as deprived of adequate male role models: "Considering the kind of men who were set up as models for me to imitate, it is no wonder that I was swept away into emptiness and that I went out of your presence, my God" (Augustine I, 18).

Augustine thus presents both of his parents as training and rewarding different aspects of his youthful exuberance. His conversion marks his rejection of the worldly ambitions entertained for him by both parents as seen in the extract below:

In these hopes (of professional success) both my parents indulged too much – my father, because he hardly thought of you at all, and only thought in the most superficial way (*inania*) of me; my mother, because in her view, these usual courses of learning would be, not only no hindrance, but an actual help to me in attaining you. So at least I conjecture when I recollect to the best of my ability what the characters of my parents were (*Augustine II, 3*). Thus, Augustine’s parents heavily influenced his worldly ambitions.

In expressing the lessons she learned from St. Augustine’s *Confessions* about parenting, Kimberly Walker stated that he pulled a “grandpa trick,” critiquing her parenting through storytelling, stressing on his own parents’ successes and failures. She stated five lessons to be learnt from the *Confessions*.

1. Overlook some faults, even though at another age they must be addressed.

Augustine reflects: “What then was my sin? Was it that I hung upon the breast and cried? For should I now so do for food suitable to my age, justly should I be laughed at and reproved . . . but since I could not understand reproof, custom and reason forbade me to be reproved. . . . We bear gently with all this, not as being no or slight evils, but because they will disappear as years increase.” (*1, 7*)

As Augustine explains, reason and custom teach us not to discipline children for something they are too immature to understand. Scripture agrees. God acts mercifully because he knows that people are but dust (*Ps. 103.1-14*). Age-

appropriate standards allow us to demonstrate God's mercy and patience toward our children.

2. Do not steer children toward the idols of glory or riches. In reflecting on the goals of his educators, Augustine lamented: "People didn't examine the purpose to which I was putting what I learned, unless that purpose was to sate insatiable greed for what was in reality poverty aplenty and degrading glory" (17, 19). Scripture admonishes us to seek wisdom and other good things, but not to spend them on our passions (James 3.13-4.10). When parents direct their children to seek God's glory and approval, parents avoid fostering their natural tendency toward self-glory and the idolatrous pursuit of human approval.
3. Teach children about God. Though the discipline in Augustine's education was brutal, he saw this discipline as a blessing, because it drove him to prayer: "For so I began, as a boy, to pray to thee, my aid and refuge; and broke the fetters of my tongue to call on thee" (1, 9).
4. Help children in their fight against sin. After Augustine's father informed his mother of their son's sexual passions, she pressed Augustine not to marry, because she feared he would not attain the academic accomplishments she desired for him. Augustine relates: "She advised me toward chastity . . . for she feared lest a wife should prove a clog and hindrance to my . . . hope of learning, which both my parents were too desirous I should attain" (2, 3).
5. Be aware that children sometimes sin out of the sheer pleasure of being wicked. Augustine confesses to stealing fruit only to throw it away. He just liked being wicked: "It was foul, and I loved it; I loved to perish, I loved mine own fault, not

that for which I was faulty, but my fault itself” (2, 4). Parents often think and act as behaviorists, assuming that environment is the true culprit for their kids’ sinful actions yet because of the fall children naturally love what is evil. Only the Holy Spirit can change their desires to love what is good; therefore, seek more than behavior modification — parents should plead with God to change their child’s heart (Luke 11:15) (Kimberly 2017).

After his encounter with God and eventual conversion, a direct transfer of dependence and attachment from the training of the earthly parents to the parenting of God occurs. Augustine’s last mention of his parents in *The Confessions* demonstrates that no longer are Monica and Patricius the “heavyweights” of Augustine’s psyche that they have been throughout his early years and into young adulthood. He now sees them simply as “brethren,” fellow pilgrims who, like him, suffer and struggle. New and loving regard for his parents resulted from his disengagement from the training of his early years so that now, although he can accurately evaluate this training, he is not resentful but finds that his training was both inevitable and the particular route by which he was led to the moment of conversion. Augustine, in his last mention of his parents, urges that

as many as shall read this may remember at your altar Monica, your servant, and Patricius, her husband, through whose flesh you brought me into this life, though how I do not know. May they with holy affection remember those two who were my parents in this transitory light, who are my brethren under you, Our Father, in our Catholic Mother, and my fellow citizens in the eternal Jerusalem for which your people in their pilgrimage sigh from the beginning of their journey until they return home. (IX, 13)

### **John Calvin's Commentary on Psalm 78**

As a way of introduction, Psalm 78 is said to be the Psalm of Asaph and written long after the death of David. This timeframe is evidenced in the close of the Psalm where the timeframe may probably be conjectured that it was written many years after the death of David. There the kingdom erected in the house of David is celebrated and Ephraim is said to have been rejected and set at opposition against the house of David. Evidently, the ten tribes were at that time in a state of separation from the rest of the chosen people as there must be some good reason why the kingdom of Ephraim is branded with a mark of dishonor as being illegitimate and bastard.

According to Calvin's Commentary, two leading topics immerge in Psalm 78. First, is how God adopted for Himself a Church from the posterity of Abraham, how tenderly and graciously He cherished it, how wonderfully He brought it out of Egypt, and how varied were the blessings which He bestowed upon it. Secondly, the Jews, who were so much indebted to God for the great blessings which He had conferred upon them, are upbraided for having from time to time perversely and treacherously revolted from God. God's inestimable goodness was clearly manifested not only in His free adoption of them at first but also in continuing by the uninterrupted course of his goodness to strive against their rebellion and stiff-neckedness.

On the adoption of Israel as God's children, a Father-Children relationship is established. God as the father has a crucial role of cherishing, protecting, providing, and preserving His children — Israel. This care can be likened to that which parents are expected to have for their children and can be summarized in the one word — love. It reflects not just in Psalm 78 alone but throughout the entire scriptures and is climaxed in

the gift of Christ to die for the redemption of the world (John 3:16). Furthermore, this relationship is reciprocal; there is an expectation on the side of the children to the father. In response to the care and love showered upon Israel by God, their father, the Israelites were to honor, worship, and serve Him all the days of their lives. In the same vein, children are expected to be submissive to their parents and obey them. The reverse was the case with Israel. Calvin described this response in his commentary as being rebellion and stiff-necked against God (194). According to Calvin, mention is also made of the renewal of God's grace which is seen in the second election God made when He chose David out of the tribe of Judah to sway the sceptre over the Kingdom of Israel (194).

The above is drawn from the introduction to the chapter in Calvin's Commentary. Further into the main text, the following is discussed. For the purpose of this section, emphasis will be made more on verses 1-8 of the Psalm 78 with reference to other parts of the Psalm. In Psalm 78.1-8, the Lord gives four principles to follow in parenting (194-201).

**Teaching Children God's Greatness (Ps. 78.1-4).** The Psalmist communicated by first getting the attention of his audience, "Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Ps. 78.1). Though stated as if God were speaking to His people, Calvin as well as other commentaries pointed out that the author himself addresses the Jews in the character of a teacher, calling the people his people and the law his law. At that time, prophets to borrowing the name of Him by whom they were sent so that their doctrine might have the greater authority was not uncommon. To secure for himself the greater attention, the Psalmist declares his purpose to be discussing subjects

of a great, high, and difficult character. This purpose points to the fact that parenting is a very serious issue and a matter that should not be taken lightly.

The Psalmist used the Hebrew word מַשַּׁל, *mashal*, which Calvin translated as parable implying a striking sentence or notable saying. The author affirms that his purpose is to utter only striking sentences and notable sayings in a transmission from generation to generation. The Hebrew word נִכְחַד, *nechached*, is to be understood as follows: *We will not conceal them from our posterity*, implying, that parents should endeavor to teach to their children what the Hebrews were taught by their ancestors. This statement means that all pretense of ignorance was removed for God's will is that these things should be published from age to age without interruption so that in being transmitted from father to child in each family, these instructions might even reach the last family of man. The first thing that parents are to pass to their children is God's greatness. The Psalmist states: "His praiseworthy deeds" — the awesome things God has done; "His power" — He is above all other powers; nothing is too difficult for Him. Furthermore, parents are to teach children of "His wonders" He is a God of miracles! Therefore, parents must teach their children of God's greatness through ages.

**Teaching Children God's Word (Ps. 78.5-6).** At this point, the author presents God as the author of what he was presenting. He declares that the fathers were not led to instruct their children in these truths under the mere impulse of their own minds but by the commandment of God. Some understand the words, "He hath established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel" (Ps. 78.5) as implying that God had established a decree in Jacob, who was to be observed as an inviolable rule, which was that the deliverance divinely wrought for the people should be at all times in the mouth of every

Israelite. However, this interpretation seems to give too restricted a sense. Hence, Calvin considers *statute*, or *testimony*, and *law* as referring to the written law which was partly given for this end that by the remembrance of their deliverance the people, after having been once gathered into one body, might be kept in their allegiance to God (198). The meaning then is that God not only acquired a right to the Jews as his people by His mighty power, but God also sealed up His grace that the knowledge of it might never be obliterated. Therefore, in the same way that Israel is to pass down the written law (Word of God) to their younger generations, so parents are to pass down God's word to their children.

In the maze of moral confusion, God's Word serves to guide us. These verses portray a multi-generational aspect of this transmission: forefathers, their children, the children yet to be born, and their children. The psalmist is talking about four generations! In Old Testament times and the days of the early church, the job of teaching children about the Lord fell squarely on the shoulders of parents. Before the law was written, the Scriptures said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment;" (Gen. 18.19) and after his death this task was enjoined upon the patriarchs as a necessary part of their duty. No sooner was the law delivered than God appointed priests in his Church to be public masters and teachers. God also testified through the prophet Isaiah that the same teaching is to be observed under the New Testament dispensation, saying, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and forever" (Is. 59.21). Through Moses, God told fathers

and mothers that they were to have His words and precepts on their hearts and pass them along to the next generation. These admonitions bear repeating: “teach them diligently to your children, and...talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deut. 6.6-9). Clearly, the Lord’s words were to permeate every facet of home life each and every day. The Shema (Jewish confession of faith) strongly implied that biblical truths and precepts should be taught to children simply throughout the course of the day as parents went about the daily tasks and activities of life.

**Teaching Children to Trust God (Ps. 78.7a).** Here the Psalmist points out the essence of the doctrine of God’s word. In the first place, when the fathers find that on the one hand they are instrumental in maintaining the pure worship of God and that on the other hand they are the means of providing for the salvation of their children, fathers should, by such a precious result of their labors, be more powerfully stirred up to instruct their children. In the second place, the children on their part, being inflamed with greater zeal, should eagerly press forward in the acquisition of divine knowledge and not suffer their minds to wander in vain speculations. Rather, children should aim at, or keep their eyes directed toward, the right mark. Children are to learn from their parents to trust God in every area of their lives.

When, therefore, parents hear for what purpose the law was given, parents may easily learn what the true and most successful method of deriving benefit from the law is. The Psalmist places *trust* first, assigning trust the highest rank. He then requires the observance of the holy commandments of God, and he puts in the middle the remembrance of the works of God which serves to confirm and strengthen faith. The

Psalmist is communicating that the sum of heavenly wisdom consists of this: men, having their hearts fixed on God by a true and unfeigned faith, call upon Him; and that for the purpose of maintaining and cherishing their confidence in Him, they exercise themselves in meditating in good earnest upon His benefits and yield to him an unfeigned and devoted obedience. Parents ought to learn from this and teach their children that the true service of God begins with faith. If Christians transfer trust and confidence to any other object, God is defrauded of the chief part of His honor.

**Teaching Children to Obey God (Ps. 78.7b-8).** “but keep His commandments. And that they might not be as their fathers, a rebellious [or an apostatizing] and a provoking generation; a generation which directed not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful towards God” (Ps. 78.7b-8). In his commentary, Calvin described Israel as a rebellious and apostatizing people inasmuch as there were still some faithful ones among them (206). Hence, children need to make the right selection of the fathers they must imitate. The prophet employs a multiplicity of terms to set straight the aggravated wickedness of the fathers, stigmatizing them as chargeable with apostasy, provocation, treachery, and hypocrisy. These accusations are very weighty charges, but these charges are not exaggerated. From the sins which are reprov'd here, parents should learn in what way He would have us obey and serve Him. In the first place, parents must lay aside all obstinacy and take His yoke upon us. Secondly, parents must clothe themselves with the spirit of meekness, bring the affections of the heart to the obedience of God, and follow after uprightness not with the fervor of a mere transient impulse but with unfeigned and unwavering steadfastness. When these steps are followed, parents pass down the right

attitude of obedience to God down to our offspring who will in turn pass this attitude down to generations after them.

### **The Parenting Advice of John Wesley**

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, John Wesley was an Anglican Clergyman, evangelist, and, with his brother Charles, was founder of the Methodist movement in the Church of England,. He was born on June 17, 1703, at Epworth, Lincolnshire, England as the second son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. His father was a former Nonconformist\_(dissenter from the Church of England) and rector at Epworth. Later in life following the death of his father, John met a Moravian in London, Peter Böhler, who convinced him that what he needed was simply faith in God. He also discovered Martin Luther's commentary on the Letter of Paul to the Galatians which emphasized the scriptural doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone. On May 24, 1738 on Aldersgate Street in London during a meeting composed largely of Moravians under the auspices of the Church of England, Wesley's intellectual conviction was transformed into a personal experience while Luther's preface to the commentary to the Letter of Paul to the Romans was being read.

From this point onward, Wesley viewed his mission in life as one of proclaiming the good news of salvation by faith which he did whenever a pulpit was offered him. The congregations of the Church of England, however, soon closed their doors to him because of his enthusiasm. He then went to religious societies, trying to inject new spiritual vigour into them, particularly by introducing “bands”— *i.e.*, small groups within each society that were confined to members of the same sex and marital status who were prepared to share intimate secrets with each other and to receive mutual rebukes — similar to those

of the Moravians. For such groups, Wesley drew up Rules of the Band Societies in December 1738.

