

**CHRISTIAN FORMATION TO CHILDREN (7-12 YEARS) IN
ANKOLE DIOCESE- UGANDA; THE ROLE OF DISCIPLESHIP
TRAINING IN CHILDREN MINISTRY**

BY

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
Master of Philosophy in Religious Education of
Norsk Lærerkademi**

May 2008

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Declaration

I, Adonia Bahuguukire declare that with exception of references from other peoples work that have been duly cited, this work contained herein is my original work and has never been submitted to the Norwegian Teacher Academy or any other Institution of Higher Learning.

.....

ADONIA BAHUGUUKIRE

Date.....

Research Supervisor

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dear beloved wife Jovernice Bahuguukire, for missing our intimate fellowship in these two years of the course, for her continual prayers and for being a supportive wife.

Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge God's Power, Love and Blessings accorded to me, most of all for opening this chance of pursuing a Masters' degree abroad which is so miraculous to our family, considering the background I come from.

On a special note, I wish to express my gratitude to my committed supervisor Prof. Rune Øystese for his advice and support when I was doing this work. He acted as a teacher, parent and friend. May God reward him in abundance.

I can not forget to acknowledge the support of my wife who allowed me to leave her for two years and take this course. The connection she made through Michael Musherure who gave me the address of Nosk Lærerkademi. I also appreciate the way she helped me to get books in Bishop Stuart Library when I was in the field. She has tremendously done her work as a wife and a parent. Even the level of education I have achieved is through her efforts. May God bless her for me. Michael Musherure also deserves a vote of thanks for encouraging me to come to Norway for further studies.

My appreciation is also extended to Dr and Mrs Nkuuhe for their financial support in contributing towards the air ticket, the family of Mugumya Herbert, Bangirana Alfred and all others who contributed towards my studies. The family of Muchandara can not be forgotten for the financial support given to me, offering me residence in their home all the days I was travelling to and from Norway, and many other responsibilities they had towards my studies. Though they are my relatives, not all relatives can do this.

Special thanks go to the Norwegian government for the scholarship granted to me. I would not have managed if I were to sponsor myself. I am also grateful to the Norwegian Teacher Academy for admitting me to this course.

I still owe much to my first spiritual mentor Rev. Ham Barugahare who recruited me into church ministry, Rev. Canon Semei Rwabushaija the former Dean of St. James' Cathedral who nurtured me before and after I was ordained a church minister. The experience I have is because of the training I passed through him. He also allowed me to study in Mbarara High School, when I was working as the Curate/Organist of the Cathedral. Many thanks are also extended to the Emeritus Bishop Kyamugambi who always blessed my studies.

Lastly, I wish to appreciate the work done by those I passed through in the course of my studies such as all my teachers at Mbarara High School, my lecturers at National Teachers' Kakoba and Bishop Barham University Kabale and all my lecturers at the Norwegian Teacher Academy. May God bless them in all their endeavours! Special thanks are extended to Dr Karoro E. the Vice Chancellor of Kampala International University, Western Campus who helped me in many ways when I was studying a diploma in Education. The Rt. Rev. Dr. George Tibesigwa my first research supervisor who added much on my skills of research. It is good that God has already rewarded them with high offices.

May the Almighty God reward each one abundantly with the heavenly blessings.

Abstract

The study was carried out in Ankole Diocese which is found in the South Western part of Uganda, and it focussed on Christian formation of children between age 7-12 and intended to look at the role of discipleship training in children.

The aim of the study was to find out the role of discipleship training in children ministry and why Christian Formation to children is of fundamental importance in their growth and the specific objectives were (i) Finding out factors that influence Christian Formation of children, and (ii) investigate the relationship between the following institutions as agents of Christian Formation:-

- (a) The church, (b) the home, and (c) the church.

The study was carried out in two Archdeaconries of Greater Mbarara and Ibanda Archdeaconry, including Ruharo Cathedral Deanery since it is the centre of Ankole Diocese. In order to get information for the study, purposive sampling was used to get 13 informants were who included 2 priests and 2 lay-readers to represent the church leaders, 4 families to represent the parents, 2 teachers from two Christian Schools to represent teachers, 2 Sunday School teachers to represent those who volunteer to teach Sunday School, and the Diocesan Missions' co-ordinator who represented the Diocesan office. Two observations were made one for Sunday school service and another one for school children service which were also useful in giving some information.

It was found out that discipleship training is an important tool in Christian formation of children if the three identified institutions i.e. the church, the home and the school are used appropriately. Most importantly, the home was seen as the basic place for discipleship training as parents play an important role in Christian formation of children.

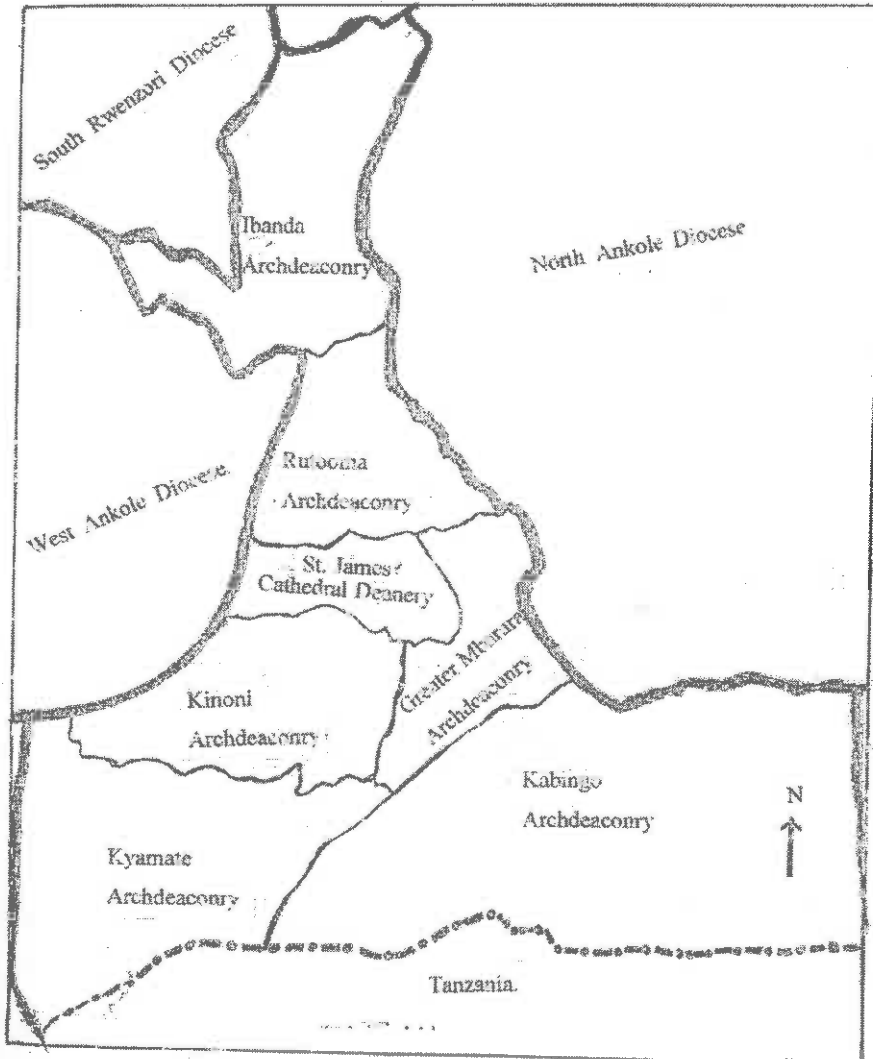
Glossary

Ahamweziga (from omweziga) -	millet chaff
Eigumira-	name of a person
Embeba-	rat
Yesu-	Jesus

Abbreviations

Acts:	Acts of Apostles
ACAO:	Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
CAO:	Chief Administrative Officer
CDC:	Child Development Centre
cf.:	compared
CMS:	Church Missionary Society
Col.:	Colossians
Dr.:	Doctor
E.g.:	Exempli gratia (for example)
Et al:	Eti alii (and other writers)
e.t.c.:	Et cetera (and others)
F.U:	Fathers' Union
i.e.:	Id est (that is)
LC:	Local Council
Km:	Kilometre
M.U:	Mothers' Union
NT:	New Testament
NTC:	National Teachers' College
OT:	Old Testament
Prov.:	Proverbs
RDC:	Resident District Commissioner
Rev.:	Reverend
Rt.:	Right
Sq:	Square
SU:	Scripture Union
Tim.:	Timothy
UNLA:	Uganda National Liberation Army

MAP OF ANKOLE DIOCESE (2003)



KEY

- - - National Boundaries
- Diocesan Boundaries
- ~ Archdeaconry boundaries

CHAPTER ONE

1. General Introduction

1.0 Background of the Study

The Anglican Church of Uganda became more charismatic/pietistic than it was before the East African Revival movement of 1936 which spread rapidly in Western parts of Uganda, more especially in Ankole. The church became charismatic as it is characterized by charismatic preaching, confession and repentance of sins publicly or openly, walking in light (as it is termed), giving testimonies, and other aspects which were missing in the former traditional church. This became one way of Christian formation to adult Christians who openly confessed their sins in the church. These Christians are commonly known as the born again or the Balokole. Ankole Diocese is one of the Dioceses well known of this Movement which brought transformation of most Christians in the Anglican Church. Christians who confess their sins openly change their way of living and there is a way of how they disciple one another for spiritual growth. The church has tried to disciple the Balokole mostly through fellowships and missions which involve Bible studies, prayers, testimonies, giving and living exemplary lives.

Theologically, children as well as adults receive salvation at baptism when they are initiated into Christianity. However, this salvation needs to be affirmed through confession, giving testimonies and declaring Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Children who are baptized in the church need to be rooted in Him as they grow because they are also followers of Christ.

This is evidenced by Charles Richardson that:

Through baptism we are called to follow him, through death to our former selves to a resurrected life ... in God's Kingdom. Even this baby is called and commissioned into its ministry as a follower of Jesus- a Christian. ¹

¹ Richardson Charles (2004:69), This is our Calling

1.1 The Statement of the Problem

This Research Project focuses on Christian Formation of Children in Ankole Diocese and the role of discipleship training in children ministry. As an Anglican ordained minister of the church in Ankole Diocese, having served the Church for more than 20 years, have realized that Christian Formation especially to children is an important aspect if we want to have a living church with tremendous and steady growth. In Ankole Diocese, discipleship is mainly targeted on adults especially those who are known as the "Born again Christians." However, the church needs a strong foundation in order to have a sustainable growth, and this would be through putting much emphasis on Christian formation of children. Children are very important and they need to have a thorough Christian nurture in order for the church to have a strong foundation.

The church has tried to reach children through Sunday School but this is not effective enough. In some instances, it is led by untrained teachers or Christians most of whom are simply church goers, who are just to keep the children busy so as to let their parents listen to the gospel as Buconyori asserts:

Children born of Christian parents are privileged to attend church services. But many churches do not have instruction which is at the level of children; Sunday Schools have become places for dumping children on a Sunday morning so that the adults can hear the preaching without children interruption.²

1.2 The Research Questions

This research was guided by the following sets of key questions:

1. What steps has the church taken to build up a strong foundation through Christian upbringing of Children in Ankole Diocese?
2. How can the Church in Ankole enhance Christian Formation to children through discipleship training?
3. What are the factors that influence Christian formation of children in Ankole Diocese?
4. What role does the home and school play in Christian nurture of children?

² Buconyori A. Elie(1993:47), The Educational Task of the Church.

1.3 The Hypotheses of the study

1. Discipleship training is an important tool in Christian Formation of children.
2. Homes and Schools in collaboration with the church are appropriate agencies of discipleship training in Christian formation of children.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to find out the role of discipleship training in children ministry and why Christian Formation to children is of fundamental importance in their growth

1.5 Specific objectives

In this research therefore, the specific objectives were:

- (i) Finding out factors that influence Christian Formation of children.
- (ii) This research was to investigate the relationship between the following institutions as agents of Christian Formation:-
 - (b) The church, (b) the home, and (c) the church.

1.6 Terminology and definition of key words

The main key words of the research topic which need more explanation are Christian formation and Discipleship. In this section, I will try to give definitions of the term Christian formation first and then define the word discipleship.

Christian formation: The term Christian formation is a combination of two words Christian an adjective that describes the word formation which is an act of giving form. Michael J. Anthony³ defines Christian formation as a process and a product of motivating, nurturing, and internalizing values, priorities, perspectives, and responses that are from God. It asks how Christians are formed. Components include teaching, and preaching the word of God, stimulating, and guiding to understanding and integration of truth into life. Michael Anthony⁴ continues to give the etymology of formation in Biblical terms. He says that "Formation" is the root word *morphe* (Rom.12:2; 2Cor.3:18), from which we derive *metamorphosis*. It concerns not only

³ Michael J. Anthony, (2001: 134), Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education

⁴ Michael J. Anthony, (2001: 91), Introducing Christian Education

outward change but also a crucial development from one form to another. As scripture describes it, we are “being transformed into his likeness”

Discipleship: The word discipleship gets its root from the Latin word *discipulus* meaning *pupil* or *discere*, to *learn*. However, Discipleship is about teaching to trust Jesus, trusting him enough to obey everything that he has commanded (Matt 28:20.), the obedience that flows from faith and grounded in love. Ralph⁵ differentiates between “making disciples” and “discipleship”. He says that making disciples is the right goal of evangelism and missions according to the great commission. Once disciples are made, they then begin the life time road of discipleship.