Wesley continued his work in these societies until the resistance grew. He was later persuaded by George Whitefield to take the Gospel to the unchurched masses. There he was able to make converts who gathered together and called on him to be their leader. His preaching went as far as the shores of America. Toward the end of his life, Wesley became an honored figure in the British Isles.

On Obedience to Parents is one of the sermons he preached on parenting. The Sermon was drawn from Colossians 3.20 "Children, obey your parents in all things." In this sermon, Wesley gave sound parenting advice to parents who tend to neglect their parental role towards their children due to ignorance or nonchalance. According to Wesley, an innate principle exists in the mind of man. This principle is naturally planted in the soul that "we ought to honor our parents" and can be traced through all the extent of Europe and Asia, through the wilds of Africa, and the forests of America. This principle is most observable in more civilized nations. This principle was first seen in the eastern parts of the world which were the seat of empire and instruction in learning and politeness as well as of religion for many years. Afterwards, this principle was observed in all the Grecian states and throughout the whole Roman Empire.

Wherever God has revealed his will to man, this law or principle of obedience to parents has been a part of that revelation. In the Jewish tradition, the notorious breakers thereof were punishable with death. Obeying your parents was one of the laws which Jesus upheld during His ministry in the world. This adherence was why He severely reproved the Scribes and Pharisees for making it void through their traditions; clearly

showing that the obligation extended to all ages. The substance of this principle is what St. Paul delivers to the Ephesians: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord” (Eph. 6.1) and again to the Colossians, “Children, obey your parents in all things.” (Col. 3.20)

A study of this law shows that the Apostle enforced the law through a threefold encouragement. (1) To the Ephesians, Paul adds, “For this is right:” (Eph. 6:1). The law is an instance of justice as well as mercy. The law gives the parents no more than their due. Obedience is what children owe to parents for the very being which they have received from them. (2) “This is acceptable to the Lord.” (Col. 3:20) God is pleased when honor and obedience is given to the fathers of our flesh. (3) Obeying your parents is “the first commandment with promise” (Eph. 6:2) — “that it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” (Eph. 6:3) This promise has been generally understood to include health and temporal blessings as well as long life.

Wesley went further to explain the meaning to the text: “Children, obey your parents in all things.” (Col. 3:20) This statement does not mean a child obeying his parents out of fear or natural affection but out of a sense of duty to God. Parents must instill this duty upon their children. Furthermore, children are to obey their parents as long as they live. There is no limit to how long a child should remain obedient to his parents. Wesley stated that, “Those only who obey their parents when they can live without them, and when they neither hope nor fear anything from them, shall have praise from God.” (Wesley, 917)

“Children, obey your parents in all things” by implication means doing nothing that your parents forbid and upholding what they bid. This implication points to the fact

that the first thing children have to learn is to submit to the will of their parents.

Accordingly, St. Paul directs all parents to bring up their children “in the discipline and doctrine of the Lord.” (Wesley, 918) The first parenting advice comes into play here.

Parents must bring up their children in the discipline and doctrine of the Lord. To achieve this, Wesley stressed throughout his sermon that parents must break the will of their children. Children’s wills can be broken through proper discipline even in their early infancy. A considerable time will pass after breaking a child’s will before they are capable of instruction. Therefore, the act of breaking a child’s will is the first point of all: “Bow down their wills from the very first dawn of reason; and, by habituating them to submit to your will, prepare them for submitting to the will of their Father which is in heaven.” (Ibid, 918) The major challenge to accomplishing this broadly is that some parents are ignorant of this charge. There are instances where a parent will tell his child to do something, the child answers peremptorily, “I won’t,” and the parent quietly passes it by without any further notice. By doing so, the parent is training the child for a transference of learning from rebellion against their parents to rebellion against God. Consequently, the parents are training the child up for the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. If parents duly consider this consequence, they would neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep till they had taught the child a better lesson, making the child thoroughly afraid of ever giving that diabolical answer again.

Wesley further stressed that parents who have the fear of God should not suffer their children to do what they forbid or rebel against what they bid. If a parent allows this, they have no compassion for the child and no regard for his salvation or destruction. Do not “spare the rod, and spoil the child.”

In Proverbs, Solomon reinforces the wisdom of placing all aspects of life under the sovereignty of God. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1.7). Solomon consistently encourages parents to discipline and train their children using a rod if necessary: “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (Prov. 13.26). Scripture warns of serious consequences for those who do not comply. Solomon says, “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother” and by extension, to his father. Solomon further exhorts parents to “...not withhold correction from a child; for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.” (Prov. 23.13-14; 29.15). A parent’s action or inaction can bring blessings or disastrous consequences. Hence, Wesley advised that “If you have not the heart of a tiger, do not give up your child to his own will, that is, to the devil. Though it be pain to yourself, yet pluck your offspring out of the lion’s teeth. Make them submit, that they may not perish. Break their will, that you may save their soul.” (Ibid, 919) In order to enforce this point sufficiently, Wesley quoted a part of a letter he wrote on the subject:

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will. To inform their understanding is a work of time, and must proceed by slow degrees; but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once; and the sooner the better. By our neglecting timely correction they contract a stubbornness which is hardly ever to be conquered, and never without using that severity which would be as painful to us as to the children. (919)

Parents should not allow their children to contract habits which are against God's will. Parents should conquer their children's wills early enough as doing this is the only foundation for religious education. When breaking a child's will is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason of their parent till their own understanding comes to maturity. Parents who do this work together with God in the saving of a soul. The parent who indulges children's willful disobedience does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that to damn his child, soul and body, forever.

In order to achieve this level of discipline in children, Wesley gave three suggestions:

1. Let a child, from a year old; be taught to fear the rod and to cry softly.
2. Let him have nothing he cries for; absolutely nothing, great or small; else you undo your own work.
3. At all events, from that age, make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it. Let none persuade you it is cruelty to do this; it is cruelty not to do it. Break his will now, and his soul will live, and he will probably bless you to all eternity. (Ibid, 920)

Explain to the children as soon as they are capable of understanding the reasons for stern discipline. A stage in the life of a child exists when his reasoning and understanding begins to open up. At that stage, the child can effectively distinguish between right and wrong as well as hatred and love. At this stage, Wesley advised that parents should open up to their children and explain to them the reason for their discipline, pointing them to God as well. Parents are to point out to their children that the will of God is the sole law

of every intelligent creature; and God wills that they should obey their parents in all things. This teaching is to be inculcated over and over again until they perfectly comprehend it.

Wesley also advised parents not to teach their children to disobey by rewarding them for disobedience (Ibid, 920). This act, according to Wesley, is done every time parents give children anything when they cry for it. Children are apt scholars. If children are rewarded for crying, they will certainly cry again. Therefore, no end to this cycle exists unless giving them nothing when they cry is a sacred rule. The shortest way to do this is to never allow a child to cry aloud. Train children up to obedience in this one instance, and they will easily obey in others. One of the reasons why parents reward their children for disobedience as seen above is fondness. Parents usually mistake this to mean love. Fondness is real hate and hate of the most mischievous kind, tending to destroy both body and soul. Parents must stand against this for the love of God, their children, and their own soul.

Parents should not be mealy-mouthed but be strong and resolute in their disciplinary decisions. Most parents in our time say, like foolish Eli, “Nay, my children, it is no good report which I hear of you,” instead of restraining them with a strong hand; but speak (though as calmly as possible, yet) firmly and peremptorily, “I will have it so;” and the child does as is told. Instill diligently into them the love of good deeds and hatred of evil no matter how attractive evil may appear. Bid defiance to indolence, to cowardice, to foolish fondness, and at all events the parent’s point should be carried out. If parents love their souls, make and keep them just as plain as parents keep themselves. Grandparents should not hinder their children from disciplining their grandchildren.

Grandparents should not dare give the child anything which the parents deny them out of discipline. Grandparents should never take the part of the children against their parent and never blame the parents in front of the children.

### **Other Parenting Styles**

Parenting style simply refers to the method and approach to parenting a child. Every person has a plan and method which they use to parent even if this method is not defined. One may use the method their parents used in parenting them or one that they have chosen for themselves. No matter the source of ones parenting style, the choosen style will dramatically affect decision-making with their children and their lives in real ways.

However, the Bible has a lot to say about different parenting styles. The Bible gives several examples of very effective parenting methods, and some disastrous parenting methods.

### **Permissive Parenting**

Permissive parents typically display high levels of warmth and low levels of control in interactions with their children. This style of parenting dates back to the philosopher Rousseau in the eighteenth century and was strongly promoted in the 1970s by the Children's Movement (Baumrind, 1978:241). Baumrind described the idea behind permissive parenting as self-actualization or the natural tendency of children to learn on their own all they need to know and to act on this knowledge when ready to do so. This parenting style is characterized by an affirmative, accepting, and benign manner that frees children from restraint. Permissive parents are warm, loving, and child-centered, but they are prone to sudden outbursts of anger when they reach their capacity of tolerance. These parents often use love withdrawal and ridicule as a means of discipline. Though these

parents often grant their children's demands for independence, they fail to engage in independence training of their children (Baumrind, 238). Like children in authoritarian homes, children reared in permissive homes also display some negative developmental outcomes. These children generally express high levels of self-confidence but are prone to drug abuse, delinquency, and a lack of interest in school during adolescence (Lamborn et al., 1991). They are also more likely to use tobacco and alcohol as minors (Cohen and Rice, 1997).

A very good example of a permissive parent in the Bible is Eli the priest (1 Sam. 2.12; 17; 29-30). In the biblical account, Eli did nothing to stop his sons from sexually exploiting the women at the Tabernacle where the Israelites came to worship. Eli's sons also took by force the best sacrificial meat from the people who came to worship God. Eli told his sons that they should not do this but took no action to actually stop them from continuing in their evil behavior toward the people of God (1 Sam. 2.23-24). God judged Eli severely for his permissive parenting and ultimately removed him from ministry because he did not stop his sons from doing evil in the house of the Lord. God told Eli that he had honored his sons more than he honored God (1 Sam. 2.29). God wants to honor Him in all actions, especially in parenting. God is honored by doing what He commands (Rev. 4.11).

Permissive parents may give verbal commands to a child but will take little action to correct the disobedient behavior. The permissive parent usually does not like the idea of discipline because he or she equates discipline with meanness. The permissive parent will usually give few boundaries to his or her children. Usually, if a child screams long enough and loud enough, the child will get his or her way. A permissive parent will

usually give in to most of the whims of their child. Permissive parents who give in to most of their child's desires will usually have out of control children. These children argue and talk back to their parents in a disrespectful way.

A permissive parent also equates guidance and instruction as meddling in their child's life. If a permissive parent has any rules at all, these rules are rarely or inconsistently enforced. If a permissive parent gives any warning to a child, the warning is not enforced and is followed by more warnings that are also not enforced. After being pushed to his or her limit by non-compliance, the permissive parent usually erupts with anger and frustration.

Permissive parents will feel like slaves to their own children because of the constant disrespect, manipulation, and confusion this parenting style brings into the home. In reality, permissive parents are simply inconsistent. He or she considers discipline and parenting simply too much work. Without discipline, this parenting style usually produces a very self-oriented child because he or she is left to become what they are by nature, selfish. (Judg. 13-16).

### **Neglectful Parenting**

Maccoby and Martin (1983) call this parenting style 'Indifferent-Uninvolved' (23). They describe these parents as emotionally detached. These parents tend to keep their children at a distance, responding to child demands only to make them cease. Neglectful parents often do not meet their children's basic needs and may expect children to raise themselves. Sometimes this is due to a parent's mental health issues or substance abuse problems. They may also lack knowledge about parenting and child development or may feel overwhelmed by life's other problems. When parents are uninvolved,

children tend to lack self-esteem and perform poorly academically. Children also exhibit frequent behavior problems and rank low in happiness.

King David is one of the best examples of an uninvolved parenting style. David was a military man who was away from his children and served as the King of Israel for much of his life, but these circumstances were not what caused him to become an uninvolved parent. David had a minimum of six wives and at least nineteen sons. Most likely David also had many daughters as well though only Tamar is mentioned in Scripture.

Primarily, David's lack of involvement and permissiveness is seen in his refusal to discipline his son Adonijah. Scripture declares that David "had not rebuked him at any time" (1 Kings 1.5-6). In other words, David was totally uninvolved in the discipline of his son. In addition, David refused to deal with Absalom for killing his brother Amnon after the rape of his sister Tamar. David also failed to allow God's law and Israel's justice system to deal righteously with Amnon's action or Absalom's murder of Amnon. Even after David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, he neglected to meet with him to resolve the issues (2 Sam. 14.28). David was an uninvolved parent.

This parenting style is much like the permissive parent though worse in many ways. The uninvolved parent has little or no actual involvement with their child. This parent is usually detached from their child's life because he or she is self-involved with other interests that are more important to them. This parent is self-oriented and neglectful of his or her responsibilities to parent. He or she has few if any expectations, little to no meaningful communication with the child, and few, if any, rules.

An uninvolved parent usually produces very unhappy children who are the least ready to deal with the pressures of life. This parenting style produces a very self-oriented child because there is little correction of this child's selfish nature. Thus, this child believes he or she can do anything they want and get away with it. David's children are the best example of this fact.

### **Authoritarian Parenting**

The authoritarian parenting style is characterized by low warmth and high control. This style has its roots in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritanical belief system that finds virtue in unquestioning obedience (Baumrind, 241). Authoritarian parents are often emotionally detached but restrictively controlling. They use force and punitive measures in order to curb their children's self-will. Although they are consistent in discipline, these parents are less likely to use rational methods of control (Ibid, 241). Authoritarian parents often use power assertion which involves the idea that the parents should be obeyed because they are bigger, more significant, and more powerful than the child. The power assertion used to guide their children, however, leaves no room for questioning or discussion. In an early study by Baumrind, authoritarian parents admitted to frightening their children as a means of control. (Ibid, 238) This parenting style has been negatively associated with academic achievement, expressiveness, and independence in children (Hill, 1995; Shumow et al., 1998). While children of authoritarian parents show high levels of obedience, research has shown this parenting style to also produce some negative outcomes in children's development, such as low levels of self-concept (Lamborn, et al., 1991) and poor adjustment at school (Shumow et al., 1998).

The authoritarian parent is best seen in the life of King Saul. He was an angry, threatening, and vindictive man. King Saul was so harsh in his treatment of David that he ended up losing the respect of his own son Jonathan (1 Sam 20.30).

An authoritarian parent runs his house with an iron fist. He or she is usually very insecure about themselves and their position in the family. This parent is usually control oriented. Children in an authoritarian household have no voice or input whatsoever. They are “to be seen and not heard.” An authoritarian parent will usually be overly-strict and will use anger, yelling, threats, and harsh discipline to keep control. An authoritarian parent will be rules oriented – “do it because I said so” — and will usually give little or no explanation or reasoning behind the rules. However, this behavior will exasperate and cause a child to lose heart (Col. 3.21). The child simply does not sense the love of the parent. The authoritarian parent has a “my way or the highway attitude.” He or she declares the law and obedience is the only path.

An authoritarian parent who is harsh and controlling can produce in their child behavior modification, but they will not affect the real change desired which is of the heart. Anger, yelling, and threats will produce temporary change in a child’s actions but will not change the heart. Changing the heart is a willing decision from within and cannot be forced from without.

God has declared in both the Old and New Testaments that a heart change is what He is after. The Father declared that His desire was that the children of Israel, “may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God” (Ps. 78.8). Jesus taught the very same thing when speaking about His desire for relationship with His people. Jesus said,

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matt. 15.8).

Note that all of these parenting styles create frustration in a parent and will bring little peace to the home. These results should bring one to the conclusion that there must be a better way.

### **Authoritative Parenting**

High levels of warmth and high levels of control characterize the authoritative parenting style. Authoritative parenting provides a balance between authoritarian and permissive parenting. Authoritative parents use reasoning and consistency in interactions with their children, placing high value on verbal give-and-take. These parents are more likely to use positive reinforcement and induction to guide their children. Induction involves explaining twelve reasons and consequences to aid children in forming and internalizing the concepts of right and wrong. Authoritative parents communicate clearly with their children, and they encourage their children’s independent strivings. According to Baumrind, “authoritative discipline tends to foster in children a particular kind of social competence which is associated with success in Western society” (245)

Authoritative parenting has been associated with numerous positive child outcomes, such as self-regulation, high social competence, positive social adjustment, and low psychological and behavioral dysfunction. Hill (1995) found authoritative parenting to be positively correlated with organization, achievement, and intellectual orientation in children. Additionally, children of authoritative parents have also been shown to possess higher levels of autonomy than children of authoritarian and permissive parents (Deslandes 2000).

The authoritative parent is not to be confused with the authoritarian parent. The authoritative parent is the parenting style parents should aspire to have in their home. Solomon is the best example of an authoritative parent. After growing up with an uninvolved father, Solomon reverses directions in his own life. In Proverbs, Solomon wrote extensively concerning the love and discipline of children and how to guide them in the way of the Lord. Solomon clearly wrote these proverbs for the guidance of his son. In Proverbs 1.8 he warns, “My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother.” Twenty-six times Solomon addressed his instructions to “My son.” Solomon very likely came to these conclusions about parenting because of what he observed in his own family life and specifically his father David’s parenting style.

This parenting style does not want to control but guide a child’s heart. An authoritative parent is assertive but not intrusive in a child’s life. Therefore, Solomon instructed, counseled, and lovingly guided his children. Note his own words: “My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice – indeed, I myself; Yes, my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things...Hear, my son, and be wise; and guide your heart in the way” (Prov. 23.15-16; 19). In reading Solomon’s words, he demonstrates that he not only authoritatively instructed his son but also encouraged him to make a choice to guide his own heart. Therefore, authoritative parents want their children to think and make wise and reasoned choices. This style of parenting desires children to become self-disciplined in their decision making. In all studies that I have read, both secular and Christian, this style of parenting has the greatest potential for producing the most well-adjusted and happy children.

Other authoritative parents that are present in Scripture would include Elkannah and Hannah, the parents of Samuel the Prophet (1 Sam. 1-2), Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist (Luke 1), Mordecai the adoptive parent of Esther (Esther 1-10), and Naomi as the single parental figure in the life of Ruth (Ruth 1-4). Each of these parents were authoritative, but not authoritarian in their parenting. Each child became a very effective instrument in the hand of God.

### **Research Design Literature**

This research project was a project that intended to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The project was a pre-intervention project that intended to find out what parenting methods parents in Anglican Church Arochukwu use and what reasons they may have for their parenting method.

The quantitative survey was done to attempt to measure as many of the one hundred parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Sensing states that a survey allows a researcher to find a sample from the entire group instead of just those who could have been measured using a questionnaire or one-on-one interviews (Sensing, 115). Judith Bell also advocates the use of a quantitative survey for a large group. She argues that it allows the researcher to have the ability “not only to describe but also to compare, to relate one characteristic to another and to demonstrate that certain features exist in certain categories” (Bell 14). Lastly, using a mixed-method of quantitative and qualitative research tools made it possible for the quantitative survey to help compensate for an inherent weakness in qualitative interviews. Sensing states,

A primary weakness that results from using qualitative methods with perceived experts centers on the nature of who they are as advocates in the field. They have a stake in presenting their congregation or their identity from a certain perspective. Researchers need to exercise caution when analyzing the data because they may only be hearing a rehearsed script. (Sensing, 21)

In addition, because this is a mixed-method project, the use of qualitative, semi-structured interviews was used to complement and enhance the research gained through the quantitative survey. Sensing contends that doing interviews in combination with surveys allows the researcher to gain new information not discovered in the interviews and explain answers discovered in the surveys. By using a qualitative interview, the researcher is able to gather data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes (102-113).

### **Summary of Literature**

The Old and the New Testament contains many examples for effective parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; therefore, the Bible must form the basic foundation for the parents as well as for the child. A strong, vibrant faith in parents does not automatically translate to an equally strong, vibrant faith in children. The Bible provides the perfect roadmap to guide Christian parents in the ways that cultivate a strong personal and familial faith. Both the Old Testament (Prov. 22.6) and New Testament (Eph. 6.1-4) show guidelines for raising godly families. Packer and Tenny stated that “The biblical teaching for family life includes instructions for children, mothers, and fathers [and shows] examples of

families that followed God's wishes [who] were greatly blessed; [while] families that disobeyed God...reaped the consequences" (411).

Every Jewish couple married with thoughts of having children. Male children were particularly prized. The Jewish father took on the role of spiritual leader of the family, functioning as the family priest. The Jewish wife willingly took a place of submission to her husband, and her primary goal was to bear children to her husband. The wife's main responsibilities revolved around the household and children. Together, the husband and wife were to train their children to know and serve the Lord.

Prior to gathering the second generation of Hebrews in the wilderness to be reminded of God's commandments, the Lord told Moses, "Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, *and that they may teach their children*" (italics added) (Deut. 4.10). After he reiterated the Ten Commandments to the people, Moses reminded them to fear the Lord God and to keep His statutes and commandments which were for them, their sons, and their grandsons (Deut. 6.2). Fathers were expected to teach their son; son would teach grandson, and so on. Immediately after this, Moses commanded them, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6.4). The implication is that fathers not only should do this themselves, but that they are responsible for training their sons and daughters to do the same.

In the New Testament, the example of Jesus being raised by Mary and Joseph is seen. They obeyed the Old Testament dictates and customs of their ancestors by having the baby Jesus circumcised on the eighth day and dedicating him at the temple (Luke 2.21-24).

One can also make the argument that raising one's children in the training and admonition of the Lord is part of contending earnestly for the faith as directed in Jude (Jude 3) as is wonderfully illustrated by Paul when he details Timothy's spiritual upbringing at the hands of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. (2 Tim. 1.4-5). Although the father was commanded to be the spiritual head of the household, Scripture implies that Timothy's father, being a Greek, was not a believer, so apparently his mother and grandmother took the responsibility of passing on the baton of faith in their household (Acts 16.1-3). Their faithfulness was rewarded with a child who grew up to love and serve the Lord, making an impact upon countless generations.

Paul offers some timeless warnings to Christians and parents in his letter to the Ephesians. In chapter five, the apostle reminds parents and others that they are no longer walking in darkness but rather in the light of Jesus Christ. He urges them to behave as children of that light and have no intermingling with works of darkness but rather to expose them (Eph. 5.8-10) He calls those who do not heed his wisdom "fools." Apparently, the Ephesians, like many Christian's today, gravitate toward darkness unwittingly. Paul exhorts them, and he exhorts Christian's today, "Awake you who sleep, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light!" (Eph. 5.14). The fact that Paul was writing his letter to those who were professed believers and telling them to rise from the dead (a term normally reserved for those who are physically dead or unbelievers who are spiritually dead) should give one pause. He addressed his letter to the saints at Ephesus.

Paul seems to be shouting to the Ephesian believers, "WAKE UP!" The Ephesians seemed not to realize the intentions that the enemy had in their lives; shameful

things done in secret were still shameful, and dabbling in darkness meant turning away from Light. Believers and Christian parents today need to heed God's wakeup call as well. While parents sleep, the enemy is actively trying to lure them and their children away from the Lord. Left unchecked, the baseness of society infiltrates their homes and unbiblical doctrines influence both parents and children. The enemy uses the lures of the world and the flesh to lead people astray. Fascination with the occult has also become a preoccupation in today's society. In virtually every small town and big city, fortune tellers, spiritualists, and New-Age stores thrive.

Before one realizes it, the lines between light and darkness have blurred, something that can have disastrous consequences for Christians today as well as for future generations. John Eldredge (2007) states, "The major ways we give claim to the Enemy in our lives are through sin and making agreements with him. Most of our sins fall under the category of pride (independence from God), self-sufficiency and idolatry (giving our devotion or fear or any part of the heart to something other than God)" (228). Parents must intentionally walk in the light and protect themselves and their children from the evil one. A game plan for those wanting to protect themselves and their children is found in Ephesians 6.12ff.

In summary, all that is needed to ensure effective parenting is enshrined in the Scriptures. A study of Augustine's Confession, Calvin's Commentary on Psalm 78, and John Wesley's Sermon on Colossian 3.20 affirm this fact. Everything in this section points to the scriptures as the foundation for parenting. Therefore, a strict adherence to the parenting guidelines in the scriptures will give birth to a generation raised in the fear of God and filled with good virtues.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter covers the research methodology that was used for this project with an analysis of the methods used to both choose the participants in this project and conduct the research necessary to complete the purpose of the project. The step-by-step procedures for how the project was done are detailed including how each research tool was used to fulfill the project's purpose and answer the research questions. In addition, the unique context of the Anglican Communion is examined, a time-line for the project laid out, and the factors contributing to the validity and reliability of this study are presented.

#### **Nature and Purpose of the Project**

The Anglican Church has emphasized biblical parenting from its leadership and training institutions as the preferred method of training children in Anglican churches. In addition, research of biblical texts was conducted. Additionally, most scholars argue for the biblical parenting style in the training of godly children. However, the growing rate of ignorance and neglect of the word of God by many parents with regards to the fundamentals of child upbringing in our society, especially from a biblical point of view, has resulted in child delinquency and lack of the fear of God. This ignorance has further led to child abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, stealing, and other crimes or violence which are being perpetuated by these children who have no biblical and godly parental upbringing. Thus, the nature of this project was to study the parenting patterns of parents at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu and attempt to understand their attitudes towards

the biblical parenting style and the disconnect between the biblical parenting style taught at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu and the practice of this style.

In addition, the purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu.

### **Research Questions**

In order to find the pattern of parenting that are used in the Anglican Church in Arochukwu and to propose how the biblical parenting style's use can be increased; the research process was guided by three questions:

**Research Question #1.** What were the participants' knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding biblically based parenting before the class?

This research question addressed the purpose of determining the style of parenting that parents in Anglican Church Arochukwu use and what reasons they may have for their parenting method. Aspects studied in the literature review were biblical, theological, and practical factors that contribute to the primarily current style of parenting at the Anglican Church Arochukwu.

The purpose of this question is to establish the background knowledge, attitude, and behavior of the participants before the training. To collect data for this question a researcher designed pre-test instrument named "Parenting Interview/Survey" which was conducted with the participants.

**Research Question #2.** What were the participants' knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding biblically based parenting after the class?

This research question addressed the purpose by studying the participants' knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding biblically based parenting after the class and how these factors have influenced their current patterns and methods of parenting.

The researcher designed a Post-Test Assessment Questionnaire to evaluate the changes after participants had participated in the training. Additionally, a semi-structured interview entitled "Biblically Based Parenting Interview" (BBPI) was conducted with ten focus groups to gather data about their experiences. The questions concentrated on the changes that occurred in the participants after the training.

**Research Question #3.** What did the participants identify in the biblical parenting class as most impactful/influential/effective?

This research question addressed the purpose statement to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu.

To answer this question, a researcher designed focus group named BBPI which were conducted with the parents. Both quantitative and qualitative questions on the pre-test and post-tests assessments survey were used to examine the impact of the biblically based parenting style on the participants. This question sought to determine the ways in which the training exercise had assisted the participants in becoming better parents in their context.

### **Ministry Context**

The ministry context of the Anglican Communion was an initiative set up with the aim of helping all Anglican Christians to be theologically alert and sensitive to the call of God. One of the unique characteristics of the Anglican Church is the Theological

education that aims to serve the strategic objectives of the Anglican Communion to foster intentional discipleship, promote peace, reconciliation, and justice, and strengthen awareness of Anglican identity. The Anglican Communion aims to respect exploration and experiment, honor every local context and, at the same time, calls each member together into communion and mutual accountability.