As the research topic states and as to per definitions above, Christian formation is a broad Christian virtue which involves many aspects in the process of Christian growth. Henceforth, discipleship is a practical side of Christian formation as it is characterized by teaching children how to pray, giving, witnessing for Christ, fellowshiping, Bible reading, living an exemplary life, Christian discipline, love and worshipping, to mention but a few. Michael, Anthony⁶ supports this when he says that;

...discipleship groups are frequently characterized by mutually agreed-upon disciplines for which group members hold each other accountable (e.g. daily prayer and Bible study, scripture memorization, weekly fasting, corporate worship e.t.c) and a curriculum that establishes disciples in fundamental doctrine.

1.7 Significance of the study

Since Discipleship is of paramount importance as a means of strengthening the faith of believers, I hope this study will be significant to the implementers of Christian Education in the Diocese of Ankole and the whole Church in general especially for spiritual growth of children and their Christian Formation.

As the Church is the institution to carry out discipleship training to Children as a way of implementation of Christian Education in the Church, the findings will help the Church leaders to review their strategies in order to build a strong foundation of the

⁵ Winter, Ralph D., Hawthorne, Steven C. (1981:576), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*

⁶ Michael J. Anthony, (2001: 209), *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*,

church. They will be aware that discipleship training is one of the ways of bringing children to the Church as it is a means of Christian formation.

The findings of this study hopefully will be of significant value to the parents in being the best disciples and implementers of Christian formation to their children by teaching them the Word of God and living exemplary life.

It is the school that takes the role of educating children following the school curriculum. The system of Education in Uganda has religious subjects in the School Syllabus but it does not cater for discipleship training and Christian formation. It is only imparting religious knowledge to children. Therefore, I hope the findings of this study will be useful to Church founded Schools to plan for the discipleship training of children especially during extra- curricular activities.

Personally, I hope to benefit from this research in the followings ways:

- i. As a Church minister, I hope to gain experience in dealing with children as a way of encouraging and enhancing Christian Education in the Church.
- ii. It will strengthen the skills of interaction with parents, other church leaders, teachers and children through the experience gained from data collection and field work.
- iii. This research will widen my scope of understanding and knowledge in the field of research and this will help me in future when carrying out further research.

1.8 Historical Background of the study

1.8.0 Ankole Diocese

The study was carried out in Ankole Diocese, one of the 31 Dioceses of the Anglican Province of Church of Uganda, which is situated in South Western part of Uganda. It was founded in 1976 by the subdivision of the Diocese into East Ankole and West Ankole respectively. But when North Ankole Diocese was curbed from East Ankole in 2004, East Ankole changed to her original name of the Diocese of Ankole. Ankole Diocese is divided into 88 Parishes with 9 Archdeaconries and 1 Cathedral Deanery. These are Ruharo Cathedral Deanery, Rutooma Archdeaconry, Ibanda Archdeaconry, Kinoni Archdeaconry, Bujaga Archdeaconry, Kyamate Archdeaconry, Rukoni

Archdeaconry, Kikagate Archdeaconry, Kabingo Archdeaconry and Greater Mbarara Archdeaconry.

1.8.1 Brief History of Uganda

The Republic of Uganda as it is officially known is a land locked country in Eastern Central Africa. Uganda shares borders with Tanzania and Rwanda in the South, the Democratic of Republic of Congo in the West, Sudan in the North, and Kenya in the East. Uganda lies on the equator and is surrounded by the Great Lakes of Central Africa. It has an estimated population of 27,269,000 (according the year 2005 estimates), and is 236,036 sq Km.

The first European explorers came to Uganda in 1862, followed by the protestant and the Roman Catholic missionaries who came in 1877 and 1879 respectively. By 1896, a British Protectorate administration had extended its authority over most of the region and later on controlled the entire region and adopted the unified name of Uganda.

Uganda has a multiplicity of languages and about 90% of the inhabitants live in rural areas. Approximately 70% of the people speak one of the Bantu languages; the main Bantu ethnic groups all of whom live in the southern half of the country are the Baganda, Banyankole, Bakiga, Basoga and Bagisu, and even the Banyoro; Batooro who live in the far Western part of the country. Other language groups in Uganda are the Western Nilotics (principally the Langi, Acholi, and Alur), whose speakers live in the North and make up 15% of the population; the Eastern Nilotics (mainly the Iteso and the Kalimajong), whose members live in the North East and make up 10% of the population; and the Sudanic (the Lugbara) whose speakers live in the North West and make up about 5% of the population. The language for my informants is Runyankole/Rukiga under the Bantu languages.

Uganda attained independence on 9th October 1962 under the leadership of A. Milton Obote as the Prime minister and in 1963 Uganda became a republic. Obote had a challenge of trying to unify the different tribes, holding their interests together, without the intervention of the foreign power and decisions. In 1966, there was a constitutional crisis involving Buganda Kingdom which led to the abolition of

monarchies in Uganda and the deportation of Kabaka Muteesa who was the first president of Uganda and the King of Buganda kingdom.

In 1971, Idi Amin who was closest to Obote and the Chief of Staff of the Army ousted Milton Obote and ruled Uganda under a dictatorial rule. His regime was characterized by massive detentions and killings and his government was overthrown by a combined force of UNLA and Tanzanian Army. Since then, Uganda passed through a wave of many changes under different presidents such as Yusufu Lule, Godfrey Binaisa, Paulo Muwanga, Milton Obote(2nd time), Tito Okello Lutwa, and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current president under the National Resistance Movement, whose regime has ushered in peace and freedom of worship which has led to the establishment of many religious sects. The church has used this chance to make discipleship programs and other outreach missions which include crusades and open air services.

1.8.2 Brief History of Christianity in Uganda

It was in 1875 when Henry Mutton Stanley came to Buganda and met the King of Buganda Mutesa 1. The king and Stanley talked about Christianity and as a result the King requested for missionaries to come to his Kingdom. The reason behind the king's acceptance of missionaries was that these would provide him security in form of giving him weapons for there was Egyptian threat with intension of extending their frontiers southward. Stanley was sent back to England with a letter which was inviting missionaries to come to Buganda. The letter was published in the daily News Paper known as *the Daily Telegram*. Shergold Smith and C T Wilson of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) were the first European Anglican missionaries to come to Uganda and they arrived in June 1877. They, along with others who arrived later were based at the court of the Kabaka of Buganda where they started their missionary activities. These were followed by the Roman Catholic White Fathers who came in 1879.

1.8.3 Brief History of Christianity in Ankole

The Kingdom of Ankole came into contact with first Christians between 1885 and 1886. There were persecutions of Christians in Buganda Kingdom by Kabaka Mwanga and some Baganda Christian escaped to Ankole Kingdom as Pirouet reports that:

The first Christians to reach Ankole were fugitives from the persecutions of Kabaka Mwanga who took refuge in the boarders of Ankole in 1885-86...⁷

In addition to the religious persecutions, there were also political wars in Buganda Kingdom which led to prominent political figures take refuge in Ankole. The person to remember most who led to the introduction of Christianity in Ankole is Apollo Kagwa the then Prime minister of Buganda. This is evidenced by Bengt Sundkler who says that:

In 1888, Ankole ... had given a temporary home to prominent Christian refugees from Buganda ... Apollo Kagwa the powerful Ganda Prime minister, himself a former Ankole refuge, felt concern for the Christianisation of Ankole and sent 2 Ganda Catechists to Kahaya's court.⁸

As a result of Apollo Kagwa's concern, the first protestant missionaries came to Ankole in 1898, while the Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in 1902. Since the first protestant missionaries stayed at the King's court, their first converts were Kahaya (the King) and his Prime minister who were baptized in 1902. Kahaya was given a Christian name Sulemani while Mbaguta was baptized Nuwa.

Anderson says that:

Ankole experienced a dramatic royal conversion. For a long time Apollo Kagwa now the Katikiro of Buganda tried to persuade King Kahaya to sponsor Christian teachers in his land. Mbaguta was an influential elder, who had been drawn to Christianity by the Baganda exiles that stayed in Ankole from 1888-1890. In 1900, Mbaguta was influential enough to secure the Baganda evangelists, and he soon responded to the gospel by burning charms. In 1902, Kahaya electrified the missionaries by claiming himself a Christian giving up his five wives and the drinking of alcohol. His baptism on 10th Dec. 1902 was full of surprises.⁹

The acceptance of baptism of these cultural leaders marked the steady growth of the Anglican Church in Ankole. Moreover, the first Anglican Church was built near the King's court at Kamukuzi where its remains still exist. Even the present Cathedral of

⁷ Pirouet M. Louis (1987:113), *The Black Evangelists: The spread of christianity in Uganda*

⁸ Sundkler Bengt and Steed Christopher (2000: 590), *A History of the Church in Africa*

⁹ Anderson B. W, (1977:4), *The Church in East Africa*

Ankole Diocese was built by the King's initiative at an adjacent Hill of Ruharo which also near the King's court.

1.9 Area of the study

1.9.0 Introduction

I carried out the study in Ankole Diocese which covers three districts of Mbarara, Ibanda, Isingiro and part of Ntungamo. These four districts share the same commonality because they were one district of Ankole during the colonial era. These are part of the then Kingdom of Ankole before the abolition of monarchism in Uganda in 1967. Therefore, I will talk about the geographical setting, the political and socio-economic setting of the area since the people who live in this area share the same aspects of life.

1.9.1 Geographical setting

The area in which I carried out research has two types of physical features. Some parts are mountainous highlands while others are plain lands. For instance, St. James' Cathedral, Greater Mbarara and Rutooma Archdeaconry lie in the plains of Kashaari, Kyamate and Rukoni Archdeaconries lie in the plains of Ntungamo, Kikagate and Kabingo Archdeaconries share the hills of Isingiro, while Ibanda and Kinoni are hilly and also have flat lands with some natural forests and swamps. The areas where I carried out my study lie in both features because I carried out my field work in St. James' Cathedral, Greater Mbarara and Ibanda Archdeaconries.

1.9.2 Political setting

Formerly, Ankole which is now a division of 6 Districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi, Ntungamo, Isingiro, Ibanda and Kiruhura was under a monarchical King of Ankole. He was from the minority ruling class of the Hinda Dynasty. It was during the Constitutional crisis of 1967 when monarchism was abolished in Uganda that Ankole also lost her King. Because of the sub-divisions of these districts, the area of my study takes the whole District of Mbarara, Isingiro, Ibanda and part of Ntungamo. But informants were selected from two districts of Mbarara and Ibanda.

1.9.3 Socio- Economic setting

The biggest percentage of the People of Ankole is predominantly of subsistent agriculturists commonly known as the Bairu or peasants. They practice both plantation agriculture and peasant farming but on a small scale. This means that most of the agricultural produce is mainly for food consumption and the little sold is for the basic needs, hence living on an economic setback because of the little income people get from little sales of their agricultural produce.

The smallest percentage is of the cattle keepers commonly known as the Bahima or Himites. These depend on cattle produce such as milk, meat and cow gee. Before the introduction of money as a medium of exchange, they could get other food stuffs from the Bairu through barter system. These have also started cultivation but on a small scale. Therefore, Ankole is economically back ward because most of the produce is for consumption and the little which is sold is for catering for the basic needs which are not even fully satisfied. This means that the church income is also too low to implement all her programs including children ministry and hence failing to pay the stipend of her employees.

Socially, the people of Ankole are stratified into two different ethnic groups. These are commonly known as the Bairu and Bahima as I have already noted above. The Hima group is dominant than the inferior Bairu. Before the abolition of monarchism, the ruling clan of Hinda dynasty was from the Hima ethnic group. The Bairu only served as servants and remained unpopular. There were no intermarriages between these two ethnic groups. It is of recent due to education and religion/Christianity that one can hardly notice the difference. Moreover, most of the Bairu who were only agriculturalists and peasants have now adopted cattle keeping and this has completely changed the situation. In addition to these two ethnic groups of Ankole, there other groups of people who migrated from other parts of Uganda and Africa. These include the Banyarwanda from Rwanda, the Bakiga from Kabale District and the Baganda who came as either the agents of the colonial government or as agents of missionaries who came as church teachers.

My respondents of this research belong to the Bairu and Bakiga groups because the sampled areas are occupied by these ethnic groups.

1.10 The structure of the study

The study is structured into six main chapters. The first chapter gives the whole introduction and background to the study, aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions and hypotheses, the structure of the study, and limitations and delimitations to the study.