The Anglican ministry is both the leadership and agency of Christian service in the Anglican Communion. “Ministry” commonly refers to the office of ordained clergy: the threefold order of bishops, priests, and deacons. More accurately, Anglican ministry includes many laypeople who devote themselves to the ministry of the church either individually or in lower/assisting offices such as lector, acolyte, sub-deacon, Eucharistic minister, cantor, musicians, parish secretary or assistant, warden, vestry member, etc.

Ultimately, all baptized members of the church are considered to partake in the ministry of the Body of Christ. “It might be useful if Anglicans dropped the word *minister* when referring to the clergy...In our tradition, ordained persons are either bishops, priests, or deacons, and should be referred to as such” (Ingham 149).

Each of the provinces (usually corresponding to individual world nations) of the Anglican Communion has a high degree of independence from the other provinces, and each of them have slightly different structures for ministry, mission, and governance. However, personal leadership is always vested in a member of the clergy (a bishop at provincial and diocesan levels and a priest — often termed a rector or pastor at the parish level — and consensus derived by synodical government.) At different levels of the church's structure, laity, clergy (priests/pastors and deacons), and bishops meet together with prayer to deliberate over church governance. These gatherings are variously called

conferences, synods, general or church-wide conventions, convocations, councils, chapters, and vestries.

### **Participants**

The participants for the study were parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu.

### **Criteria for Selection**

The initial participants for this study were carefully chosen to match the purpose and research questions associated with this project. The selection project was for the most part purposive, but there was a random element used to obtain a sample for the interviews.

Two characteristics were used to choose the participants. First, all the participants for this study were parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Second, all of the participants were the parents of the children who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. These two characteristics insured that participants fit the purpose statement and research questions. First, the participants' status as parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu narrowed the field to fit both the purpose statement and all three of the questions. Second, the participants' status as parents of the children who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu aligns with the purpose of exploring parenting patterns of current parenting at Anglican Church Arochukwu and also helps answer research questions one, two, and three.

To keep the subject pool for this study focused, parents who are not members of Anglican Church are not included in the study to make sure the study is not too broad and does not attempt to solve problems that are not controlled by the Anglican Church.

Furthermore, although my research showed that this issue spreads beyond Arochukwu, the Anglican Church in Arochukwu has over forty churches with a total number of about 1,700 members in three selected Anglican churches in Arochukwu. This sample size allowed me to choose a sufficient pool of participants for my study. To confirm those criteria, questions were added on the Parenting Survey to ask the participants if they were the parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. If they did not answer yes to this question on the Parenting Survey, their survey was not counted.

The last question in my survey asked participants if they would be willing to take part in a thirty minute interview to further explore parenting methods and styles. Participants were informed that ten candidates would be chosen for interviews, and, if they were willing to participate, to write their name and email address in the survey so they could be contacted to setup an interview. Sixty-seven parents completed the survey, and thirty-one indicated their willingness to take part in an interview. Out of thirty-one, a random sample of ten was picked using Excel as documented by SurveyMonkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/random-sample-in-excel/>).”

### **Description of Participants**

As stated above, the candidates were all parents of children who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. They were all over the age of eighteen, but there was no limit on age as long as they were parents worshipping at Anglican Church Arochukwu. The genders of the candidates were both men and women, and they were of a variety of ethnicities. The participants were in good mental and physical condition.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Informed Consent was received by participants in the online Parenting Survey by way of asking applicants to read the Parenting Survey Informed Consent and answering yes to the question, “Do you agree to the above terms? By clicking ‘Yes’, you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in this survey.” The participants in the Parenting Interview were given a written copy of the Parenting Interview Informed Consent to read, sign, and date if the interview was in person or were sent the informed consent by way of email and asked to return them signed if the interview took place by way of Skype or FaceTime.

Confidentiality for the Parenting Survey was ensured by using privacy protocols of the online survey tool, Survey Monkey, which are laid out at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/privacy-policy/>. Furthermore, all survey responses were strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. The information was coded by Survey Monkey, remained confidential, and was only accessible by using a login and strong password on the site.

Confidentiality for the Parenting Interview was obtained by an assurance in the informed consent that the participants’ answers were confidential and only accessible to the research team. Furthermore, all data was secured via password to an account which was also known only by the research team. Data downloaded from the website was secured on the secure, encrypted folder of the researcher’s laptop which is password protected. Any data printed in hard copies was secured in the researcher’s locked security file box. Six to twelve months after completion of the dissertation and its final approval, all data will be deleted from the website. Data saved on the researcher’s computer will

be securely deleted by FileShredder, and all hard copies of data will be shredded and burned as well one year after the date the dissertation is completed and approved.

Anonymity was ensured for the Parenting Survey. Anonymity was secured by only using the responses in the aggregate to form a composite of responses and did not refer to individual responses in the reporting of the study. For the Parenting Interviews, each candidate was identified using a four or five letter code beginning with the letters “abc” for interview and a number between one and 10.

### **Instrumentation**

Two researcher-designed instruments collected data in this study. The first one was the Parenting Survey, and the second one was the semi-structured Parenting Interview.

The Parenting Survey was a researcher-designed quantitative instrument to measure the parenting styles and attitudes of the parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu which helped establish information and trends for all three research questions. The survey also included a demographic section which identified age, marital status, number of years married, number of children the participant has, and educational level of each participant. The goal of this instrument was to identify trends of parenting methods for the whole family. The survey was used to sample the entire group of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu. The survey had eighteen questions and used some binary questions where participants chose between biblical and other parenting style for their answers and also had a forced choice Likert Scale of 1-5 for questions where participants were asked for an opinion or observation.

The Parenting Interview was a research-designed, semi-structured, qualitative instrument used to allow a randomly picked group of ten participants to further explain questions used in the survey and dig deeper into other aspects needed for the research questions. The rationale for this instrument was to allow the parents to explain their parenting method, choices of parenting methods, and their rationale for their parenting methods. There were ten questions in the interview and an eleventh question which allowed the participant to clarify any of his or her answers and gave an opportunity to express any further thoughts on biblical and other parenting methods. This tool helped answer the three research questions and formed the basis for helping create suggestions to help parents use more biblical parenting.

### **Expert Review**

Since the project's assessment instruments were researcher-designed, three expert reviewers were used to evaluate and fine-tune the questions. A cover letter explaining the project, rationale, and the research questions were sent along with the instruments and an evaluation protocol for each instrument to each reviewer. The helpful comments of the reviewers tightened up the wording of some questions, combined or eliminated some questions, suggested other questions that might be asked, and affirmed the alignment of the instrument questions with the research questions.

### **Reliability and Validity of Project Design**

The use of the Parenting Survey for the entire sample of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu was the best way to explore the parenting methods, parenting method rationales, and other factors influencing parenting styles of the entire community and matched up with the purpose

and all three research methods. The Parenting Interview enabled deeper research with a smaller sample of the larger group in order to investigate parenting methods and rationales while allowing participants to expand on their answers. The instruments were reliable as the Parenting Survey followed best practices for a survey, including use of the Likert Scale, and received a 29 percent response rate. In addition, the Parenting Interview followed the best practices for semi-structured interviews, including a consistent order and reading of questions.

Both instruments were administered to the participants in a consistent basis. The Parenting Interview was offered on the internet so that the presentation was consistent and a reminder was sent out to remind parents to complete the interview. In the Parenting Interview, all the questions were asked in the same way each time, and the researcher was intentional not to make any comments to indicate approval or disapproval of answers to the questions. Plus, the findings of the two studies were trustworthy and generalized, because there was a mixed-method approach of a quantitative Parenting Survey and a qualitative Parenting Interview.

### **Data Collection**

The project design was a mixed-method, pre-intervention, which used a quantitative Parenting Survey and a qualitative Parenting Interview. The Parenting Survey was done using Survey Monkey and was sent out to every parent who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu. To facilitate a quick response, participants were given four days to complete the survey. A 29 percent response rate was obtained using these methods.

The qualitative, semi-structured Parenting Interview candidates were identified by asking for volunteers in the Parenting Survey to give their names and email addresses if they were willing to be interviewed. Of the thirty-one responses, ten were chosen using a randomization program in Excel. They received an email nine days after the survey closed confirming their selection for the interviewing and laying out the process for the interview. The ten candidates were then contacted by phone the next day, and in-person interviews were setup for ten participants in the next two days.

The quantitative Parenting Survey was done to find answers to the research questions from a large group of people, such as the sixty-seven parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu. As Judith Bell states, the survey is a good tool for a “large group of individuals to enable the research not only to describe but also to compare, to relate one characteristic to another and to demonstrate that certain features exist in certain categories” (14).

The qualitative Parenting Interview was done to create a mixed-method study which pulled more in-depth answers from the quantitative research done in the Parenting Survey. In addition, the qualitative research method of the Parenting Interview strengthened the research, as J.W. Creswell contends, “the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes” (37).

### **Data Analysis**

The data was collected in a mixed-method format with a quantitative Parenting Survey sent to sixty-seven parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu. In addition, qualitative, semi-structured Parenting

Interviews were administered to ten randomly selected parents who took the survey and indicated their willingness to participate in the interviews.

The online service SurveyMonkey provided the quantitative data from the Parenting Survey. The data was collected and analyzed in Microsoft Excel 2020. Analyzation by Excel computed the descriptive statistics, most notably the mean and standard deviation of each question. Each question was individually analyzed to determine the statistical significance of the responses, mean, and standard deviation.

The semi-structured Parenting Interview protocol provided qualitative data which was recorded, and notes were created during the interview.

The data in this study was analyzed by the use of simple frequency percentage statistical formula. The data was analyzed on the basis of the number and percentage of the responses to each question. Hence, conclusions were drawn based on the number of respondents and what percentage they represent of the sample population of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

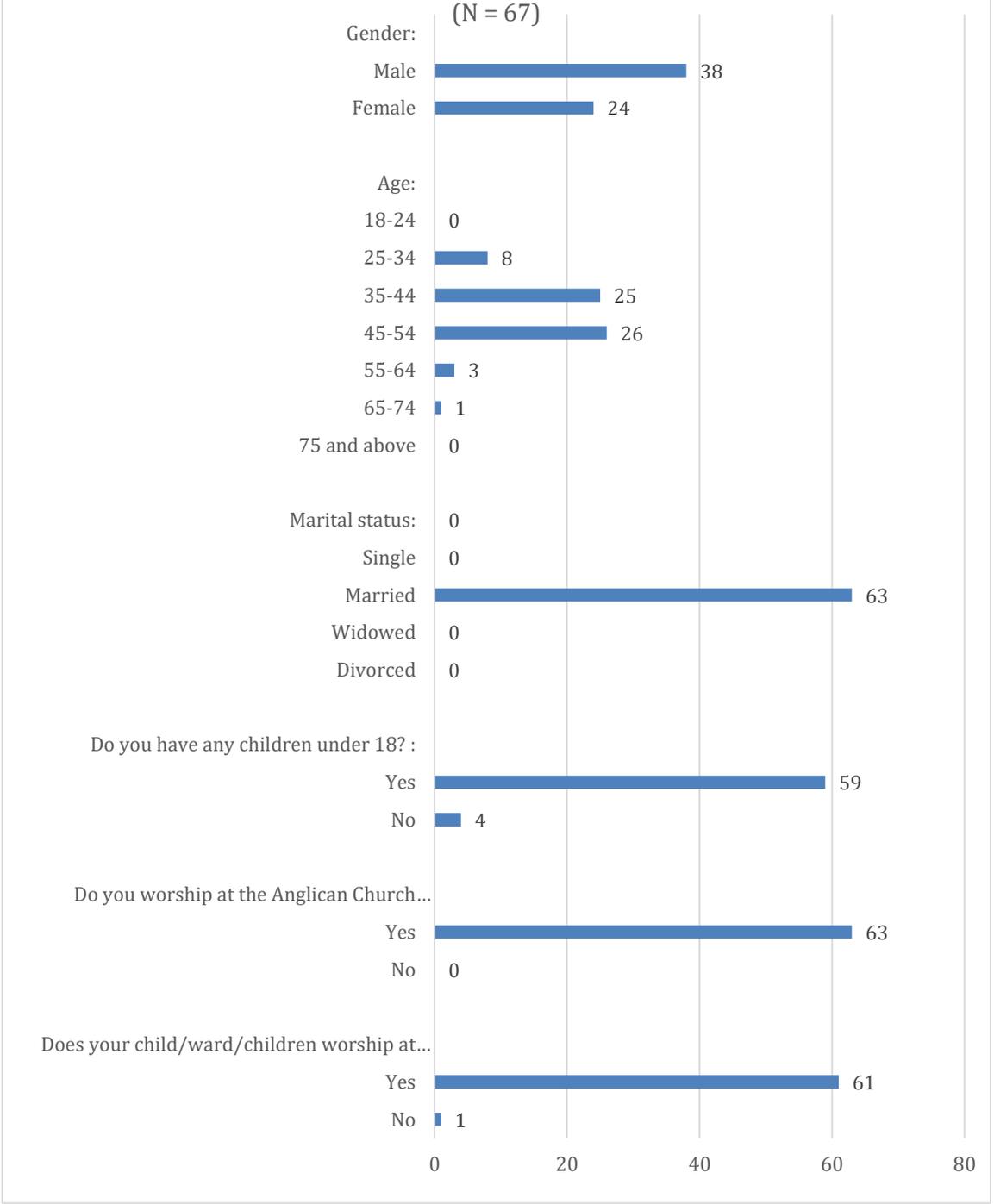
The Anglican Church has emphasized biblical parenting in their leadership and training institutions as the preferred method of training children in Anglican churches. The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church in Arochukwu.

This chapter identifies the participants in the study and their demographic makeup. Then the chapter presents the quantitative data from the pre- and post-test Parenting Survey and the coded qualitative data from the Parenting Interviews for each of the three research questions. Chapter Four concludes with a list of major findings from the presented data.

#### **Participants**

The participants for this study were parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The Parenting Survey was sent out to one hundred parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Of that number, sixty-seven parents, who met the qualifications, filled out the survey. Of that group of sixty-seven, thirty-one volunteered to take part in the Parenting Interview of which ten were randomly selected. The demographic profile of those who took part in the Parenting Survey is represented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: The demographic profile of those who took part in the Parenting Survey



### **Research Question #1: Description of Evidence**

What were the participants' knowledge, attitude and behavior regarding biblically based parenting before the class?

The tool used for collecting the answer to this research question was the pre-test survey administered through Survey Monkey. In the survey,

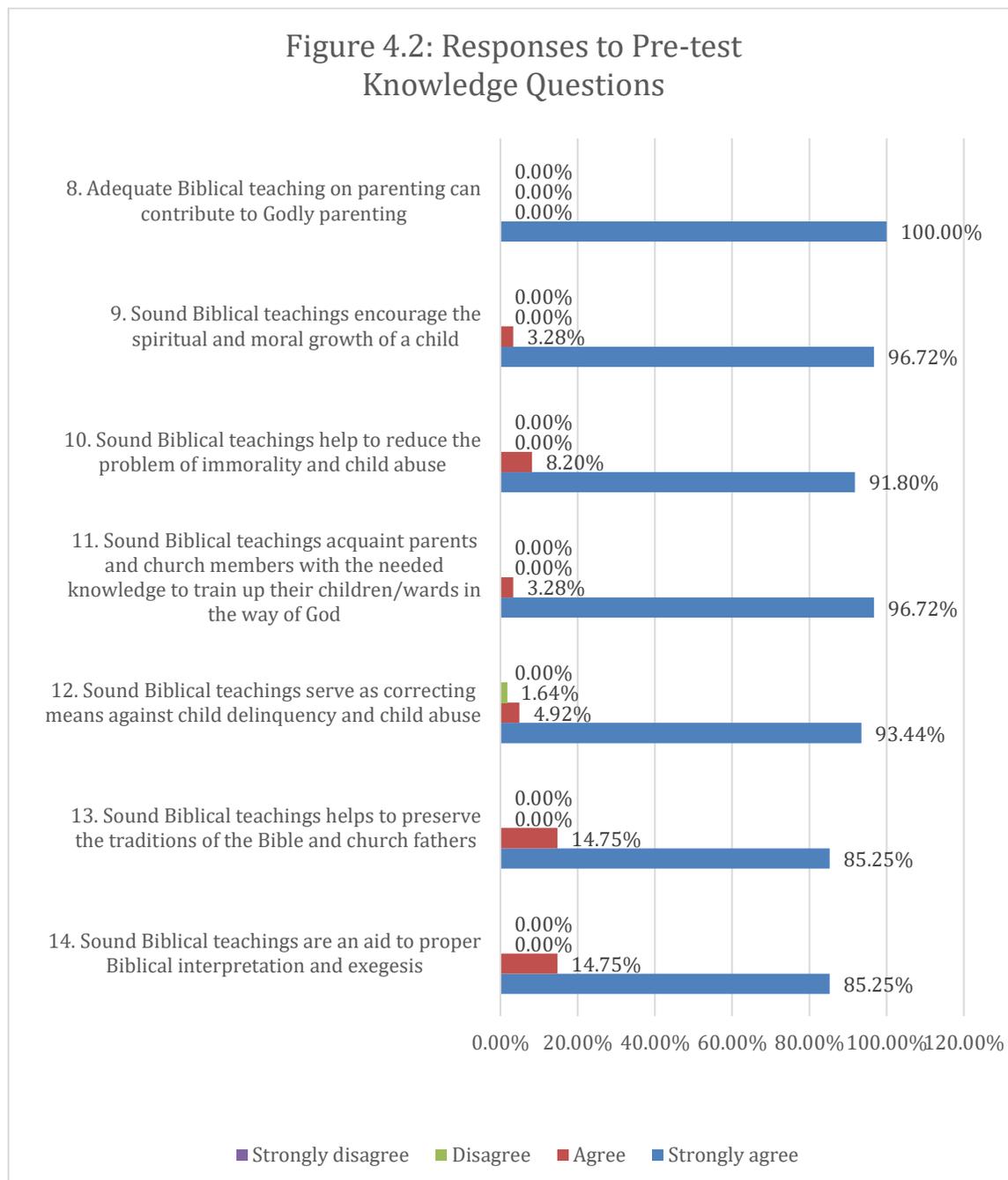
- Questions 8-14 tested the participants' knowledge on biblical parenting and the roles sound biblical teachings play in the parenting styles of parents.
- Questions 15-25 tested the participants' attitude on some of the factors impairing adequate teaching and the impact of the lack of sound biblical teaching on parenting in the church today.
- Questions 26-30 tested the participants' behavior regarding the teaching methods that can influence biblical parenting.

Each of these three categories are discussed in turn.

#### **Responses to Pre-test Knowledge Questions**

The pre-test survey yielded significant observable data regarding the participants' knowledge on biblical parenting and the roles sound biblical teachings play in the parenting styles of parents. The results of the knowledge questions can be seen in Figure 4.2. This chart shows that no participant disagreed with the point that adequate biblical teaching on parenting can contribute to Godly parenting. The chart further shows that 91.53 percent of the participants strongly agree on the roles sound biblical teachings play in parenting. However, in question twelve, one person (1.64 percent) disagreed that sound biblical teachings serve as correcting means against child delinquency and child abuse. The pre-test surveys also stimulated verbal feedback from the interview. One participant

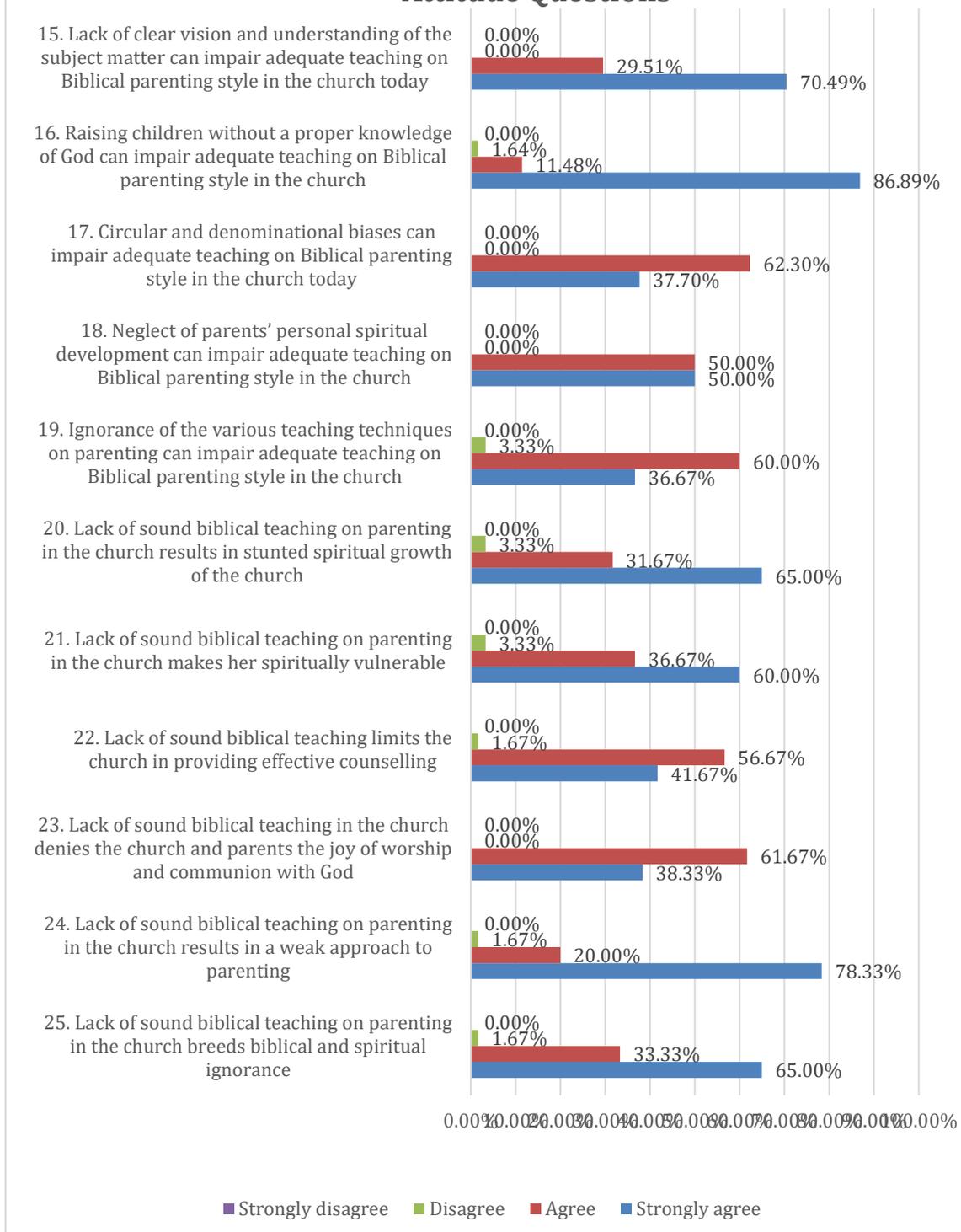
remarked after taking the survey that the biblical based parenting style is most challenging and impactful to her and said that she will do things differently in order to improve her parenting style. Others made similar contents.



### **Responses to Pre-test Attitude Questions**

The pre-test data for the attitude questions 15-25 can be seen in Figure 4.3. This figure shows the participants' attitude on some of the factors impairing adequate teaching on biblical parenting and the impact of the lack of sound biblical teaching on parenting in the church today. Having carefully studied the responses, no participant disagreed or strongly disagreed on this point. In seven of the eleven questions, over three quarters of the participants were already in agreement. The widest variance in responses came in response to question 16: "Raising children without a proper knowledge of God can impair adequate teaching on Biblical parenting style in the church." The standard deviation (0.42) for question 16 was the highest.

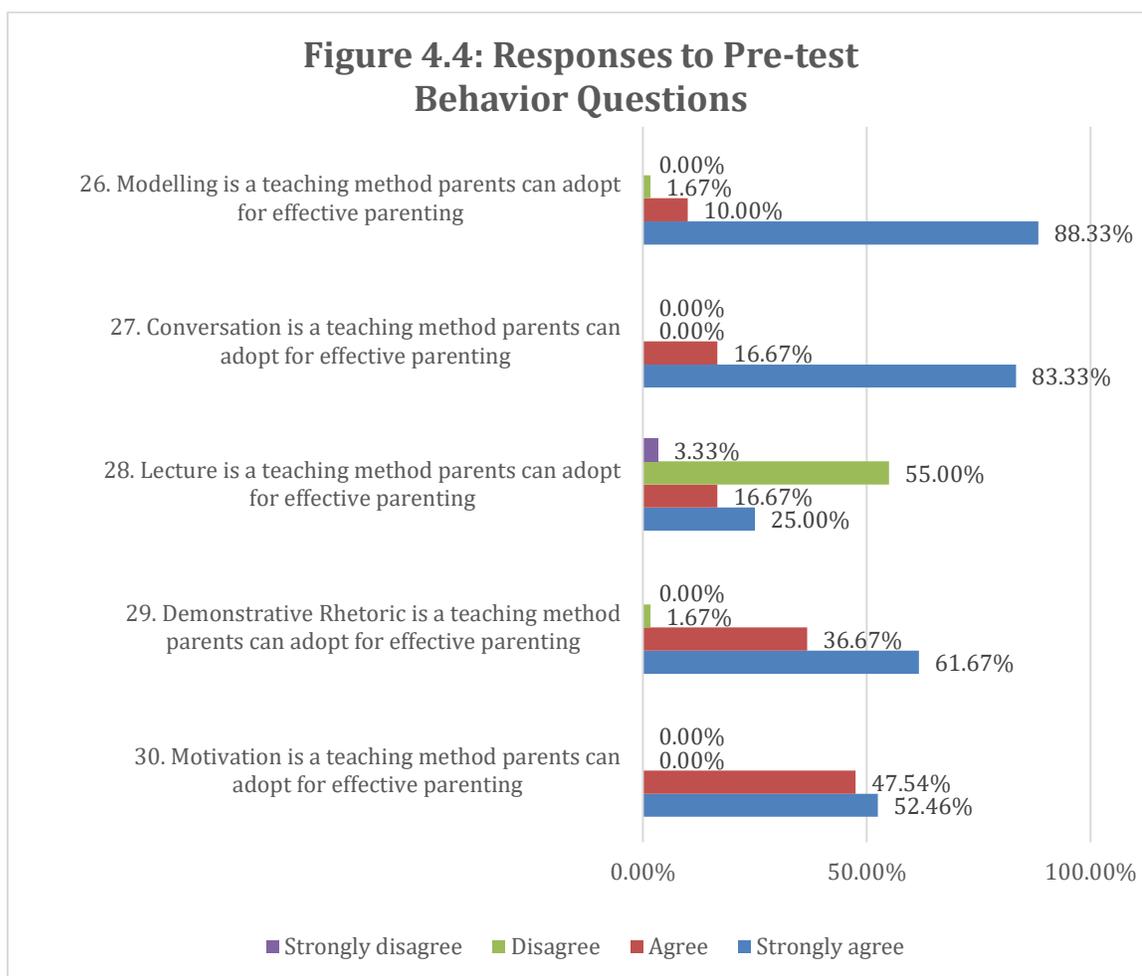
**Figure 4.3: Responses to Pre-Test Attitude Questions**



### Responses to Pre-test Behavior Questions

The pre-test data for the behavior questions 26-30 can be seen in Figure 4.4. This figure shows the participants' behavior regarding the teaching methods that can influence biblical parenting. In question 28, interestingly 55 percent of the participants were in disagreement that lecture is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting.

In four out of the five questions, more than 21 percent of the participants indicated that they strongly agree to Modelling, Conversation, Demonstrative Rhetoric, and Motivation as the teaching methods parents can adopt for effective parenting.



## **Research Question #2: Description of Evidence**

What were the participants' knowledge, attitude and behavior regarding biblically based parenting after the class?