The second chapter looks at relevant literature to the study, the third chapter shows the methods used in the study, the fourth chapter gives data presentation, analysis and interpretation, while chapter five shows the discussion and implications of findings and chapter six gives the conclusion and recommendations.

1.11 Limitations and Delimitations

There were some problems encountered during the research period. The first was that I did not have enough funds for all the necessary requirements for my research project. I needed a lot of money for transport, stationary and other important items for the research.

Another limitation was that there were high expectations of the informants getting some incentives in terms of money. This was automatically solved by informants being too genuine to me as they know the problem of students.

Another thing was that some parents expected some materials from me hoping that since I study from abroad, I came with a lot of things such as clothes and money. However, I tried to explain to them that I was just on a study program whereby we do not get any donation from abroad.

CHAPTER TWO

2 Theoretical framework and Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In order to get the relevancy of other writers to my topic of research, I tried to read books on two important key terms; Christian formation and discipleship. I also looked at how other writers say about the three agencies of Christian formation to children especially; the church, the home, and the school. However, I would like to first look at the psychological implication of children within the age range of my research especially on how Psychologists looked at the cognitive and faith development of children, which will lay a background of discipleship training of children which is the practical perspective of Christian formation.

2.1 Psychological reflection of children between 7-12 years

The children of my research fall under the stage of concrete operations according to Piaget's stages of cognitive development. Children in this stage begin to become less egocentric and start to understand and use new concepts. They can classify things into categories, deal with numbers, take all aspects of a situation into account and understand reversibly. Children of this age become much better at seeing the world from another person's angle and this has implications for the development of moral behaviour. It is within this stage that children develop logical thoughts that are reversible and form part of an integrated system of actions. Children here develop new and more complicated intellectual structures and even they can monitor their thinking. Santrock applies Piaget's ideas to education that:

...concrete operation is a reversible mental action on real, concrete objects. Concrete operations allow children to coordinate several characteristics rather than focus on a single object.¹⁰

There are many factors to consider when looking at Piaget's theory of cognitive development as they are crucial for anyone dealing with children. Elkind¹¹ describes three principles in Piaget's theory of cognitive development. First, the foremost issue in education is communication. In Piaget's theory, a child's mind is not a blank slate;

¹⁰ Santrock John, (1996:226), Child Development

¹¹ Elkind David, (1976:228), Child Development and Education

the child has a host of ideas about the physical and the natural world, but these ideas differ from those of adults. Adults must learn to comprehend what children are saying and respond in the same mode of discourse that children use.

Second, the child is always unlearning and relearning in addition to the acquisition of knowledge. Children come to school with their own ideas about space, time, causality, quantity and number. Third, the child is a knowing creature motivated to acquire knowledge. The best way to nurture this motivation for knowledge is to allow the child to interact spontaneously with the environment; education needs to ensure that it does not dull the child's eagerness to know by providing an overly rigid curriculum that disrupts the child's rhythm and pace of learning.

Other psychologists such as Vygotsky¹² talk about how the development of higher mental process, such as memory, attention, and reasoning that involve learning to use the inventions of language, mathematical systems, and memory devices. He also emphasized on how children are aided in development by the guidance of individuals who are already skilled in these tools.

In relation to my research, the skilled individuals to guide children in matters concerning Christian formation and discipleship training are none other than church leaders, teachers and parents who are already rooted in Christ.

According to an American Psychologist Barbara Rogoff (1990)¹³, children's cognitive development is an apprenticeship that occurs through participation in social activity, guided by companions who stretch and support children's understanding and skill in using the "tools" of the culture.

Therefore, it is from this psychological perspective that I look at how discipleship training, which is the practical part of Christian formation can take place to children during this time of cognitive development, because they are able to understand and classify things. It is even during this stage that they develop moral behaviour and are able to accept guidance from elders.

¹² Elkind David, (1976:237)

¹³ Ibid. 239

2.1.1 Stages of Faith as developed from the psychology of cognitive development

James Fowler was influenced by Piaget's psychology of cognitive development and looked at how it can influence the religious thinking of children. He assumes that all human beings have some form of faith that proceeds through a rather predictable process of development. He believes that each person is devoted to a master theory that gives him/her direction and hope in life. This master theory which involves other people, with whom values are shared, transcends human experience; and it goes beyond the limitations of life and this leads to faith development. By this, Fowler¹⁴ found out that there are 6 stages of faith development namely; intuitive-projective faith (2-7 years), mythical-literal faith (8-11years), synthetic-conventional faith (12-22), individuating-reflective faith (young adulthood), conjunctive faith and universalizing faith.

Since I am interested in children between 7-12 years, let me look at Fowler's first three stages of faith development since the age of my research falls under these stages.

1. Intuitive-projective faith: In this stage, imagination emerges, gestures and symbols. When imaginations are joined with perceptions and feelings, it creates powerful faith images that continue over life time. In this stage, moral emotions emerge and the child's understanding of God takes shape and it is influenced by experiences and teachings of parents and other adults with whom he is associated to.

Fowler describes this stage in the following words:

Intuitive-projective faith is the fantasy-filled, imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith of primally related adults...there is continually encountering novelties for which no stable operations of knowing have been formed. The imaginative process underlying fantasy is unrestrained and uninhabited by logical thought. In league with forms of knowing dominated by perception, imagination in this stage is extremely productive of long lasting images and feelings (positive and negative) that later, more stable and self-reflective valuing and thinking will have to order and sort out...¹⁵

The implication here is that in this stage, the child has started to perceive what he/she is taught. If he/she is taught that there is God, he/she will perceive that and have a feeling of God. The image of God will always be in his/her minds. It is at this stage

¹⁴ Fowler James, (1981: 122-199)

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 133

that the experiences of parents and other adults will have impact on the children especially if they start discipling them. This stage lays a good back ground for discipleship training because children are able to project their faith and put into practice what they are taught.

2. Mythical- literal Faith: The child here begins to take on stories, beliefs, and practices of his or her community. He/She is able to distinguish between the reality and fantasy. The perspectives and feelings of others can be perceived and He/She views God as an anthropomorphic Being. In fowler's words, he says that:

Mythical-literal Faith is a stage in which the person begins to take on for him- or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community. Beliefs are appropriated with literal interpretations, as are moral rules and attitudes....the actors in their cosmic stories are anthropomorphic. They can be affected deeply and powerfully by symbolic and dramatic materials and can describe in endlessly detailed narrative what has occurred...¹⁶

This implies that during this stage, it is good for the disciplers to use this chance and start teaching children about their faith. This would be done by reading Bible stories to children, teaching them how to pray and even teaching them about worship.

3. Synthetic- conventional Faith: In this stage the child is able to use abstract ideas as he/she is now in adolescence stage. Mutual perspective- taking and the ability to see things as others see them becomes possible. There are also strong relationships in this stage. About this stage, Fowler says that:

...a person's experience of the world now extends beyond the family. A number of spheres demand attention: family, school or work, peers, street society and media, and perhaps religion. Faith must provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that more complex and diverse range of involvements. Faith must synthesize values and information; it must provide a basis of identity and out look...¹⁷

The implication here is that the agencies of discipleship can help children at this age to emulate other old Christians when they are testifying for Christ. As they interact with others, they can be able to give testimonies at school, at home and even in the church. It is in this stage that they realize that they belong to a larger Christian community.

¹⁶ Ibid. P.149

¹⁷ Ibid P.172

2.2 Biblical Reflection on children and their religious values

The Bible is very clear on children and how they should be instructed to know their Creator. Parents were supposed to teach their children how to observe the commandments, the Passover and other religious practices.

2.2.1 O.T Teachings about nurturing children in a religious way

According to the Old Testament, children were included in the daily instructions given by their parents as they went on with their daily activities. The house acted as the classroom for the children. Deut. 6:6-7 says: "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up." Children were supposed to observe the Passover because they were included when the Lord instituted it. Moses told the Israelites to observe the Passover with their children. ("And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons". Ex. 12:25). The Bible emphasizes on training children when they are still young as in Prov. 22:6 which says; "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Parents will not do this work of training their children when they are not a blessing to them. They should be righteous in their way of living and this will give their children blessings as Prov. 20:7 which says that "the righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him."

2.2.2 N.T Teaching about children

In the N.T, Jesus emphasizes the importance of children in the heavenly kingdom and He wants children to be part of His ministry. In His teachings, He would at times illustrate using children. Matt. 18:2-4 says; "Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" He continues to say; "Whoever receives one little child like this in my name receives Me. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for if a millstone were hung around his neck, and were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:5-6).

Jesus also blessed the children who were being forbidden by the Disciples. He said in Mark 10: 14-15; "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (c.f. Lk 18:15)

Paul also gives instructions concerning children and their parents in the process of training them. They are supposed to obey their parents while the parents not to provoke them. Paul says; "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with you and you may live long on earth. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." (c.f. Col. 3: 20-21).

The scripture from the Old Testament emphasize the training of children especially by their parents. These references from the Old Testament are relevant to my topic because parents were supposed to instruct their children in matters concerning religious observances as the paper is also looking at parents having a leading role in Christian formation of their children. They lay a background to discipleship training of children especially by their parents.

According to Jesus' teachings, children are also part of the Kingdom of God. They should not be hindered from coming to Him or following Him. They should be brought to Him for blessings. This shows that children are also Disciples of Christ. If they are Christ's disciples, they should be helped through this journey of following Christ which will lead them to the Kingdom of God and this would be done through discipleship training.

As we have seen in Paul's teachings, it is the responsibility of parents to train their children leading them to the Lord. The children are also expected to obey their parents, as it is stated in the Decalogue. This knowledge from the biblical references is relevant to my research as it emphasizes on dealing with children. Therefore, children should not be neglected in terms of Christian formation and especially the practical but of it which I termed discipleship training.

2.3 Christian Formation a value for Christian Children

It is worth to note that Christian formation is valuable to children born of Christian parents if we want to have a sustainable church firmly rooted in Christ. This can not take place at once but it is a process within the Christian community which involves motivation as Michael J. Anthony says that;

Formation involves motivation-becoming actively involved in desiring growth, wanting to become what God has designed us to be. It includes information-knowing who God is and what God wants, knowing who I am and how I grow. It involves will-deliberate commitment to respond to truth in life once known under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, learning that integrates all three of the above leads to a transformation of the person into increased likeness to Christ.¹⁸

He continues to say that;

Christian Formation is always related to life. This means it will begin and end in life perspectives and experiences as shaped by God for knowing Him and for a person's growth in Him....¹⁹

Christian Formation is a dynamic, unceasing program of growth and development which we experience in our lives with and in the Risen Christ. Christian Formation cannot be reduced to the acquisition of skills or knowledge by completing a prescribed curriculum similar to achieving and satisfying the requirements for a degree. It is not simply one of the activities or occurrences in a person's life; Christian Formation is the continuing activity that gives shape and meaning to all activities in the life of a Christian.

Christian formation to children is very important as it fosters and strengthens children's relationship with God. Children should be able to relate themselves positively with their Creator, as stressed by Cavalletti Sofia that;

The child's contribution in his relationship with God is of the highest quality; the enjoyment of the presence of God. This response, on the level of being, forms the basis of all other responses which will be concretized in doing. The intensity of the children's response to the relationship with God is not so surprising when one remembers that, in fact, relationship is the most basic need; it is the fulfillment the child seeks from the first moment of his or her life.²⁰

¹⁸ Michael J. Anthony, (2001: 134), *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Page 135

²⁰ Cavalletti Sofia, (2002:9) *The Religious Potential of the Child 6-12 years Old,*

2.4 The Concept of Discipleship

This word discipleship is derived from disciple, which is connected with the followers of Jesus Christ and followers of rabbis of that time. It has a biblical connotation from the well known twelve disciples who were chosen by Jesus himself to follow him.

Elwell Walter elaborates that;

During Jesus' earthly Ministry, and during the days of the early church, the term that was used frequently to designate one of Jesus followers was "disciple" ... Hence discipleship is a central theological theme of the Gospels and Acts...