The evidence for answering research question #2 comes from the data collected from post-assessment questionnaires administered to the participants on the last days of the twelve-weeks teaching on Biblically Based Parenting.

The post-test data for the participants' knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding Biblically Based Parenting after the class can be seen in Figure 4.5.

### **Knowledge**

For most of the question, the post-test demonstrated an increase in knowledge among the participants. The several observations and subjective comments indicated positive change in the attitude and behavior of the participants towards biblically based parenting as was evident in the weekly feedback. One participant in her forties remarked several times that "all these while I had thought that King David was a good example of biblical parenting, I have now realized that one can be a good leader, but a failure in his family." Others made similar statements throughout the class. Also, responses to open-ended questions were given on the post-test survey. Participants wrote comments like:

- "I really enjoyed this class! The biblical based parenting style is most challenging and impacting."
- "I learned so much from this teaching! I will try to improve my parenting style."
- "I learned so much and enjoyed the teachings! The use of illustrations, stories and analogy made the class engaging and interesting."

- “I have learned so much, I am inspired to do something for God regarding my children’s upbringing.”

### **Attitude/Behavior**

The qualitative data demonstrates that participants in the biblically based parenting class were asking questions and thinking reflectively with regard to their attitudes towards their parenting styles. The questions did not always necessarily correspond to the attitudes represented in the survey questions. One participant called the researcher in the middle of the week following one of the class and asked for a private conversation. The conversation revealed that he was re-examining his understanding about the Bible because of the statement in Proverbs 13.24 “He who spares his rod hates his son...” (NKJV). He was wondering if such act will not be cruelty towards the child or child abuse. He was wrestling with what it means that the Bible “is encouraging parents to use the rod on their children.”

There were also comments about attitudinal growth from the open-ended questions on the post-test survey which invited general comments about biblically based parenting. Participants wrote comments like:

- “I appreciated learning how the Bible shows God’s deepest concern for the upbringing of my children and the importance of team work between couples in the training of their children. I learned that I am directly responsible to God for the spiritual life of my children. I learned that it is my responsibility to teach my children the word of God.”

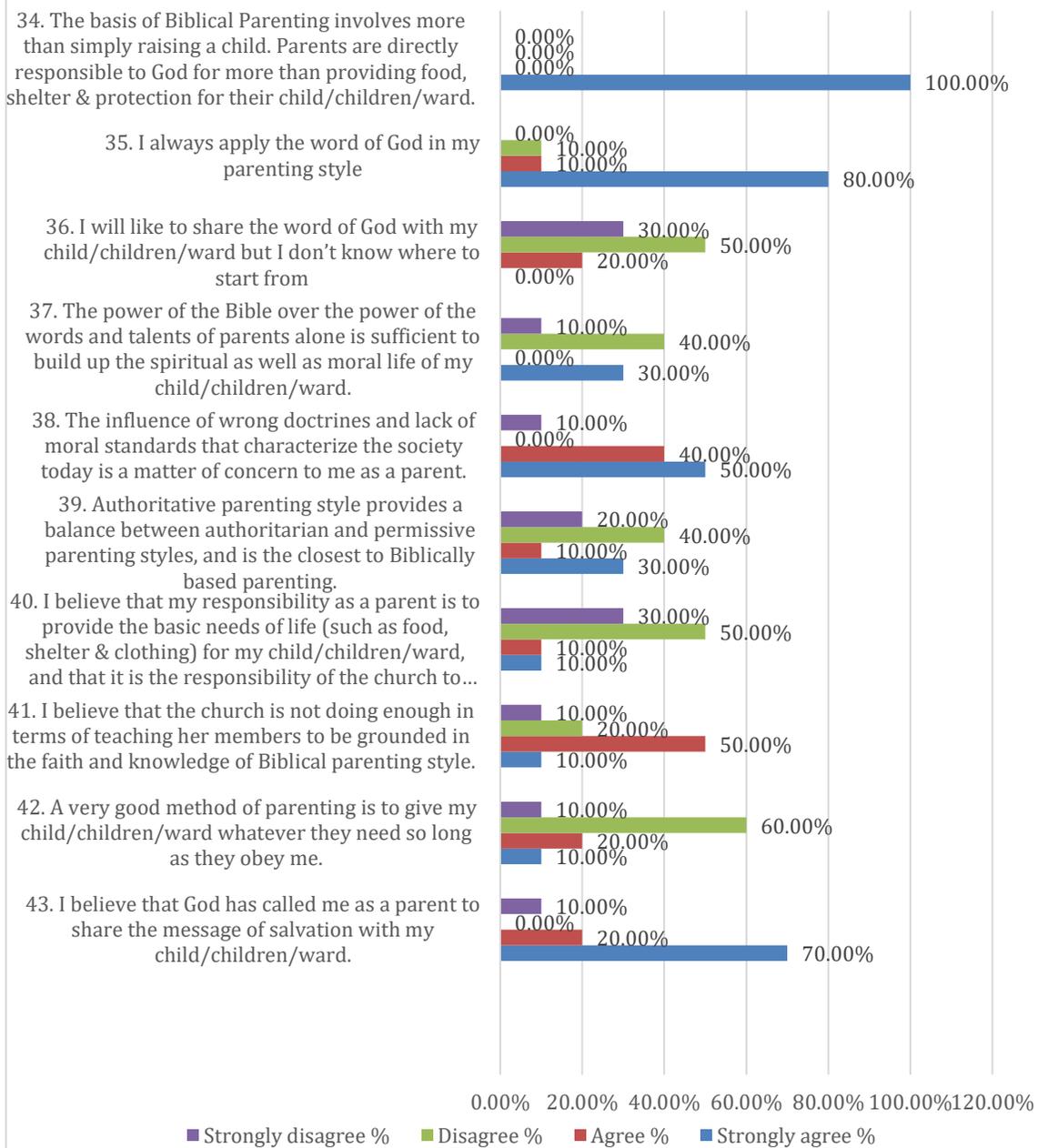
- “A thought-provoking class... it makes me look at myself deep inside regarding the thoughts I have of my children concerning their spiritual and moral upbringing.”
- “Loved this teaching. I was inspired to think differently about parenting, about how God calls me to teach my children the word of God.”

Furthermore, the open-ended questions in the post-test assessment survey also shed light on the changes in attitudes and behavior in comparison with what was observed in the biblically based parenting class during the pre-test discussions.

Participants’ change in attitude and behavior in the area of parenting was also observed. During the class discussion as well as individual responses, participants consider first the context of biblically based parenting and then the contextual approach to their parenting style. Comments were made about attitudinal change such as:

- “I now understand that if my child is to grow spiritually as well as morally, I must emphasize the power of the Bible over the power of my own words and talents”.
- “The Bible is the inspired word of God to accomplish “teaching, reproof, correction, and training for righteousness”, it would be irresponsible for me to not use the Bible in my parenting style as I am striving to disciple and train my children.”
- “I now understand that parenting involves the act of translating God’s word from the biblical contexts into contemporary context of my children.”

Figure 4.5 - Responses to Post-test Questions



### Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

What did the participants identify in the biblical parenting class as most impactful?

Qualitative Data obtained through the Parenting Interviews found some common themes that showed what the participants identified as most impactful.

The first section of the post-test assessment questionnaire enjoined participants to look back at the twelve weeks of contextual preaching training and place a value on it in terms of their benefits and impact on their parenting style. The values were based on a five-point Likert scale with '1' as the "least valuable" and '5' as "most valuable" (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 - The value attributed to the elements of the Biblically Based Parenting Class**

		Value				
Elements of Training		1	2	3	4	5
A	Content of training			3	7	10
B	Discussion/Interaction			2	8	10
C	Application			4	5	11
D	Biblically Based Parenting Style	3			5	12
E	How easy is it to apply the Bible to parenting?	2			5	13
F	How impactful is the training to your life?	1			2	17

	Total	6		9	32	73
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About 92 percent of the participants rated the elements of the training to be most valuable to them.

The responses from the Focus Group sessions and the participants weekly Journal also depicts the impact of the elements of the training program. The responses ranged from the indifferent to the profoundly excited. One of the strongest responses came from the teachings on “other parenting styles” as well as a comment about “relating the Bible to the context of the child.” The participant said “the way you apply illustrations, stories and personal testimony to our daily life in the Anglican Church Arochukwu in conjunction with the Biblically based parenting made the class engaging and interesting.”

There were comments on the impact of the training such as:

- “I now understand that parenting involves the act of translating God’s word from the biblical contexts to the context of my children.”
- “The focus of parenting must be Bible centered but within the cultural context of my children.”
- “Have become more aware of the way to communicate the Bible effectively in my parenting style in bridging the world of my children. As I learnt the essential of the biblical text and the context.”
- “I found this week’s class awesome and exciting.”
- “A thought-provoking class. It makes me to think very deeply on how to communicate the word of God more contextually to my children.”
- “I was inspired to think differently about my parenting method”.

The above responses conveyed the important value placed on the training program by the participants.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

The data gathered from this project produced significant findings on the matter of Biblically Based Parenting Style in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Several major findings became clear from the data analysis of both research tools. Some of the findings includes:

1. Sound Biblical teaching is very important in the training of children.
2. Biblically Based Parenting style requires methodology to be effective and result oriented.
3. Christian parents and the church as a body must prioritize sound biblical teaching in order to train up our children morally and spiritually.
4. The need exists for Biblically Based Parenting training so as to increase the effectiveness of biblical parenting and produce changes in the attitude, knowledge, and behavior of the parents.

## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

The Anglican Church needs to pay more serious and urgent attention to biblically based parenting through adequate teachings on the biblical appraisal of parenting styles to help parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu know the biblical standards God has laid down for them to bring up their children. The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of parents who participated in a biblically based parenting class at the Anglican Church Arochukwu.

This chapter identifies four findings from this research project and explains how they correspond to personal observations, my literature survey, and the biblical framework of the project. Then, limitations of the research study, unexpected observations, and recommendations for further study are explored.

#### Major Findings

**Major Finding #1 — Sound Biblical teaching is very important in the training of children.**

The first major finding is that sound biblical teaching is very important in the training of children.

I have observed many parents in the Anglican Church in Arochukwu struggling with the upbringing of their children due to the lack of knowledge of the word of God that has led to deficiency toward effective and sound biblical parenting which is a major factor why our society is full of delinquents.

During my research, the majority of participants strongly agreed that sound biblical teachings acquaint parents and Church members with the needed knowledge to train up their children in the way of God. The Parenting Survey and the Parenting Interviews also confirmed that parents in the Anglican Church Arochukwu had the idea of biblically based parenting methods but were not properly equipped with the biblical knowledge on how to apply this method to their parenting style. The observations and findings clearly demonstrated that their own parenting method is not as influential as the biblically based parenting style. In the Parenting Interview, some of the participants spoke of their dilemma resulting from ignorance and neglect of the word of God with regards to the fundamentals of child upbringing especially from the biblical point of view. Most of the parents in the interviews modeled their parenting after other parenting styles that seemed convenient to them.

Other responses from the Focus Group sessions also depicts the importance of sound biblical teaching in the training of children. One of the strongest responses came from the teachings on “relating the Bible to the context of the child.” The participant said:

Sound Biblical teaching is important in the growth and maturity of a child. This will encourage the spiritual and moral growth of the child, help to reduce problems of scriptural ignorance, it will also acquaint parents with the needed knowledge and experience to train up their children in the way of God, serve as a correcting tool against heresy in a way to help preserve the tradition of the Bible and the Christian faith, and will also aid proper biblical interpretation and exegesis.

In my literature review, Packer and Tenny support this finding. Packer and Tenny stated that, “The biblical teaching for family life includes instructions for children, mothers, and fathers [and shows] examples of families that followed God’s wishes [who] were greatly blessed; [while] families that disobeyed God...reaped the consequences.” (411) Thus, to help parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu have a godlier parenting style, the biblically based parenting teaching must be applied in order to acquaint parents with the needed knowledge and experience to train up their children in the way of God. This training serves as a correcting tool against heresy in a way to help preserve the tradition of the Bible and the Christian faith and will also aid proper biblical interpretation and exegesis.

The biblical and theological framework for this project pointed to an emphasis on the importance of sound biblical teaching in the training of children. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, guidelines for raising families are presented. Moreover, the Bible itself argues for the use of Scripture as the basis of authority in the upbringing and training of children (Deut. 6.6-8; 11.19-21, Ps. 127.3-5, Prov. 22.6). The relevance of family is stressed from the beginning of the Bible where God created Eve as a companion and helpmate for Adam and then told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1.22). After the flood, God repeated this command to Noah and his sons, and He promised Abraham more descendants than there are stars in the sky (Gen. 15.7). The Lord also said, “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.” (Gen. 18.19).

In the Gospels, Jesus used the parenting of Old Testament Scriptures to address his disciples who were preventing the children from coming to him (Mark 10.14) and

showed that just quoting Scripture without the proper understanding and application of that Scripture was insufficient (Matt. 18.2-6). This biblical example needs to be the most important precedent and example for parents. In addition, Paul, who was a parent figure to Timothy, instructed Timothy that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (2 Tim. 3.16) which shows that Biblically based parenting method involves reading the Scripture as well as teaching and applying the passage to our parenting life style.

**Major Finding #2 — Biblically Based Parenting requires methodology to be effective and result oriented.**

The second major finding that can be summarized from the research is that the Biblically Based Parenting teaching requires methodology to be effective and result oriented. The human child is dynamic in all ramifications; hence, to successfully bring them up in the way of God requires that one operates on the level of the child needs. This requirement does not suggest conformity, rather it means that parents, like the fisherman, are to use their spiritual bait to catch them young for the kingdom of God.

Through the responses of the participants, particular teaching methods that are adequate for effective biblical parenting style were discovered. These methods include but are not limited to:

- Modelling method — this method seeks to teach children to fully develop to the extent that they are like their godly parents.
- Conversation method — this method seeks to involve the child in the discourse in order to win his or her heart.

- Lecture method — this refers to instructive discourse with the aim of convincing the child of the truth of the subject matter.
- Demonstrative Rhetoric method — this method is concerned with the use of examples in teaching. This is one teaching method that is very important in the upbringing of a child.
- Motivational method — this method seeks to spark immediate response from within the child to submit his/her will to God.
- Questioning method — this method is concerned with using questions to provoke the child to think and seek the truth for himself/herself.

In my literature review, I touched on the arguments of Wesley who stressed throughout his sermon that parents must break the will of their children. Their will can be broken by proper discipline even in their early infancy though a considerable time will pass before they are capable of instruction. This principle, therefore, is the starting point: “Bow down their wills from the very first dawn of reason; and, by habituating them to submit to your will, prepare them for submitting to the will of their Father which is in heaven” (918). The major challenge to accomplishing this broadly is that some parents are ignorant of this charge. Instances exist where a parent will tell his child to do something; the child answers peremptorily, “I won’t,” and the parent quietly passes it by without any further notice. By doing so, the parent is training the child for a transference of learning from rebellion against their parents to rebellion against God. Consequently, the parents are training the child up for the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. If parents duly consider this consequence, they would neither eat, nor drink, nor

sleep, till they had taught the child a better lesson, making the child thoroughly afraid of ever giving that diabolical answer again.

Wesley further stressed that parents who have the fear of God should not suffer their children to do what they forbid or to rebel against what they bid. If this practice is done, no compassion for the child and no regard for his salvation or destruction is shown. A parent's action or inaction can bring blessings or disastrous consequences. Hence, Wesley advised that "If you have not the heart of a tiger, do not give up your child to his own will, that is, to the devil. Though it be pain to yourself, yet pluck your offspring out of the lion's teeth. Make them submit, that they may not perish. Break their will, that you may save their soul" (919). In order to enforce this point sufficiently, Wesley quoted a part of a letter he wrote on the subject:

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will. To inform their understanding is a work of time, and must proceed by slow degrees; but subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once; and the sooner the better. By our neglecting timely correction they contract a stubbornness which is hardly ever to be conquered, and never without using that severity which would be as painful to us as to the children. (920)

Parents should not allow their children to contract habits which are contrary to God's will. They should conquer their wills early on as this is the only foundation for religious education. When conquering the will is thoroughly done, a child is capable of being governed by the reason of its parent till its own understanding comes to maturity. Parents who do this work together with God in the saving of a soul. The parent who

indulges this work does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that to damn his child, soul and body, forever.

In order to achieve this level of discipline in children, Wesley gave three suggestions:

1. Let a child, from a year old; be taught to fear the rod and to cry softly.
2. Let him have nothing he cries for; absolutely nothing, great or small; else you undo your own work.
3. At all events, from that age, make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it. Let none persuade you it is cruelty to do this; it is cruelty not to do it. Break his will now, and his soul will live, and he will probably bless you to all eternity. (920)

Explain to the children the reason for stern discipline as soon as they are able to understand. A stage in the life of a child exists when his reasoning and understanding begins to open up. At that stage, the child can effectively distinguish between right and wrong as well as hatred and love. At this stage, Wesley advised that parents should open up to their children and explain to them the reason for their discipline, pointing them to God as well. Parents are to point out to their children that the will of God is the sole law of every intelligent creature, and the will of God is that they should obey their parents in all things. This teaching is to be inculcated over and over again until children perfectly comprehend it.

Do not reward children for disobedience. Wesley also advised parents not to teach their children to disobey by rewarding them for disobedience. This act, according to Wesley, is done every time parents give them anything because they cry for it. Children

are apt scholars. If children are rewarded for crying, they will certainly cry again. Therefore, there is no end to this cycle unless one makes it a sacred rule to give children nothing which they cry for. The shortest way to accomplish this is never allowing them to cry aloud. Train children up to obedience in this one instance, and parents will easily bring them to obey in others. One of the reasons why parents reward their children for disobedience as seen above is fondness. Parents usually mistook fondness to mean love. Fondness is real hate and hate of the most mischievous kind, tending to destroy both body and soul. Parents must stand against this for the love of God, their children, and their own soul.

Parents should not be mealy-mouthed but be strong and resolute in their disciplinary decisions. Most parents in our time say, like foolish Eli, “Nay, my children, it is no good report which I hear of you,” instead of restraining them with a strong hand; but speak (though as calmly as possible, yet) firmly and peremptorily, “I will have it so;” and do as they are told. Diligently instill in them the love of good deeds and hatred of evil no matter how attractive evil may appear. Bid defiance to indolence, to cowardice, to foolish fondness, and to all events the parent’s point should be carried out. If parents love their children’s souls, they should make and keep their children just as plain as themselves. Grandparents should not hinder their children from disciplining their grandchildren. Grandparents should not dare to give the child anything which the parents deny them out of discipline. Grandparents should never take the part of the children against their parent and never blame the parents in front of them.

In Proverbs, Solomon reinforces the wisdom of placing all aspects of life under the sovereignty of God. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools

despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1.7). Solomon consistently encourages parents to discipline and train their children, using a rod if necessary: “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (Prov, 13:26). Scripture warns of serious consequences for those who do not comply. Solomon says, “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother” and by extension to his father. Solomon further exhorts parents to “...not withhold correction from a child; for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.” (Prov. 23.13-14; 29.15).

**Major Finding #3 — Christian parents and the church as a body must prioritize sound Biblical teaching in order to train up children morally and spiritually.**

The third major finding of this research was that in order to train up children morally and spiritually Christian parents and the church as a body must prioritize sound biblical teaching. Parents cannot expect their children to become what they themselves are not. Parents must first love God with all of *their* hearts, souls, and strength. In contemporary terms, one might say that parents must practice what they preach. Children generally have keen hypocrisy detectors and can spot contradictory words and actions from a far distance. Children who do not see a genuine and growing relationship with God in their parents will not likely travel the path of righteousness themselves.

Most of the participants believe that sound biblical teaching is a major factor that can facilitate biblical parenting. For them, when Christian parents and the church as a body prioritize sound biblical teaching, the members are encouraged and that can lead to godly parenting. In responding to the interview questions, one participant said “one way the church can intensify its teaching responsibility is by ensuring that the church’s

Sunday school is well equipped with sound biblical programs and good teaching aids.”

Another participant, however, suggested the training of enough church workers to help in sound biblical teaching in the church while another participant said that the church should take her teaching task seriously to help members understand the Bible contents better.

The findings through the responses collected show that certain factors are impairing adequate teaching on biblical parenting in the church today. The majority of the participants agreed as well that lack of clear vision and understanding of the teaching content of the church, training children without proper knowledge of the word of God, lack of sound Christian education, circular and educational biases, neglect of parents’ personal spiritual development, and ignorance of teaching techniques are factors impairing adequate teaching of biblical parenting in the church today. What this reflects is that both the church and parents have the duty to adopt the necessary approaches to do away with all these factors (and may be any other factor impairing sound teaching on biblical parenting in the church) so that the church can get the best of Christian teachings for her adequate spiritual and moral growth.

Another discover is that the lack of sound biblical teachings has impacted the church negatively. Most of the participants believe that the impact has, among other things, led to stunted spiritual growth of her members and weak approach to godly parenting. Limiting the church from teaching effective godly parenting, thereby denies both the church and parents the joy of worship and communion with God. This result implies that lack of sound biblical teaching does the church no good at all, putting the church at a huge disadvantage. In other words, the lack of sound biblical teaching is disadvantageous for the church in terms of her spiritual and moral growth.

In my literature review, Fowler alludes that, “Research consistently affirms the declining biblical worldview of our young people...nothing short of a crisis, even among committed Christian families.” (25) Deere J. remarks that, “The moral and biblical education of children was accomplished best not in a formal teaching period each day but when the parents, out of concern for their own lives as well as their children’s, made God and His word the natural topic of conversation which might occur anywhere and everywhere during the day.” (275) Furthermore, J. M. Gundry and J. B. Marcia noted that in Greco-Roman antiquity and Judaism, children were both appreciated in some aspects and viewed negatively in other aspects. Children had no rights of their own and were legally subject to their father who had almost absolute power over them. Childhood was viewed largely as a state of immaturity to outgrow. On the one hand, parents loved and took pleasure in their children; they valued children as necessary to their economic survival and well-being and as heirs in whom they would live on after death. Children were considered fundamentally deficient and not yet human in the full sense. They were physically small, underdeveloped, and vulnerable.

The biblical/theological point that would respond to this mindset is the directive given to parents in the Bible that they must teach God’s words, ways, and commands *diligently* to their children (Deut. 6.7). The Hebrew term, *shanan*, means “teach diligently, sharpen, or whet.” Webster defines “diligently” as “something characterized by steady, earnest, and energetic effort or something done painstakingly.” (109) Clearly parents are commanded to teach their children wholeheartedly — not halfway, not on occasion, not under someone else’s direction but personally and persistently. Subsequent verses of the Shema confirm that the center of biblical discipleship is the home. Parents

are commanded to talk of the Lord and His word in their home as they go about their daily business. God's word was commanded to be such an integral part of family life that his word would be as if it were written on their foreheads, bound to their wrists, and displayed prominently on their doorposts. Many, if not most, families claiming the name of Christ fall far short of these directives. If the current generation has any chance of successfully passing on the baton of faith, a paradigm shift is needed, a refocusing and a return to a biblical view of discipleship.

God promises blessings to those who obey his commands and stern retribution to those who do not. In Exodus, the Lord admonished the first generation of those rescued from slavery: "For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Exod. 20.5-6). A perpetuation of the faith and an abiding awe of the Lord and His power and mercy are some of the direct benefits of obeying these commands.

When your son asks you in time to come, saying, "What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God has commanded you?" then you shall say to your son: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the Lord showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. Then He brought us out from there that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be

righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.” (Deut. 6.20-25)

The New Testament material on children must be viewed within its historical and cultural setting. According to J. M. Gundry, there are five main ways in which the significance of children is underscored in Jesus’ teaching and practice: (1) He blesses the children brought to him and teaches that the reign of God belongs to them; (2) He makes children the model of entering the Kingdom of God (Mark 10.13-16; Matt.18.1-5); (3) He calls his disciples to welcome little children as he does and turns the service of children into a sign of greatness in the Kingdom of God (Mark 9.33-37; Matt.18.1-2; Luke 9.46-48); (4) He gives the service of children ultimate significance as a way of receiving himself and by implication the One who sent him; (5) He is acclaimed by children as the “Son of David” (162). The inspiring and tender account of Jesus blessing the children is found in three of the four gospels (Matt. 19.13–15; Mark 10.13–16; Luke 18.15–17). The three accounts vary slightly. Matthew reports that Jesus “laid his hands on them” (Matt. 19.15). Luke does not record Him blessing them. Only in Mark’s account is this tender experience found: “And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10.16). Some Scholars have suggested that the Jewish custom of bringing children to the elders or scribes for blessing and prayer following the Day of Atonement lies behind this scene although this is not attested to in the New Testament but only in the *Talmudic tractate*.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul’s instructions on marriage, Godly family, and biblical parenting are presented to encourage Christian parents and the church as a body to emulate Christ in giving loving attention, affection, and recognition to children (Eph.

5.22-33; 6.1-4, Col. 3.18-21). Children should not be pushed aside as nonentities, rather children are to be treated as individuals with potentials. Christian parents and the church as a body are to embrace and bless the children and live exemplary lives that can be emulated. Christian parents and the church as a body should be examples of Christian life and conduct, caring more for the salvation of the children than other things. D.C. Stamps states that parents bear the responsibility of giving their children the upbringing that prepares them for lives pleasing to God. Christian parents and the church as a body are to encourage as well as correct, punish only intentional wrongdoing, instruct with patience, and dedicate their lives in love to the children. Both formal and informal training must be given to children to empower and equip them to face the challenges of life. Christian parents and the church as a body must learn from Jesus' teaching to emulate child-like characteristics of lowliness, trust, powerlessness, and absolute dependence on the favor of God in order to have peace here on earth and to have a place in the Kingdom of God.

#### **Major Finding #4 — The Need for Biblically Based Parenting Training**

The fourth and last major finding is the need for biblically based parenting training. In that case, I propose to introduce biblically based parenting training as a resource/model for effective parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Biblically based parenting training has the capacity to increase the effectiveness of biblical parenting and produce changes in the attitude, knowledge, and behavior that will be able to give a more Bible centered approach to parenting and bridge the disconnect between the church in teaching her members and the actual practice of biblical parenting styles in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. The goal is to help parents go back to the biblical standards of child upbringing that instills virtues such as love, patience, morality, faith,

discipline, fear of God, and wisdom within children's characters. Parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu need to learn the methods of biblically based parenting to let the Bible be the main focus of their parenting. Creativity, speaking talent, and technology could be added to help in the communication of biblically based parenting, but the parents could know that the Bible has the power of transforming the life of the child.

The biblically based parenting method will be a good resource for effective parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu as biblically based parenting will wipe out wrong doctrines and the lack of moral standards which appear to characterize the society today. Larry Fowler alleged that "Research consistently affirms the declining biblical worldview of our young people...nothing short of a crisis, even among committed Christian families" (25). In this context, the parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu need to understand that biblically based parenting is part of contending earnestly for the faith as directed in Jude 3. Paul illustrates the importance of biblically based parenting when he details Timothy's spiritual upbringing at the hands of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (2 Tim. 1.4-5). Christian parents today need to heed God's wakeup call. While parents sleep, the enemy is actively trying to lure them and their children away from the Lord. Left unchecked, the baseness of society infiltrates their homes and unbiblical doctrines influence both parents and children. The enemy uses the lures of the world and the flesh to lead people astray. Fascination with the occult has also become a preoccupation in today's society. In virtually every small town and big city, fortune tellers, spiritualists, and New-Age stores thrive. Before one realizes, the lines between light and darkness have blurred, something that can have disastrous

consequences for Christians today as well as for future generations. John Eldredge said: “The major ways we give claim to the Enemy in our lives are through sin and making agreements with him. Most of our sins fall under the category of pride (independence from God), self-sufficiency and idolatry (giving our devotion or fear or any part of the heart to something other than God).” (228) Parents must intentionally walk in the light and protect themselves and their children from the evil one.