The roots of biblical discipleship go deep into the fertile soil of God's calling. That calling is expressed in the pattern of divine initiative and human response that constitutes the heart of the biblical concept of covenant, manifested in the recurrent promises, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people." That call from Yahweh is reiterated in the call of Jesus, when he said, "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matt.11:28)

God has called his people to represent him on earth, to be with him in every circumstance of life, to be transformed in personal character like him. That calling is at the heart of biblical discipleship both in the OT and the NT.²¹

The process of discipleship did not stop with the calling of disciples by Jesus Christ but as a fulfilment of Jesus' command (Mat.28:19) to his disciples. Michael Anthony uses the term discipling which he explains as;

Investment of concentrated time, energy, and attention in a relatively small number of students by a spiritual formation leader to facilitate Christ like qualities. Disciple making as a New Testament notion is at the heart of the Great Commission of Jesus, expressed in his final words from the gospel of Matthew, "Go therefore and make disciples." This command certainly implies conversion. But based on the ministry of Jesus, it was intended to move beyond initial salvation and produce holy character, vital service in the world, and involvement in the Christian community.²²

Christians are called into discipleship through baptism as they are initiated to Christianity individually making a community of believers. Thus, as new followers of Christ, they are expected to grow steadily in their Christian faith. For Richardson Charles;

The Christian community is called into discipleship and service, individually and communally. Thus the newly baptized are given a welcome that is both personal and public, a welcome which expects the presence of God in the lives of all people. Being called by baptism

²¹ Walter Elwell

²² Michael J. Anthony ((2001:209), Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education,

into discipleship means our learning to worship with the church, to grow in prayer, to listen to the scriptures and to serve our neighbour as ourselves²³

At first sight, discipleship training of children seems to be neglected in local churches. However this is not the case. Both formal and informal opportunities for discipleship training are provided through the church: **(1) Formal** - a number of ministries within the church are aimed at educating children spiritually. The importance of Sunday School classes should not be overlooked. Here a teacher discipled a small group of children through relationship building, role modelling, teaching and guiding. Such contexts are ideally for starting to disciple children in the faith. **(2) Informal** - within the life of a local church community children are discipled informally through the role models (unfortunately both good and bad models are available, but I am concerned with good models which aim at producing faith oriented children); through their interaction with Christians across various generations and through messages and ministry aimed at them within other age-specific or age-inclusive ministry (such as church services). It must be remembered that the nature of the child is essentially corporate. While formal contexts of discipleship training are highly important, children learn and grow in faith through their presence in the faith community. They spend a lot more time studying the lives of adults within the church. Adults must be spiritual examples as well as teachers of the word of God.

2.5 Agencies of Discipleship training

2.5.0 Introduction

I have identified three agencies of discipleship training in formatting children. These include the church, the home and the school. It is from these that a child passes through in his life style. He/she is born from a home, brought to church for baptism and then goes to school for formal education. Therefore, it is necessary to look at their importance in the process of Christian formation and particularly in discipleship training of children.

²³ Richardson Charles (2004:73), *This is our Calling*

2.5.1 The Church

The Church's primary aim for children is their spiritual development: that they should come to worship, know and love God in Word and sacrament and through personal prayer in pilgrimage with other Christians, in ways suitable to their age, culture and stage of faith. The church does this to fulfil the following aims which include;

- Exploring ways in which children are engaged in the worship of the Church, including Eucharistic worship, and to identify and disseminate examples of good practice in the creative use of liturgies with children.
- Forming a judgement about the knowledge the Church might expect children to have of the Christian faith through Scripture, being part of the Church and Christian living, according to their ages, cultures and abilities.
- Knowing how best to enable children to make moral decisions and develop a lively and searching approach to values and attitudes in their faith and in society.

The NT referred the church to both local groups of Christians (c.f. Acts.13:1) and to all Christians throughout the world (c.f. 1Col. 1:24-25). The church as the body of believers headed by the clerical professions has an important role to play in discipling children so as to get rooted in their Christian faith. Some writers view the church as the second institution for Christian formation, looking at the home as the first institution. Different writers have the following views on the church as agency of Christian nurture and Harro says that;

The second agency of the Christian nurture is the church. The teaching ministry of the church emphasized in the book of Acts... Similarly today, the church must teach the young the Good News and how they can take up their full responsibilities in the fellowship of believers.²⁴

When children are welcomed in the church, they need to be nurtured in the Christian way so as to grow in an intimate relationship with their Creator. The church has this responsibility of showing the love of God to children as a way of discipling. Megill argues that;

The most important aspect of Christian nurture for a young child is that of relationships. If a child finds him self loved and accepted by the people around him, and of significance and worth to them, his emerging self is growing in the direction of the self of the mature Christian.

²⁴ Harro Van Brummelen, (1988: 3) *Walking with God in the Family*

God becomes part of the child's world through personal relationships. The chief contribution the church can do to Christian nurture ... is to help Christian parents to learn to know their children, to understand something on how they learn and develop, and the effect of a happy, secure home life on the religious development of the child²⁵.

Though the church has this task of discipleship training to children, it does not do it in isolation without involving families where these children grow. The church has to extend this love of God to families in order to have good relationships.

Michael J. Anthony says that,

The church, through the grace of God brings love, kindness, goodness, and discipline with gentleness to families so that their primary relationships (marital and children) are transformed by the mere experience of being exposed to healthy relating patterns. One needs to receive love in order to give love.²⁶

2.5.2 The Home

2.5.2.1 Beliefs and Practices received in a Home as the basic Institution

The home is a key context in awakening and informing faith; homes develop an understanding of God by projecting ideas to children from adults they encounter. Children understand and accept what they are taught uncritically; they copy what others believe; imagination and rituals are important in faith development. The first education children get, is from the home through their parents. Children receive instructions on how they should grow as useful people which include their religious beliefs and practices. This is evidenced by Jersild when he says that:

All children in a culture such as ours are influenced to some degree by religious practices, ideas, and beliefs, whether or not parents give them religious instruction in the home or send them to church...the tendency is to accept rather than reject, what they hear and read, especially if it ties in with their own desires and interests, and as long as they meet with no direct contradictions.²⁷

The home is the first place where children receive their first instruction, and is looked at as the primary and major agency of Christian formation to children which is carried out mostly by parents. Harro (1988:3) supports this assertion that;

²⁵ Megill, Esther L(1976:58), Education in the African Church

²⁶ Michael J. Anthony(2001: 196), Introducing Christian Education Foundations for Twenty-First Century

²⁷ Jersild T.Arthur (1949:459), Child Psychology

The most important agency of Christian nurture is the family, the basic building block of the society. God directs His injunctions to nurture children in the first place to parents (Deut. 6: 6-9, 11: 18-21, Eph. 6:4). Children experience and develop their ability to live a Christian life within a secure family environment based on a Christian atmosphere of love, support and discipline. Parents must model Christian convictions and a Christian lifestyle. More than any one else, they can communicate to their children how the Christian life should be governed by the insights gained from an obedient listening to God's word.

Parents as models, and when they communicate to their children the word of God and tell them to be obedient to God, they are trying to disciple them. This is one way of discipleship training that children receive in the home from their parents.

2.5.2.2 The home of Christian Parents as a Church in discipleship training

The church in conjunction with homes tries to disciple children through many ways, whereby the home becomes a church to some extent. As the children feel at home when they are in the church, likewise the home becomes the church for the children and the parents are looked at as the pastors. Larom Peter has this to say on a home being a church;

Christian formation should be taking place in the home as well as the Church. The father, the mother or the head of the house becomes a pastor by leading the family prayers, the grace at meals, and the prayers in preparation for attending church on Sunday. The clergyman or lay leader must encourage the parents in his church to take seriously their role of pastor in the home.²⁸

As Christian formation is a broad Christian virtue, in this context, leading family prayers, the grace at meals, and the prayers in preparation for attending church on Sunday are the practical part /discipleship training which is most important to children. Therefore, it is the role of the church leaders to equip parents with enough materials concerning discipleship training as it is important in Christian formation of children.

As the church leaders visit children in their homes as a means of following them, they meet their parents and share with them concerning their faith. It is also argued that children of believers are to be brought up in faith as Michael Anthony asserts when quoting the words of Horace Bushnell that;

²⁸ Larom Peter, et al, (1983:28), Pastor; A Practical Guide for Church Leaders,

Children of believers are to be raised in the faith, having never known a time when they were not believers.²⁹

It seems that for Bushnell, Christian formation is a natural process, taking place through the relationships between believing parents and their children. He emphasizes on the influence of parents to their children in the course of their growth. This means that Christian families play a big role in Christian nurture. Miller, Randolph gives another quotation from Bushnell that:

Horace Bushnell, in his *Christian nurture* in 1847, was thinking primarily of the Christian family and of the influence of parents on their children. He saw clearly the difference that was made by the attitudes and emotional climate, even before words could have meaning for the infant. This applies also to later periods of life, so that we can speak of the situation ideally set for Christian nurture as having an "atmosphere in which grace dwells." Thus the child can grow up as a Christian and never know himself or herself as anything else...³⁰

It is the responsibility of the parents in their homes to up bring their children well versed with their Christian faith. Though the church takes up this responsibility, it does it supplementing the duty of the parents by giving the necessary materials and education that would help in discipleship training of children.

2.5.2.3 Parents as Models to their Children

Children learn through experience as they see what their parents do. They are good imitators and as these Christian parents are faithful to their religion, they will influence the children into becoming good and committed Christians. Westerhoff says that;

The importance of direct experience in the infants' life becomes obvious. Our actions with our children influence their perceptions and hence their faith much more than the words we speak. Our actions frame what our children will experience. While we do not give our children faith, we do influence the character of the faith by how we behave with them...³¹

The faith of a Christian parent is fundamentally important in Christian parenting. As the parent continues this task of parenting, the child is influenced by the religiosity of the parent because he/she grows in the knowledge and love of God. Barbara S. Wilson talks about Christian parenting that;

²⁹ Michael J. Anthony(2001: 268), *Introducing Christian Education Foundations for Twenty-First Century*

³⁰ Miller Randolph Crump (1980: 174), *The Theory of Christian Education Practice*

³¹ *Ibid.* (Page 25-26)

A Christian parent's faith, however, shapes all of parenting. A Christian parent understands parenting to be a vocation, not simply a challenging or as gifts given by God, created in love, and shared with us to nurture, love, and Christ is revealed. While those principles may not be spoken aloud by parents, they are theological underpinning of Christian parenting.³²

This shows that children born of Christian parents are more privileged to get discipleship training through their parents than those born of non-Christian parents though Buconyori cited a problem of lack of instruction that;

Children born of Christian parents are privileged to attend church services. But many churches do not have instruction which is at the level of children. Sunday Schools have become places for dumping children on a Sunday morning so that the adults can hear the preaching without children interruption...³³

Summing up the importance of homes as the primary agencies in discipleship training of children, Richards³⁴ brings in another perspective that;

If we accept socialization as more appropriate than 'education' for communicating Christian faith as life, we are immediately forced to look to the home... There is no question that parents are the primary agents for young children.

2.5.3 The School

Schools play another important role in discipleship training of children because children who go to school spend much of their time at school. As a matter of fact, it is the responsibility of Christian schools to act as centres of discipling children in strengthening their Christian faith, hence forth supplementing the work of the church and the home in discipleship training of children. Zuck Roy says that;

The Christian day school is not designed to replace the church or the home. Instead it seeks to supplement the responsibility of the church and the home. Because the Christian school and the evangelical church each adheres to biblical philosophy of life, they seek to teach in harmony... The school reinforces the home as the biblical directives and admonitions to parents are exercised by the teachers. During the school day, teachers stand in the place of parents.³⁵

³² Barbara S. Wilson, et al(2004:110), *The Ministry of Children's Education: Foundations, Contexts, and Practices*

³³ Buconyori A. Elie.(1993: 82), *The Educational Task of the Church*

³⁴ Richards L.O(1979:55) *A Theology of Christian Education*

³⁵ Zuck Roy (1975: 482)

It is the duty of the Christian schools to shape the children in a godly way. Children who go to Christian schools should be exemplary and reflect the image of God in the sense that they are in a Christian environment or community. Harro on Christian schools argues that;

Christian schools wish to present an image of God's glory and grace. Therefore, they have every right to expect students to live by standards that represent such an image, whether or not the students have been converted and made a personal commitment to Christ. Christian schools must nurture tendencies and behaviour that glorify God.³⁶

Harro³⁷ continues to say that Christian schools challenge and prepare children to be and become citizens of a kingdom that on one hand has been established in Christ and, on the other hand, will not find its ultimate fulfilment in this present life. He continues to give what schools contribute to discipleship training of children by implementing four goals which are;

- To unfold the basis, frame work and implications of a Christian vision of life.
- To foster the development of concepts, abilities, and creativity that (a) proclaim the marvel and potential of God's creation, even in its fallen state, and (b) enable students to walk in God's way by using their God given talents in service to God and their neighbours.
- To let students experience the meaning of living out of a Christian worldview, in order that they may be able and willing to (a) make personal and communal decisions from a biblical perspective, and (b) develop values and practice dispositions in harmony with Christian principles.
- To encourage students to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and to a Christian way of life, willing to serve God and their neighbours.

The purpose of a Christian school education is to assist parents in helping their children to develop a fuller understanding of God, not conforming to the world but conforming to God, and bringing their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Teachers are the responsible people in discipling children at school. But they will not do this if they are not fully committed to the work and if they are not good examples. Zuck Roy³⁸ gives the potentiality of teachers that Teachers must be

³⁶ Harro Van Brummelen(1988:160), Walking with God in the Family

³⁷ Ibid. (1988: 6, 8-10)

³⁸ Zuck Roy(1975:490)

able to lead students to Christ, be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and be whole some, exemplary Christians. Their own faith must be lively and growing as they experience God in their personal lives. They must know how to pray and how to ask in faith the wisdom that is from above.