For effective parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Bible must form the basic foundation for the parents as well as for the child. A strong, vibrant faith in the parents does not automatically translate to an equally strong, vibrant faith in children. Parents who do not intentionally cultivate a household environment that is conducive to prayer, meditating on God’s word, and worshiping Him in their daily lives risk raising children who are lukewarm in their faith who may in turn raise children who are faithless. There is a rather pessimistic but true saying that Christianity is only one generation away from extinction. The Bible provides the perfect roadmap to guide Christian parents in ways that cultivate a strong personal and familial faith. Concerned godly parents need to trust in the Lord’s directives on this matter, in the power of prayer, and in the Holy Spirit’s ability to move in their children’s lives. The Bible tells parents, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22.6). *The Message* puts this verse in an interesting way: “Point your kids in the right direction- when they’re old, they won’t be lost.” Prov. 22.6 (MSG) Scripture contains all the wisdom needed to point one’s kids on the path to righteousness and trust in God’s plan for them; one only has to take God’s word to heart and put it into action (Jer. 29.11-13).

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

The first implication of the findings of this research is that adequate biblical teaching will contribute positively to godly parenting. This study generated great interest in the parents who worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu. One of the implications of this study is that parents in the Anglican Church Arochukwu seemed to have the idea of biblically based parenting methods but were not properly equipped with the biblical knowledge on how to apply this method to their parenting style. As demonstrated in these observations and findings, their own parenting method is not as influential as the biblically based parenting style. Therefore, many parents in the Anglican Church in Arochukwu are struggling with the upbringing of their children due to the lack of knowledge of the word of God. For as much as the Anglican Church Arochukwu gives priority to teaching and studying the word of God in all sincerity, she invariably makes herself approved of God as a workman who need not to be ashamed but rightly dividing the word of truth. Sound biblical teaching is important in the growth and maturity of a child. This teaching will encourage the spiritual and moral growth of the child, help to reduce problems of scriptural ignorance as well as acquaint parents with the needed knowledge and experience to train up their children in the way of God, serve as a correcting tool against heresy in a way to help preserve the tradition of the Bible and the Christian faith, and aid in proper biblical interpretation and exegesis.

The second implication of the findings of this research indicate that if the Anglican Church Arochukwu is going to have more biblically based parenting, they will have to try to overcome the factors impairing adequate teaching of biblical parenting in the church. The researcher discovered quite a number of factors that impair sound biblical

teaching in the church. These factors include but are not limited to lack of vision and clear understanding of the subject matter, parents training their children without proper knowledge of the word of God, lack of sound Christian education including circular and denominational biases, neglect of parents' personal spiritual development, and ignorance of the various teaching techniques. The researcher also found out that the lack of sound biblical teaching has a negative impact in the church. Among other things, the lack of sound biblical teaching leads to stunted spiritual growth, weak approach to godly parenting, and makes the Christian parent both spiritually and physically vulnerable to the works of Satan. This oversight breeds biblical and spiritual ignorance, limits the church in doing effective counseling, and denies the church the joy of worship and communion with God.

The third implication of the findings is that through the responses of the participants, the discovery was made that there are particular teaching methods that are adequate for effective biblical parenting style. These methods include but are not limited to:

- Modelling method — this method seeks to teach children to fully develop to the extent that they are like their godly parents.
- Conversation method — this method seeks to involve the child in the discourse in order to win his or her heart.
- Lecture method — this refers to instructive discourse with the aim of convincing the child of the truth of the subject matter.

- Demonstrative Rhetoric method — this method is concerned with the use of examples in teaching. This is one teaching method that is very important in the upbringing of a child.
- Motivational method — this method seeks to spark immediate response from within the child to submit his/her will to God.
- Questioning method — this method is concerned with using questions to provoke the child to think and seek the truth for himself/herself.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although I faced some limitations during my research, I do not believe that they impacted the generalization of the study findings. The most noticeable of the limitations was my time restraint. Because the Parenting Survey had to be conducted close to the shutdown as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, the pandemic undoubtedly affected the number of participants who were able to engage in the survey. In addition, due to the shutdown, there were geographical limitations that made interviewing certain or additional respondents challenging. In fact, due to restriction on social gatherings, I had to conduct some of my interviews via telephone conversation rather than the preferred face-to-face, in person method.

If I were to conduct this study again, more time would be allotted to conduct both the survey and the interview. However, I would not alter my instrumentation or data collection, because I did not encounter limitations with either of them as they both allowed me to do quality data analysis.

### **Unexpected Observations**

One unexpected observation was that the researcher doubles as the Bishop of the Anglican Church Arochukwu. Even though, I tried to make participants free to express their opinions and ideas, a few were constrained by my person and position. Furthermore, in my context, people find it difficult to disobey the Bishop and so at the end I have the feelings that the participants were trying to give me the “right” answer or impress me.

### **Recommendations**

While this study produced good results and had value, there are always ways to improve and expand on this study. In future, the study could adopt the following for a better participation:

- Extend the program to six months or one solid year of training.
- Introduce more practical application opportunities to the training, wherein participants could practice what they have learnt.
- The Bishop should use other trainers than himself and then evaluate the program personally.
- In a future study, the population of the participants could be increased to accommodate participants from other Churches.

### **Postscript**

I give all the Glory, honor, and adoration to God Almighty for the grace to do this research. I have learned a lot from my coach and the participants. This process has been quite exciting and educative for me. I wish I could do more in future.

## APPENDIXES

### **Appendix A — Biblically Based Parenting in Anglican Church Arochukwu Syllabus**

Course Description: This course provides a biblically based mode for parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu. It expands participants understanding of the practice of biblical parenting.

#### Course Schedule (Outline of Sessions):

1. Foundations – Introduction, Course design, purpose and expectations.
2. Pre-test assessment survey.
3. Biblically Based Parenting – What is it and why biblical based parenting.
4. (a) Parenting as a Divine Assignment  
(b) The Responsibility of Parents
5. The Child/Ward/ and their environment.
  - a. Cultural antecedents of the Arochukwu people of Eastern – Nigeria.
  - b. The traditions of the Christian people.
- 6 Understanding the Child/Ward.
- 7 The role of family/marriage in parenting.
- 8 Biblically Based Parenting: Understanding the process, building the gap between the Bible and child/ward.
- 9 The Father as the Head of the Family:
  - (a) Models of Biblical Parenting
  - (b) Developing an effective model of Biblically Based Parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu

10. Biblically Based Parenting –Parenting Style. (Practical Parenting and Reflections).

11. Conclusion and Post class reflections.

**Appendix B — Parenting Assessment (PA)****Pre-Test Assessment Questionnaire**

This assessment questionnaire is to test your understanding of parenting from your previous knowledge, attitude and behaviour regarding biblically based parenting.

**A. Demographic Data (Please Tick as appropriate)**

1. **Gender:** Male   
Female
2. **Age:** 20 – 29   
30 – 39   
40 – 49   
50 – 59   
60 and above
3. **Marital Status:** Single   
Married   
Divorced
4. **Do you have a child/ward/children?** Yes   
No
5. **Do you worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu?** Yes   
No
6. **Does your child/ward/children worship at the Anglican Church Arochukwu?**  
Yes   
No

**B. Please circle the number that agrees with your opinion.**

4 – Strongly Agree

3 – Agree

2 – Disagree

1 – Strongly Disagree

1. Adequate Biblical teaching on parenting can contribute to Godly parenting

1      2      3      4

2. Sound Biblical teachings encourage the spiritual and moral growth of a child

1      2      3      4

3. Sound Biblical teachings help to reduce the problem of immorality and child abuse

1      2      3      4

4. Sound Biblical teachings acquaint parents and church members with the needed knowledge to train up their children/wards in the way of God

1      2      3      4

5. Sound Biblical teachings serve as correcting means against child delinquency and child abuse

1      2      3      4

6. Sound Biblical teachings helps to preserve the traditions of the Bible and church fathers

1      2      3      4

7. Sound Biblical teachings are an aid to proper Biblical interpretation and exegesis

1      2      3      4

8. Lack of clear vision and understanding of the subject matter can impair adequate teaching on Biblical parenting style in the church today

1      2      3      4

9. Raising children without a proper knowledge of God can impair adequate teaching on Biblical parenting style in the church

1      2      3      4

10. Circular and denominational biases can impair adequate teaching on Biblical parenting style in the church today

1      2      3      4

11. Neglect of parents' personal spiritual development can impair adequate teaching on Biblical parenting style in the church

1      2      3      4

12. Ignorance of the various teaching techniques on parenting can impair adequate teaching on Biblical parenting style in the church

1      2      3      4

13. Lack of sound biblical teaching on parenting in the church results in stunted spiritual growth of the church

1      2      3      4

14. Lack of sound biblical teaching on parenting in the church makes her spiritually vulnerable

1      2      3      4

15. Lack of sound biblical teaching limits the church in providing effective counselling

1      2      3      4

16. Lack of sound biblical teaching in the church denies the church and parents the joy of worship and communion with God

1      2      3      4

17. Lack of sound biblical teaching on parenting in the church results in a weak approach to parenting

1      2      3      4

18. Lack of sound biblical teaching on parenting in the church breeds biblical and spiritual ignorance

1      2      3      4

19. Modelling is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting

1      2      3      4

20. Conversation is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting

1      2      3      4

21. Lecture is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting

1      2      3      4

22. Demonstrative Rhetoric is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting

1      2      3      4

23. Motivation is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting

1      2      3      4

24. Questioning is a teaching method parents can adopt for effective parenting

1   2   3      4

**C. Please answer Yes / No to this question.**

1. Do you feel confident in your parenting style?      Yes       No
2. Do you sometimes wish you had more training in parenting? Yes       No
3. Does the feedback you get from your child/ward/children show their understanding of your parenting style?      Yes       No

**D. Please answer the following questions (You are free to use extra sheets)**

1. What is your assessment of the contemporary church in terms of her teaching on biblical parenting?

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2. What is the church doing well in her teaching on biblical parenting?

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3. How can the church improve her teaching responsibility?

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4. What are other factors you think can facilitate biblical parenting?

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### Appendix C — Parenting Assessment Record. (PAR)

#### Post – Test Assessment Questionnaire.

A. As you look back on the twelve weeks biblically based parenting class, place a value on each of the following elements in terms of their benefit and impact on your parenting style.

*(1 – Least valuable, 5 – most valuable)*

- a. Content of training – 1    2    3    4    5
- b. Discussion/interaction –1        2    3    4    5
- c. Application –1    2    3    4    5
- d. Biblically Based Parenting style –1    2    3    4    5
- e. How easy is it to apply the Bible to parenting? – 1   2   3   4   5
- f. How impactful is the training to your life? –1    2    3    4    5

#### **B. Please answer the following questions (You are free to use extra sheets)**

- i. What particularly stood out for you as valuable in the biblically based parenting class?

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- ii. What was the least valuable for you?

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- iii. What are you still uncertain about?

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iv. How does this training change your perception about parenting?

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v. What will you do differently after this training?

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vi. In what areas of your parenting style do you foresee an improvement after this training?

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vii. Do you think this model of parenting will impact your child/ward/children's understanding of their upbringing?

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viii. How has your parenting method changed after the training?

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**Appendix D — Biblically Based Parenting Interview (BBPI)**  
**(Focus Group)**

The Goal

The goal of this twelve weeks biblically based parenting training programme was to increase our knowledge, attitude and behaviour regarding biblically based parenting in the Anglican Church Arochukwu.

Questions:

Your evaluation and feedback is a valuable part of this project. It provides a critical understanding on what were most beneficial, effective, and/or weak. Please feel free to express your perspective; your comments will only help me better analyse the impactfulness or lack thereof, of the Biblically Based Parenting programme.

1. As you look back over the twelve weeks, what have been the two or three greatest learning points for you?
  - a. What stood out for you as particularly valuable?
  - b. What was the least valuable for you?
2. Given the focus of this training – biblically based parenting. What would you have liked to see more of?
3. Looking at biblical based parenting, do you think you have an understanding of it and how it relates to the child/ward in your context? What are you still uncertain about?
4. Of the twelve sessions, what part(s) of it was more beneficial for you?
5. What part (s) of the sessions was the least beneficial? Explain.
6. What could be improved on in the sessions?

7. Do you feel that your own parenting has been affected and impacted gaining new insights by the training? Yes/No. In what ways.
8. As you look at the whole training programme the purpose and the sessions. What could be done to make it more effective? How could it be improved?

**Appendix E. — Informed Consent Letters/Forms**

Johnson Onuoha  
Cathedral Church of All Saints, Ugwuavo,  
Arochukwu.  
Abia State, Nigeria.

**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

Dearly Beloved,

You are invited to participate in a research study being done by Johnson Onuoha who is a Doctor of Ministry student from the Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because I am working on my dissertation project as part of my studies at Asbury Seminary through the Beeson School of Practical Theology, Wilmore, Kentucky. The project is titled: A Biblically Based Parenting Style in Anglican Church Arochukwu. The first three chapters of the dissertation have been completed and approved by my dissertation committee. Now is the time to initiate the research dimension of my project that involves taking a group of parents through a twelve weeks biblically based parenting class.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to meet at the Anglican headquarters, Cathedral Church of All Saints Ugwuavo Arochukwu to participate in a 60 minute focus group.

All your responses will remain confidential. The researcher will use a combination of numbers or letters instead of your name when writing and presenting the results of the study. Although confidentiality will be encouraged during the focus groups, it cannot be guaranteed. You will receive no monetary payment for participating in this research.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the study, please immediately inform: Johnson Onuoha, Cathedral Church of All Saints Ugwuavo, Arochukwu. Phone: +2348037170234 or Email: johnson.onuoha@asburyseminary.edu.

If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be disappointed if you do not participate or even if you begin the study and change your mind later.

You can ask Johnson Onuoha questions any time about anything in this study.

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