2.6 Other informal Agencies which may be good or bad models for Children

Children do not grow in isolation. They grow in an environment which is surrounded by many factors that may influence their spiritual growth and faith positively or negatively. These include the peer groups, the media and the community.

2.6.1 Peer Groups

During the normal socialization and group development, children strive to become members of various kinds of groups. These provide appropriate social roles, norms, values, and attitudes for group members, and this facilitates group conformity patterns and means of gaining acceptance in the group. Peers can be effective agents of reinforcing and modifying behaviour. They can influence children either to be good Christians especially those in Christian peer groups, or they can be deviant to the social norms because children respond positively to peers' actions quite often. Handel has this to say on peer groups:

Probably at least as important is the peer group of children that forms in the street, playground, or classroom and constructs activities that, although influenced in some degree by adult expectations, none the less has an autonomous authority of its own.³⁹

2.6.2 The media

Today, the media has tried to challenge other agents of socialization. In other words, it is trying to compete with other agencies in formatting children. Children like watching TV, or listening to music when they are at home. As a result, messages from the media become powerful and seductive henceforth, a need to use the Media in Christian nurture of children. The types of media common to children in my area include TV, Radios, News Papers and Magazines without forgetting the Videos.

Barbara says that;

³⁹ Handel Gerald (2006: 175), Childhood Socialization

...for better for worse, media culture is the primary context in which children's ministry takes place, and communities of faith must engage that culture fully, understanding children's ministry a deliberate cultural intervention.⁴⁰

Barbara also continues to argue that:

Woven into all of this blur are the daily practices of media- so common- place that we often take them for granted. TV programs and during breakfast, the car Radio on while commuting, after- school "screen time"...all of these are part of our shared environment. It is in this context that religious educators must enter, and it is in this context that we will be supportive and engaged with learning with children, or not.⁴¹

2.6.3 The Community

Children live in a community which has many religious, political and economic ideologies that are prevalent in the society. Christianity itself is in diversity with many denominations some of which have different doctrines. Therefore, children grow in such an environment that needs a lot of intervention by the appropriate disciplers so that they are not shaped according to the norms of the community but according to Christian way of living. Mercer says that:

For instance, children bring different cognitive awareness of the dynamics at work in the interplay of the individual and communal identities, less ability to "act back" upon the community that shapes them, and, or less freedom to determine their own membership by staying in or leaving the community at will.⁴²

The community needs much attention if we want to groom the children into faithful and strong devout Christians. If not, there are other possibilities of negative formation as cited by Mercer in form of questioning her self and explaining what she understands as Christian formation:

And what about the possibilities of "negative formation," that is, formation into destructive or negative identities? Acknowledging the fallibility of congregations, an important question occurs. Is it not risky to allow imperfect communities to shape the identities of children? Do we really want children to be formed into the identities and practices of faith communities where racism, sexism, classism or homophobia (to name just four quick and common examples) constitutes a strong aspect of a particular congregation's communal identity? It is a legitimate question, and the answer, of course, is no. The understanding of education as identity formation in Christian faith must have a normative dimension certain forms of identity, such as those that are oppressive or destructive, are in fact ruled out by norms from

⁴⁰ Barbara S. Wilson (2004:128)

⁴¹ Ibid. P.130

⁴² Mercer, Joyce Ann (2005: 172); *Welcoming Children*

scripture, tradition and experience that affirms God's love ...To say that congregations form children and others in particular identities through their participation in community practices does not guarantee that the formation will be positive, negative, or benign. A view of education as identity formation, therefore, must account for the possibility of children being negatively formed into distorted, oppressive, or otherwise problematic identities.

In conclusion, the information gotten from the above literature gives a broader understanding of Christian formation of children between 7 and 12 years considering the role of discipleship training which is the practical perspective of Christian formation. It has also set an impressive background to the study because of the relevancy of the above writers' views to the topic in consideration.

CHAPTER THREE

3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

Methodology in scientific research is the basic connection that links the empirical data of the study to the preliminary research questions and conclusions in the final analysis. It is the approach, style by which a researcher employs in an area of study to get findings for his/her scientific knowledge. Therefore the method I employed in this study was both literary and empirical. Literary, I read books related to the subject of study especially from the Norwegian Teacher Academy Library and I also visited other libraries such as Bishop Stuart University-Kakoba and Bishop Barham University libraries in Uganda for more information concerning the topic of my research.

3.1 Sampling procedures

Sampling in scientific research is an important aspect as it helps a researcher to get valid and reliable results. There are two major sampling procedures commonly known as probability sampling and non- probability sampling. According to Judd, et al,⁴³ probability sampling means that every unit within the population has the chance of being selected. This type of sampling is usually used in quantitative research which involves large samples. Since my study is based on qualitative research, I used non-probability sampling. Berg, Bruce L.⁴⁴ says that “in non-probability sampling, the investigator does not base his or her sample selection on probability theory...Non-probability samples offer the benefits of not requiring a list of all possible elements in a full population, and the ability to access otherwise highly sensitive or difficult to research study populations.” Berg gives the following types of non-probability sampling; convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling.

⁴³ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R & Kidder, L.H,(1991:142) *Research Methods in Social Relations*

⁴⁴ Berg, Bruce, L (2001:31)

In my research, I used purposive sampling whereby I used my knowledge in selecting subjects who represented the population.

According to Silverman David,⁴⁵

Purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested. However, this does not provide a simple approval to any case we happen to choose. Rather purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample case carefully on this basis.

3.1.1 Area and Size sampling

Ankole Diocese which is the area of investigation is a wide and big area which covers almost 4 Political Districts. Since my study is qualitative, I carried it in two Archdeaconries of Greater Mbarara and Ibanda Archdeaconry, plus Ruharo Cathedral Deanery since it is the centre of Ankole Diocese, concentrating on only three parish churches namely St. James Cathedral Parish, All Saints' Church Parish and Ibanda Parish.

Why did I choose these parishes in the whole Diocese?

- They have active children ministries
- They have programs for school children
- They have educated parents from whom I hoped to get information.

3.1.2 Sample population and units

The topic of my study deals with children who are between ages 7 -12. Therefore, the target group for information were the adults who are responsible for Christian formation of children. These include;

- Church leaders; ordained priests and lay-readers,
- Parents especially those with children with the age under my study,
- School teachers especially those concerned with the spirituality of school children.

Since I was doing a qualitative research, not all the above mentioned were my respondents/informants. I used purposive sampling as already stated to get 2 priests and 2 lay-readers to represent church leaders, 4 families to represent parents, 2 teachers from two Christian Schools to represent teachers, and 2 Sunday School teachers to represent those who volunteer to teach Sunday School.

⁴⁵ Silverman David,(2000: 104) *Doing qualitative research : a practical handbook*

In addition to the above, I visited the Diocesan Missions' office to find out the strategy the Diocesan office has for discipling children. I also found it necessary when I was in the field and made informal interviews to 4 children who managed to give me the information I wanted.

3.2 Pilot Study

In order to test my data collection instruments, I carried out a pilot study before I started the real study. The pilot study refines both research design and field procedures. During the pilot study, the variables which were not fore seen during the research design phase can crop up uncovering some study logistics. Henceforth, a pilot study is important because it helps the researcher to see the strength and weaknesses of his/her instruments of data collection leading to alteration where it necessitates. In this regard therefore, I conducted a pilot study at the Parish of the Good Shepherd Kakoba. I interviewed one pastor representing the church leaders and one teacher who is also a parent. After the first interview with the pastor, I listened to the tape and found out that the recordings were not clear because the recorder was a bit far and my voice was low. This helped me to project my voice and to place the recorder near us all. Further analysis was done, changes made in questions that proved unclear to the respondents. The church that was used as pilot study did not form part of the selected churches when the main study was conducted.

3.3 Data collection Instruments

Collecting data from the field of research requires thinking about methods to employ depending on the nature of research one is undertaking. There are many methods of data collection which include questionnaire, street ethnography, historical analysis, interviews and observations to mention but a few. As my study is based on qualitative research, I used interviews and non participant observation as my instruments of data collection. The questions for the interview guide were formulated which guided me in collecting the data. The interviews I conducted helped me to address the research topic and allowed respondents to unfold themselves having a mutual encounter. A detailed guide was used in interviewing individuals and was taped and later on transcribed, analyzed and then got a detailed report.

3. 4 Qualitative Research Interview

Interviewing is the most widely method used in Qualitative research. Kvale (1996) says that the research interview is a specific form of conversation. Kvale⁴⁶ asserts that:

The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.

He continues to say that qualitative research interview is a construction site of knowledge. An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest.

Interviewing as a qualitative research method has its strength and weaknesses. I have tried to extract some advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research interviews from the Book of Kvale (1996) and the Book of Holstein (2003) who extensively wrote about interviewing.

Advantages of Qualitative research Interviews

- Qualitative research interviews allow the interviewee to describe what is meaningful or important to him/her using his/her own words rather than being restricted to predetermined categories.
- Interviews in qualitative research also provide credibility and face validity. In these interviews, there is face to face encounter between the interviewer and the interviewee.
- They also allow the researcher to probe for more details and ensure that participants are interpreting questions the way they were intended.
- In qualitative research interviewing, the interviewers have the flexibility to use their knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes raised by participants.
- Sometimes, there are no standardized questionnaires as in Quantitative research and outcome measures are available that are appropriate for what the researcher's program is trying to accomplish.

⁴⁶ Kvale Steinar. (1996:1). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*

Disadvantages of qualitative research interviews

- Qualitative research interviews may be experienced as more intrusive than quantitative approaches because participants may say more than intended to say.
- They may be more reactive to personalities, moods, and interpersonal dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee than methods such as survey.
- Conducting interviews can be expensive and time consuming, because it requires considerable skills and experience.
- Analyzing and interpreting qualitative interviews is much more time-consuming than analyzing and interpreting quantitative interviews.
- Qualitative research interviews are more subjective than quantitative because the researcher decides on which quotes or specific examples should be included in the report.

It is important to note that qualitative research is different from quantitative research. In qualitative research, few people are selected who are interviewed whereas in quantitative research, questionnaires are designed and sent to many. This leads to a researcher gaining a lot of knowledge from few informants in qualitative research. But in quantitative research, the researcher gains less knowledge, however, he/she gets many answers from the many informants asked hence knowing more about their feelings and attitudes.

In general, qualitative research generates rich, detailed and valid data that contribute to in-depth understanding of the context whereas quantitative research generates reliable population based and generalizable data.

3.5 Reliability and validity

This section explored and reflected two main features which are measurements in judging the quality of any social research. These are commonly termed as reliability and validity of research.

3.5.1 Reliability

The reliability of a research instrument concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. Although unreliability is always present to a certain extent, there will generally be a good deal of consistency in the results of a

quality instrument gathered at different times. The tendency toward consistency found in repeated measurements is referred to as reliability. In order to address the issue of reliability, interview guide questions were set before I went to the field for data collection. I also made use of the guidelines which were given to us during Summer semester as a way of training for field research because emphasis was mainly on research methods and how to ensure reliability and validity in scientific research. I did not only rely on this but also read some literature concerning research methods and other related literature of my research topic. I was also guided by the research coordinator through the discussion of my proposal with my classmates who helped me to identify and point out some errors before going for field study, and this enriched my credibility in research. I also received guidance from my research supervisor on how to conduct qualitative research and also furnishing my research topic. All the above steps in addition to the pilot study that I carried out before starting the main study gave me insight on how to detect and identify errors and avoid biases, which is the main aim of reliability.

3.5.2 Validity

Validity can be defined as the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses a specific concept which a researcher is attempting to measure. Validity is concerned with the studies success at measuring what a researcher intends to measure, for he/she aims at getting valid and reliable conclusions. Kvale⁴⁷ says that ascertaining validity involves issues of truth and knowledge during thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, validating and reporting.

Therefore, the validity of this research was strengthened mainly by choosing an appropriate time scale and also by selecting appropriate instruments for collecting the data.

⁴⁷ Kvale Steinar (1996:236), *Interviews, An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

The study is set out to look at Christian formation of children between 7-12 years in Ankole Diocese specifically, the role of discipleship in children ministry. The data collected included responses from interviews conducted to the selected people using purposive sampling. The people selected were 12 who consisted of 2 priests and 2 lay-readers to represent church leaders, 4 parents to represent families, 2 teachers from two Christian Schools, and 2 Sunday School teachers. I also visited the office of Diocesan Missions' co-ordinator who also gave me information concerning the strategy the church has for discipling children. In addition to these respondents, informal interviews were conducted among 4 children, and 2 observations were made with Sunday School, and School children services respectively.

In this chapter, results are presented as deduced from the collected data as to per the research questions and responses got from the categorized respondents.

4.1 Research Question one: What steps has the church taken to build up a strong foundation through Christian upbringing of Children in Ankole Diocese?

The researcher wanted to find out the steps taken by the church in nurturing children to make them strong Christians. This research question was tested by using questions 8 and 14 of church leaders and 9 of parents and teachers.

4.1.1 Responses from Church leaders

Church leaders both ordained and lay were asked about how the church has tried to cater for children and the steps taken in Christian formation of children. In interviewing the church leaders, focus was on children between 7 and 12 years. All the church leaders whom I interviewed have Sunday School and Bible classes which they hope are the appropriate avenues for Christian nurture. One of the respondents a Lay reader gave the following steps put forward in his church to nurture the children:

- The church tries to visit children in their homes. However, he said that these visitations are not regular because of other programs within the church such as office work, meetings and other impromptu functions which come abruptly for instance funeral and burial services. According to his view, home visits are not sufficient enough for Christian nurture of children but they play a key role because it is one way of following and discipling children. This is part of discipleship training as the informant said that during these visitations, the church leaders teach the children how to pray and they pray with them, they share testimonies with children and parents, and lead them in Bible study in their homes.
- Parents have meetings on Wednesday evenings with topics concerning children ministry. These meetings according to the respondent have an impact on the families of those who attend them. They discuss on how to carry out discipleship training to their children at home and church leaders encourage them to have time of discipling their children. But when I asked the respondent whether all Christian parents come to these meetings, he said that not all come. However, he had the view that the church administration has the plan to organize such meetings in villages/cells so that every family is reached. Each church is divided into cells and each cell has a Church warden who is responsible for every Christian activity in his/her cell. Therefore, it was the respondent's opinion to liaise with the churchwardens/cell leaders and organize meetings which would accommodate all Christians.
- The church started children service every Sunday at 8.00 a.m. They lead praise and worship and also read lessons. This service is entirely for school children. However, the respondent noted that this service benefits children who are in Boarding Primary schools that are within the area of the church. Few of the day scholars come for this service; hence not all children are beneficiaries. This service focuses on discipleship training as some of the children lead prayers, share their testimonies to other children and even learn how to give offertories to God.

He also cited out that the church has a program for the Schools within his church's jurisdiction. Every school has a day in a week for church leader's visits in order to conduct services which are sometimes led by the children in collaboration with the teachers concerned with spiritual affairs in the school. He also said that when these children are in holidays, there is a program designed by the church to cater for these school children. They come at the church on the following days in the evenings for children gatherings which have different activities:

- Mondays- children gather for praise and worship which is led by the youth leader who was chosen by the church as the spiritual mentor of children. The spiritual mentor's role is to guide children on leading praise and worship, and also on sharing their testimonies.
- Tuesdays- children fellowship together and have English Bible Study also led by the spiritual mentor and the pastor or lay leader who guide these children in Bible study groups.
- Wednesdays- children fellowship together and have vernacular Bible study led by the lay leader
- Thursdays- children come for what is termed as children's flavour. In this meeting, children have different activities which include singing, plays, citations and testimonies.

Another Lay leader gave the view that discipleship training in his church is through encouraging children to participate in different church activities such as reading lessons and leading praises. The church prepares small gifts for the children of Sunday School which motivate them to come to the church. He also said that every Monday, he visits the school to conduct prayers at the School assemblies and on Wednesday evenings, he has Bible study with children.

When I interviewed the curate of St. James' Cathedral Deanery, he gave the following steps put forward by the church in discipling children:

- The church has an active Sunday School program. Children meet on Saturdays in addition to the Sunday services.
- They have children fellowships every Wednesdays and Fridays.
- Children meet every Sunday at 4.00pm for home visitations where they visit families of Sunday School members.

He said that the church appointed a full time Sunday school worker who is responsible for children ministry in this church. He also said that 8 Sunday school teachers were trained to do the work of Sunday school most of whom are school teachers.

The pastor of Ibanda gave me some views concerning the program of child development centre which is situated at the Archdeaconry centre in addition to the Sunday School programs. He said that this organisation has done much on Christian formation of children in the church. The children meet every Saturday at their centre and the first thing they do is to pray and read the word of god together. As a result, most of the children affirm their salvation and testify that Jesus is Lord and Saviour. Children ministry in Ibanda parish is specified in two groups. They have a Sunday School program in which there is a Bible class and also the program for child development.

In addition to church leaders, I had an encounter with the Diocesan Missions' coordinator. He is fully responsible with all the ministries within the church. His office is in charge of discipleship and evangelism, children ministry, youth ministry, ministry for men (Fathers' Union) and ministry for Women (Mother' Union).

When I asked him the steps that his office has put forward in discipling children, and the program the church has for children ministry, he gave me the following:

- The office in collaboration with Scripture Union organises children conferences during holidays. These conferences draw school children under the Church of Uganda foundation in the whole Diocese to come and attend the conference. He said that the main goal for these conferences is for discipleship training children. They study the Bible in groups and also share their testimonies.
- There is a team of Christian volunteers who make regular follow-ups to children in their Schools. This team meets children at school and organize Bible study groups and share the word of God with them.
- The office has trained few committed Christians for the work of discipleship training at the grassroots. They make a program to visit children groups in villages where they guide children in prayers, Bible studies, e.t.c. which are involved in discipleship training.

INTERPRETATION

According to the above information gathered from the church leaders, I realised that church leaders have a noble task of Christian formation of children especially through discipleship training within and outside the church (homes, schools etc). It is the wish of the church that children are reached and helped to grow as faithful Christian. All the programs of children ministry as seen above are planned by the Pastors, or their Assistants. If they are planned by the Sunday school teachers or any other person who works with children ministry, he/she plans them with the church leaders' consent. Whether the meetings of children ministry are organized by the church leaders or not, they are always called upon to be present and help with their wisdom, authority, leadership abilities, official or spiritual endorsement, financial support, or provision of a meeting place and other facilities as deemed necessary.

Church leaders' work involves sensitization of the congregation on the importance of discipleship training and Christian formation of children, henceforth; Christians are requested to recognize the need for discipleship training of children in the church, homes and schools. In a way of convincing the congregation, the church leaders said that this is always done during notices in the Sunday services.

Church leaders do not do this work alone, without any assistants to help them since they have other responsibilities. They recruit and train personnel to handle the work of children. It was found out that it is the church leaders' initiative to recruit those to teach Sunday school and appoint a discipleship team to help him/her in the work of discipling children. According to church leaders, asking for volunteers from the congregation to teach Sunday school on Sunday is not enough and is not consistent. They have to seek out people who are committed and interested and even confident in working with children. Such Christians must be gifted in working with children because children of this age are sensitive. They need some one who can handle children with much care.

All the steps put forward by the church to enhance Christian formation of children can not be successful without funds. Two of the church leaders felt that the church budget provides little money for children ministry while the other two said that their budgets provide reasonable money for the children ministry which is used for buying materials

for Sunday school and even for giving some incentives to Sunday school teachers. The churches that do not provide funds for children ministry are those from rural areas who undergo financial constraints, whereas those who try to provide funds for children ministry are those in urban area of Mbarara town whose members are mostly business people, the employed and elite groups. According to the investigation carried out, these are the same churches that have managed to train Sunday school teachers in the Diocese.

The churches in which I got information concerning Sunday school classes differ in handling the services. Two of the churches had a well designed program for Sunday school which follows the Sunday school syllabus while other two churches do not have a designed program. The reason is that the churches that have a designed program are those with trained Sunday school teachers while others have just volunteers.

Another important feature noted is that some churches start the main service with Sunday school children and after the citation of the creed, the service leader calls all the children to the alter with their teachers, they are prayed for and blessed and then released for their own services. While in other churches, children go straight to their Sunday school classes for their service without passing through the church. When I asked the Sunday school leader when these children interact with the congregation, she said that they organise family services 3 times a year where by children attend the main service and present some items to the congregation. I feel that it is good for the children to be part of the church. Therefore, the first example of the church where all the children first join the main service before going for their own service, children feel being part of the main congregation. Even, they receive the church leader's blessings every Sunday.

Pastoral visits to Christian homes with a purpose of following Sunday school children were found to be fruitful according to the respondents. It was found out that some parents only send their children to attend Sunday school and for them they just stay at home. But when church leaders keep on visiting such homes, they soon become regular attendants. One of the church leaders gave an example of one of the Christians who used to drive his children to and from the church every Sunday and goes back

without attending the service. The church leader paid regular visits to this family following Sunday School children and praying for the family. One Sunday, he was invited to see his children participating in Sunday School presentations. The Christian came with his children and attended the service and was impressed by what his children presented. From then, he became an active attendant of Sunday service, and surprisingly enough, the respondent testified that this Christian is now a church warden. In his words, the respondent said; "Too often we preach and teach the reached who come to church and do not take God-given opportunities of finding the lost sheep". Therefore, it was through following the Sunday school child that brought this parent to the church. This parent now is keen in discipling his children because he is now a committed Christian who knows his responsibility as a Christian parent.

Church leaders were asked about the experience they get from visitation of homes. One of the respondents said that in most cases fathers are not found in their homes. He said that they come very late and tired which shows that they have little or no time for discipleship training of their children. Most work of nurturing and discipleship training is left to mothers. Another respondent said that other homes with business parents, children are left to the care of house attendants the whole day. Parents come late at night with fatigue and have little time for their children.

Church leaders felt that confirmation classes are one of the ways of Christian formation of children within the field of my study. They all agreed that the children who register for these classes are between 11-12 years. That the children of this age are curious, quick and eager to learn when their interest is captured. They have a sense of what is right and wrong, hence easy for imparting Christian doctrine to them.

4.1.2 Responses from Parents

I made interviews with four Christian parents, three males and one female, three of them were baptised when they were still infants, while one was baptized when he was a youth. First and foremost, parents said that the first step the church has done is to register children for baptism. It is after baptism that children become Christians.

The second step the church has put forward is by creating avenues for teaching children their Christian faith, e.g. establishing Christian schools, Sunday school

classes, child development centres and in catechetical classes when they are preparing them for confirmation. The church has organized seminars to parents through Mothers Union and Fathers Union concerning Christian parenting. The church has tried to visit homes, pray with children and read the word of God with them. One of the respondents testified that if it was not the Church's initiative, she would not have grown into a responsible Christian. That she was baptized when she was still a child, then joined Sunday School and it was from there that she started testifying for Christ. According to her testimony, she did not know that she was saved until when she was in Sunday School. In addition, she sees the work of the church in following children at home very crucial, because it has helped her children to be good followers of Christ.

According to the parents whom I interviewed, the work of discipleship training is seen as the work of the church. They are not aware that they are the primary disciplers of their children. They do the work unconsciously, putting the blame of any failure to the church. One of the parents said that;

“Most young Christians are going away from our church because church leaders do not teach children their doctrine. During confirmation classes, their intention is to get a big class just to raise the money from confirmation fees and use the time for classes doing manual work.”

According to this comment from the parent, he thinks that most youth who join the newly established Pentecostal churches is because of church leaders not being serious on their work, the parent disregarding his role in discipleship training of children as a primary discipler.

Parents think that it is because of lack of doctrinal teaching which leads to the flow of the youth to Pentecostal churches. To some extent, I also think that this assumption is true, because if these youth are well rooted in their faith beginning from their childhood, there would be no need of moving from their main church to other new churches. They move in quest and search for some thing they are lacking and missing. However, the question remains to parents about their responsibility in Christian nurture of their children. Should we assume that they go without the knowledge of their parents? If not why should they let them go unquestioned?

4.1.3 Responses from School teachers

The teachers I interviewed were of different sex. The female teacher was married but without children and the male teacher was still a bachelor. They almost had the same views concerning the work of the church in schools. One of the teachers said that the Church has tried to do the following: organise joint worship services for the two schools within the church's premises (Mbarara mixed and Mbarara Junior) every Wednesdays in the church. These services are in two sessions. The first one is for the lower classes i.e. P.1-P.4, and the second is for the upper classes thus from P.5-P.7. Secondly, the church has trained eight teachers from these two schools to do the work of discipleship to children. These also help the church in leading Sunday School services on Sundays. She also said that she is more concerned about children ministry, and she is one of the teachers who are responsible for discipleship training of children in the school. Though she is not trained as a church minister, she tries to act as a chaplain in the school by organizing Christian activities such as Bible Studies, fellowships e.t.c.

Another teacher of Nyabuhikye Boarding Primary School said that the lay reader has the responsibility of leading worship services every Friday in the church. He also prays for the boarders in their hostels every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at night. The teacher I talked to told me that he is responsible for spiritual affairs of the school mainly in discipleship training of children, but he said that he at times prays for the staff when they gather in the staff room. When I asked him on how he has tried to disciple children of this school, he said that he has done the following in the school:

- Leading prayers and choosing children who are capable in leading prayers everyday morning as children parade before going to their classes.
- He organises fellowship meetings for children where they read the Bible and share testimonies twice a week (Wednesday and Friday evenings).
- He formed a children's choir and a praise and worship team in which songs of praise are taught, and he said that they also help in spiritual growth of children.
- He also established a Scripture Union, Boys and Girls Brigade groups in which discipleship is carried during the groups meetings.

INTERPRETATION

The schools I visited are in different locations and far apart in different Districts but in the same Diocese of Ankole. Mbarara Mixed and Mbarara Junior Schools are in Mbarara town and within St. James Cathedral premises. That is why they use the Cathedral as their chapel according to the teacher Interviewed who is in charge of the services.

These two schools are church founded Schools but they are aided by the government. They are the only schools in that area which is mainly occupied by a big number of Moslems as there is a big Mosque few metres from Mbarara Mixed School. This means that children from Moslem homes attend school from these schools, and they too attend chapel services with all the school children hence forth, getting Christian faith though they are not Christians. It was found out that at times some even convert to Christianity because of the Christian experience gained from these schools. The teacher I interviewed informed me about two Moslem boys who converted to Christianity when they were students of that school to the extent that one of the boys later on married one of the church leaders daughter.

The other School which is known as, Nyabuhikye Boarding Primary School is situated in sub rural area and in the District of Ibanda. It is also a church founded school but it accommodates children of different religions. Being the only Boarding school in the whole sub-county of Nyabuhikye, some of the boarders are of other religions. The teacher I interviewed said that they have 4 children in the Boarding who are Moslems. These too attend the service with other children and read the Bible which is a rear incident to Moslems.

According to the findings from the field, teachers play a significant role in discipleship training of children at school. They organise prayer meetings, Bible study groups and Christian organizations within the school. But this work is done by those who are committed to Christian faith. Those who are nominal Christians do not care about discipling children but mind about their teaching profession. The teachers also think that this work of discipleship is entirely for the church workers, because one of the teachers I interviewed told me that they do this work voluntarily, and wish to be trained for the work or have school chaplains to do it.

4.1.4 Responses from Sunday School Teachers

I interviewed two Sunday School teachers from different churches. One was from Mbarara Archdeaconry, and the second one from Ibanda Archdeaconry. They both expressed their views which were almost similar in showing the steps the church has put forward in nurturing children. They said that the church first establishes children ministry by starting organizations such as Sunday School, Scripture Union as a means of reaching them. They said that the church collaborates with the school to get classrooms where Sunday school services are held. Then the church puts in place a committee for children ministry, selects voluntary workers to teacher these children. The one from Mbarara Archdeaconry added on that their church has trained about 6 Sunday school teachers to take the responsibility of teaching Christian values to these children. Another important thing that the church does is releasing finances for buying gifts to children and giving some little allowances to the teachers. Again the church provides teaching materials such charts, children's Bibles and other materials for Christian activities.

From the above findings gathered from all my respondents, the Church has not kept aloof from the work of children ministry. Sunday school classes have been established, programs for pastoral visits made and other church leaders have tried to make workshops for sensitizing parents and teachers. Some have tried to train Sunday school teachers to help in the work of discipling children. However, it should be noted that this work of children ministry which involves discipleship is enormous and can not be done by one person. Churches in Ankole Diocese have big congregations with many homes to be visited by one person, the church leader. This shows that though the church has put forward some steps of reaching children, not all churches have done this work effectively. For instance, some have trained Sunday School teachers while others use volunteers because they failed to train Sunday School teachers. According to the information I got from the field, only two parishes out of 88 parishes have trained Sunday School teachers. Fortunately, the Diocesan Missions co-ordinator said that every year, they make seminars and workshops for Sunday school teachers in the whole Diocese, which gives hope for the ministry.

4.2 Research Question two: How can the Church in Ankole enhance

Christian Formation to children through discipleship training?

The researcher wanted to find out how the church in Ankole Diocese can disciple children in a way of enhancing Christian formation in the church. This research question was tested by using questions 9, 19, and 21 of church leaders, which were used to other respondents.

4.2.1 Responses from Church leaders

The interviews I carried out between the church leaders gave the following ways how Christian formation of children can be enhanced through discipleship training. They all concurred that the first thing is to sensitize parents to let their children come to the church as it is always regarded as a Holy place and also to allow them to participate in church activities. They also agreed that making regular pastoral visits in homes and schools, and involving children in Christian activities in homes, schools and at the church is an important aspect of Christian formation of children. Then the parents need training on skills of discipleship so as to be knowledgeable on what to do and how they can help their children in their Christian growth. They also said that there is a need of establishing a fund for getting materials for children, reimbursement for volunteers and even for facilitating workshops for parents and teachers. The Diocesan Missions' co-ordinator gave me the following strategies that can enhance Christian formation and discipleship training of children in Ankole Diocese:

- Children to be followed in homes and schools; sharing the word of God and praying with them.
- Making children's cell groups at the grass root and children's fellowships in the schools and at the church.
- The Diocese to have a discipleship office which would help in training volunteers who would help the Diocese and the entire church in discipleship training of children.
- To have a separate office of children ministry, that is not integrated with the Youth ministry. This office would be responsible for all the programs concerning children ministry, discipleship training inclusive.
- Recruitment of Christian teachers who should be appointed to Christian schools and help in discipleship training of school children.

- Training of Sunday School teachers in the whole Diocese and on the Diocesan level. The churches which have trained Sunday school teachers trained them on individual basis, and these help the individual parishes but not the entire Diocese.
- Organizing workshops for parents, teachers, and church workers in discipleship training of children.
- Establishing a fund for facilitating children ministry especially in discipleship training of children.

4.2.2 Responses from Parents

According to the parents, most of the work of children is seen to be on the shoulders of the church leaders. They all said that in order for the church to enhance Christian formation to children through discipleship training, the leaders of the church should set aside time for pastoral visiting in form of following children. One Christian parent said that church leaders at times make these visits but they focus on collecting money than preaching the word of God.

She noted that the Church should make children ministry a priority hence emphasis should be put on discipleship. She said that most church leaders put much emphasis on other organizations e.g. MU, FU and Youth, neglecting children ministry. Children are mostly met in Sunday School classes which are normally on Sundays. Therefore, a proper program for children should be designed as a means of enhancing Christian formation which embraces all venues where children can be met.

Parents also concurred with church leaders on issues of making regular workshops for parents and even God parents and also have a fund for the work of children.

4.2.3 Responses from School teachers

Most of the answers given by the teachers were in conformity with what other informants gave. They also said that in order for the church to enhance Christian formation to children, the following has to be done:

- The church should organise regular seminars for school teachers and parents in matters concerning children ministry.
- The teachers should be trained methods of discipling children.

- The Church in conjunction with school administration should work together and create enough time for discipleship training at school especially during extra-curricular activities.
- They also noted that when children go home for their holidays, teachers do not follow them to their homes. They suggested that a committee of teachers in collaboration with the church workers should be formed to follow children during their holidays.
- Another important thing that was put forward that can enhance Christian formation of children in schools is that each school should have a teacher in charge of spiritual matters whom we might call a chaplain.

4.2.4 Responses from Sunday School Teachers

The formal interviews I had with Sunday School teachers gave me some ways how the church can enhance Christian formation to children in Ankole Diocese. These mostly hinge on their work as volunteers, because it seemed church leaders have cast all the burden of Christian formation of children on their shoulders. Though Sunday school teachers think the leaders of the church have left all the work of Sunday school to them, it is not their intention. All the ministry of the church is under their care therefore, they should try to make a program whereby they should get time and attend Sunday school service and give a blessing to children.

Another idea in concern was that the work of Sunday school is always left to females only. Few males are doing this work. For instance, in Ruharo Cathedral Church, they have more than 8 Sunday School Teachers who are all females. All Saints Church has 6 Sunday School teachers but only one is a male. Therefore, the church should try to sensitize males to do the work. They even noted that even in the home women are the ones with this task of nurturing children. This concurs with what the church leaders experienced in their pastoral visits when they found out that in most homes, men are not always there. Women are the ones at home doing everything including teaching children of the domestic chores. This implies that men look at the status of working with children as inferior. But the work of training children should be done by both parents. Prov. 22:6 say; "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it". This was an instruction to parents despite of sex differences. The verse does not specify that women are the ones to train children.

Moreover, Paul in Eph. 6:4, specifically is concerned with fathers when he says; “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord”. The implication here is that children work should not be left to women only but should be a combined effort of both parents.

Another idea given by Sunday School teachers that can enhance Christian formation to children was that church leaders together with Sunday School teachers should have a program of visiting Christian children in their homes. They said that this would make children realise the concern the church has towards them, and this would strengthen their faith.

They also concurred with other respondents on the church organizing workshops for parents, teachers, and church workers, and establishing a fund for facilitating children ministry.

4.3 Research Question Three: What are the factors that influence Christian Formation of children in Ankole Diocese?

The researcher wanted to know the factors which influence Christian formation to children in Ankole Diocese. This was tested by questions 11 of church leaders, 7, 8 of parents and teachers and 1-4 for teachers only.

4.3.1 Responses from Church leaders

Home influences are very important in Christian formation says one of the church leaders I interviewed. In the home, religion is an important value and it is where commitment starts through prayers, reading the Bible, and sharing the word with children

Another home factor expressed by the church leaders is of parents being role models to their children in their attitude and practices to their Christian faith, their discipline at home, and their commitment to the church activities. The way parents answer questions asked by children relating to God also matters.

Love is another factor which church leaders advanced. That church leaders, parents and teachers should show love to children. That a parent can not tell his/her children

that God is Love when a parent does not have love and is aggressive to family members.

4.3.2 Responses from Parents

The parents I interviewed had the following views on the factors that can influence Christian formation to children;

- Social life at the church gives a sense of belonging to children. When children come at the church, they feel that they belong to a big group. Therefore, the Church workers way of welcoming children matters because it activates them to keep on coming to the church.
- The church liturgy for the children also can influence Christian formation. Children can not bear with the usual church liturgy because it is focussed on the adult Christians. Therefore, the church can design a liturgy that fits the children so as to make them feel that they are cared for.
- Involving children in church services e.g. children reading lessons, sharing testimonies e.t.c
- Use of mass media e.g. sermons on TVs, and Radios and even taking children to Radio stations to present some church songs and plays.
- Well teaching of catechism is also very important in Christian formation. In our Diocese, children of age 11- 12 are allowed to attend confirmation classes so that they can be confirmed into Christian faith by the Bishop. Confirmation classes are supposed to take six months. Therefore, during these months children should be well taught catechism as it is in the syllabus. Parents raised this concern because they noted that at times church leaders register children for confirmation when they get the program for Bishop's pastoral visit and teach them on selected days for few months and in the evenings. The parents said that they became strong in their faith because of catechism as it contains the doctrine of the church.

4.3.3 Responses from School teachers

The teachers I interviewed gave the factors which mainly concern the school environment. They all agreed that each school should have a teacher concerned with the spiritual welfare of both teachers and school children. One of my informant teachers used the term "religious personnel". That such a teacher would bring a lot of Christian influence to the school.

Another factor is classroom influence by the teachers. If the teachers are all good Christians, they can influence Christian formation in classrooms as they teach e.g. saying a short prayer, reading a verse from the Bible etc. The teachers also said that the time for extra curricular activities can be used effectively for Christian nurture of children. Children here can get enough time for Bible study, prayer, meditation, and other Christian activities. These influences on the children's beliefs and practices are very important in Christian formation and spiritual growth. They emphasized on the importance of Christian organizations that involve school children such as Scripture Union, Boys and Girls Brigade. These are important because they teach Christian values to children hence strengthening their faith.

Teachers specified other issues which are crucial and can also influence Christian formation. For instance, the language used by the formators should develop appropriate symbols that speak to the culture and concerns of children so that they are inspired. This also concerns the way children's questions are answered and well explained in order for them to understand what is meant by being a Christian.

Another view was that of participation in all Christian activities. All the strategies of the Christian formators should promote participation, and acceptance of children in the Christian community. Children will grow with deep experience of the Christian community if they are allowed to participate in Christian activities.

4.3.4 Responses from Sunday School Teachers

Sunday School teachers are typically concerned with the work of Sunday School. This is evidenced by the factors they advanced that could enhance Christian formation of children. They said that children are enthusiastic and vigilant in singing; songs and praises can bring children to Sunday services hence strengthening their faith. They also said that children are found of playing. That in order for the church to enhance

Christian for the church to enhance Christian formation to children, games and sports should be encouraged.

Sunday school teachers whom I interviewed said that the church also organizes concerts whereby parents are and other special guests are invited, to be entertained by children. The children prepare for the concert and present their items to the church, and this encourages children to come regularly for practices. By doing this, the church strengthens Christian faith of children and uses this time for discipleship training.

Another important feature that was advanced by Sunday School teachers is organizing children camps and retreats. The church can organize camps and retreats for children in order to teach them about their faith. Themes and topics are chosen and relevant and convenient facilitators are invited to lead this retreat.

They also said that today, children love the media especially when they are at home. They like to watch the TV programs, to listen to the radios e.t.c. Some local Radios stations have tried to make a schedule for children ministry, where they request children organizations to go to the station and present their activities. Some of our local Radios include Radio West, Top Radio, Greater African Radio, Life Radio e.t.c. These can be influential in formatting children's faith if the church tries to use them.

4.4 Research Question Four: What role does the home and school play in Christian nurture of children?

This research question has two parts to put in consideration. In the first part, the researcher wanted to find out the role played by the home in Christian nurture of children. This was tested by item 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 of parents. In the second part, the researcher wanted to find out the role of the school in Christian nurture of children. This was tested by items 17-21 of church leaders, and 1- 4 of additional questions for teachers.

4.4.1 Responses from all the respondents about the role of the home

As noted previously in chapter 2, the home plays an important role in Christian formation especially in discipleship training of children. Children are born in homes; they are reared and brought up in homes. Therefore, Christian parents have a great religious influence to their children. But there are two types of Christians; the committed or devout Christians and the nominal Christians who may go to church only at Christmas or who last went to church when they were baptized. These are Christians by name. Discipleship training of children will depend upon the strength of faith and commitment a parent has. Committed Christians who regularly attend church services will have committed Christian children than nominal Christians who do not care about church services. This was evidenced from what I got from the respondents. My key informants were 12, 10 of these were baptized when they were infants and they testified that much Christian influence was from the parents, both God parents or Sponsors and biological parents who taught them how to pray, read the Bible and even encouraging them to attend Sunday School services until when they were old to join the main service.

First and foremost, Christian formation of children begins with parents bringing the children in the church for baptism. It is at baptism when the child becomes a Christian. Then going with them to the church for services strengthens their faith. Parents who are responsible start going with the children to attend the services, and when the child reaches the age of joining Sunday school, it is the parents that encourage the child to join.

All my informants said that parents influence Christian formation to children through prayers. They teach them the prayer before meals and after meals, the Lords prayer and other short extempore prayers. For instance, one of the respondents said that in their family, each one has his/her day for leading prayers. She said that they are seven people, two parents and five children and they all lead prayers irrespective of their age. When it is the time for the young child who is now 9 years, he organizes family members and leads the prayers, and the same applies to every member of the family.

One of the Sunday School teachers also said that she started leading prayers when she was a child at home and now she is confident in leading others and at times she preaches to the adult congregation in the church. She praised her parents for raising her in a Christian way, the life that she has never regretted.

Another important role by the home is reading the Bible and sharing some verses with the children. It was found out that most Christians who read lessons in the church started in homes, then in schools and at the end, in the church. Most church leaders today whether lay or ordained come from homes of such background. This, reminds me of a proverb which says that "charity begins at home". Also Paul in 1 Tim. 5: 8 says; "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

4.4.2 Responses from all the respondents about the role of the School

The school plays a very big role in Christian formation of children because it is the second home of children. When children are not at home, they are at school. In Uganda's system of education, children stay three months at school, and less than a month at home during holidays. Children who attend Boarding Schools are completely cut off from their families for three months. Those who attend Day Schools spend the whole day at school and only meet their parents in the evening or at night depending upon the nature of work or business the parents are involved in. In some homes, where both parents are business oriented and attend their shops, the family is left for house girls/boys. This means that parents of such category may have less or no time for their children.

Therefore, when children are sent to school, they are sent to their second home and the information I got from all my respondents conveys with what Harro says as already quoted in my 2nd Chapter concerning the goals of Christian Schools, which are basically after encouraging school children to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and to a Christian way of life, willing to serve God and their neighbours.

4.5 Respondents' Attitudes towards Discipleship training and Christian Formation of Children

Looking at the respondents attitudes to discipleship training and Christian formation of children, I will put the following into consideration which are drawn from the answers of questions 10, 13 and 15.

4.5.1 Who is Responsible for Christian nurture of children?

One of the questions posed to the respondents concerned the one responsible for upbringing children in a Christian way. They all agreed with what was cited out as agencies of discipleship (c.f. Chapter 2:5). The main answers given were that parents, teachers and church leaders are the ones responsible for Christian nurture of children. However, two views emerged from their answers. One was that parents were classified into two categories; biological parents and the God-parents. But still, one of the respondents emphasized on the factor of biological parents to be the most appropriate people responsible for Christian nurture of children because they are the closest people to the children. Another view was of the saved adult Christians or the "Balokole" as they are always called in Uganda. These do the work of care takers in matters of salvation as advanced by the respondents.

4.5.2 The importance of Christian formation to children

Respondents were asked on the importance of Christian formation to children. The researcher's intention here was to get the views of respondents on the effects of Christian formation to the children. Many answers were given by the respondents as here below:

- That the children grow strong in their faith.
- That they testify Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
- That they are firmly rooted in Christianity and can not be taken by any new religious teachings.
- They learn to be responsible to others.
- They are exemplary to others at school and at home.
- They learn to be good Christians and are well disciplined
- That Christian formation makes children to be good leaders in schools and in future as they grow up.

4.5.3 The impact of Christian formation to the church, school and home

In addition to the above effects of Christian formation to children, respondents were also asked the impact of Christian formation of children to the home, church and the school. Most of the answers given by the respondents derive from the effects of Christian formation as described above.

Firstly, Christian formation of children brings the growth of the church. When children are baptized, they are being initiated into the church and they become members of the Christian community. Then, nurturing them into their Christian faith will bring steady growth of the church. As if this is not enough, the church will be a living church built on a firm foundation considering the imagery of the church – children being the foundation, youth being the wall and adults being the roof. In addition to this, the church gets future church leaders from these children who are well nurtured in the Christian faith. One of the respondents gave an example of the Diocesan Bishop who was nurtured through Sunday school in which he fully accepted Jesus as His saviour and continued to shun sin.

On the side of the school, respondents advanced that Christian formation yields children with good discipline as they are Disciples of Christ. Teachers interviewed said that children who are well brought up are disciplined in the school unlike children from other backgrounds. In addition to discipline, schools with children who are strong in their faith perform well academically. One of the teachers quoted the Bible that; “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...” (Prov. 1:7)

Another thing was that Christian formation through discipleship training in schools encourages social interactions of children and their teachers. These occur through Bible studies, fellowships and Christian camps organized by the schools.

4.5.4 The Relationship between the Church, the Home and the School

Parents and teachers were asked to give their view on the relationship that is between the three institutions which were identified as the agencies of discipleship, i.e. the church, the home and the school. According to their views, these three institutions are related in the following ways:

- The church is established by the Christians according to the number of homes within the area.

- Church gets funds according to the many homes within the church and according to the strength of each home. Each home is supposed to give a quota to the church.
- Schools in Ankole Diocese are/were established by the church with the help of Christians. Most of them were started as church schools until when they were given grant by the State but are still managed by the church.
- It is from the homes that children who go to these schools come from. Parents build the schools on the church premises and send their children to attain education from the schools.

Therefore, they all concurred that without homes, there is no church, and school which school is built on church's land. One of the teachers used his history that schools in Uganda were established by missionaries who came with 3Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). Henceforth, it can be concluded that these three institutions compliment each other and they can not be separated.

4.6 Observations

I made formal observations on 23rd September 2007 and 17th October 2007. The first one observation was attending a Sunday school service while the second observation was with school children service.

4.6.1 Observations on 23rd September 2007

I attended a Sunday service with an intention of joining the Sunday school service and see what takes place there. I was impressed by the following:

- After the 2nd lesson, the Parish priest requested all the children to come forward to the Alter, and receive the blessings from God. The children with their Sunday School teacher kneeled at the alter and then prayed for them, after which he sent them for their service.

As if that was not enough, he urged parents to always send their children on Sunday for the service that they are nurtured in a Christian way. He stressed the importance of joining Sunday School classes the most important being upbringing children in a strong Christian foundation.

Then I went with children in a class room of the School that was built by the church to attend and observe what takes place in the service. I observed the following as their service started:

- The Sunday School teacher gave prayer requests and requested children who wished to offer prayers to come forward and pray. Prayer requests were to pray for children, parents and teachers. Three children aged 8,9,11 offered to pray and their prayers were successful.

Then followed praising in which I observed the following:

- It was led by older children,

- Children followed their teacher's actions.

- Children danced a Christian song in a folk tune which says;

"Eigumira naruga owa Yesu", literary, meaning that Eigumira is coming from Jesus.

Another important thing I noticed was that while they were dancing, one child picked a coin and gave it to the teacher which showed that the child was taught not to steal.

- The teacher then asked the children to share their testimony for God's protection during the week. One child gave testimony on how God protected her with her parents on their journey to and from Kampala where they arrived and came safely.

Then the teacher introduced the topic concerning the **loving God** and asked the children how this love can be displayed, and they gave the following answers:

- Through praying to him
- Through giving him offertories
- Through praising him
- Through humbling before him
- Through thanking him
- Through doing what He wants us to do
- Through loving our neighbours

Then the teacher asked them about people who do not have that love; and they gave the following answers:-

- Rapists, kidnappers, thieves, fighters, sorcerers, fornicators, and those who do not go to church.

The teacher asked the children about how they are protected from such bad elements and they said that; God, Parents, Teachers, and Elders protect them.

Then, they gave their offertories and the teacher asked one of the children to pray for them and then they said the Grace together which marked the end of the service.

After the service I interviewed the three children who led the prayer requests about the ones responsible for teaching them how to pray and all of them said that it is their parents. When I asked the Sunday school teacher about these children, she told me that their parents are among the devout and faithful Christians in the church. This reminds me of a saying in our local language that; “embeba enkuru niyo etwara ento ahamweziga” literary meaning that the elders are the ones to show the way to the young.

4.6.2 Observations on 17th October 2007

On Wednesday 17th Oct. 2007, I went to St. James Cathedral and attended the service for Mbarara mixed and Mbarara Junior Schools. These Schools have two joint services every Wednesday. I attended the first one which is for the lower classes (P.1 - P.4) that begins at 10.30-11.30a.m. This service is dominated by the children within the age range of my study. The 2nd one for upper classes (P.5 - P.7) begins at 11.45a.m- 12.45p.m, and this one is dominated by the older children. The service was led by the Parish Priest but praise and worship were led by the children themselves, even the lessons were read by the children. Teachers were in the service but working as wardens.

When the children entered the church, they started songs of praise and in that process the priest and the lay reader proceeded. Then followed a prayer by one of the pupils, then a lesson was read by one of the pupils, then followed preaching by the priest.

In this service, I also observed that teachers of these two schools were acting as the church wardens.

Then, after the service, I had an encounter with one child who read the lesson and asked him some questions. He was broad enough to answer the questions I asked him. I asked him when he was baptized and he told me that he was baptized when he was still an infant. Concerning his parents, he told me that he lives with his mother because his father died when he was still young. But he was and is still nurtured by one of his sponsors who happens to be one of the teachers of the school. And that his mother is an active member of Mothers’ Union in St. James’ Cathedral. With this background, he said that this helped him to grow strong in his Christian faith as he was taught how to pray, read the Bible and other Christian doctrines by his mother and the sponsor respectively.

The findings from all the respondents and the observations made show that Christian formation of children is important if we want to have a strong foundation of the church. There are many ways of how children can firmly be brought up as strong Christians. But the most important seemingly is discipleship training, since it involves teaching, fellowships and testifying for the one you are following. As a disciple is understood as a follower of Christ, discipleship also involves following. And children too have to know whom they are following.

Henceforth, discipleship training helps children to understand their faith, to know and understand the scripture and grow in intimacy with God. In discipleship training, children grow knowing that they are not merely believers but followers of Christ. If discipleship training is emphasized in the church, it would work as a mentoring program to children and would be one of the effective ways of nurturing children's faith and preparing them for worship with the whole congregation as they grow old.

4.6.3 Different opinions from the respondents

Interviews were conducted between three categorized agencies of discipleship, the church, the home and the school. In each of these categorized agencies, interviews were conducted between the selected individuals sampled using purposive sampling. These had different opinions especially on the work of discipleship of children in Ankole Diocese though they all agreed on many issues.

Church leaders' Opinions on Discipleship training of children

Church leaders both ordained and lay agreed that discipleship plays an important role in children ministry, as it is one way of making children grow as strong Christians or forming them as Christians. They admit that they have not done it to their expectations but have tried to minister to children through Sunday school and in other cases in schools. They have the view that church funds for facilitating children ministry are insufficient, not enough to cater for all the programs especially in reaching the children even in their homes. However, they have tried to reach them through pastoral visits, which are catered on the church budget. Therefore they were of the opinion that Christians should be keen in their giving so that the church gets enough funds for discipleship training of children. The church in Uganda has no specific income. The money that is used in paying the workers and doing other developments is the money

collected from Christians. This money is always not enough to cater for all the programs for the church. They had the concern that church leaders/workers should try to mobilize funds for the work of discipleship training by any means possible.

Parents were seen as ones with much time to do the work of discipleship training to their children. But church leaders said that some Christian parents are not keen in performing their role of Christian formation through discipleship training. That when they are invited for parental meetings, few turn up. Even some Christians do not send their children to Sunday school and others do not pray with them; even others do not know how to pray. The cause was attributed to ignorance of most of rural Christians who did not have chance of attending school. Church leaders said that such parents are helped by regular attendance of fellowships and other seminars which ignite the illiterate parents.

Church leaders also admitted that Schools play a big role if they are well used by the church. This happens if the schools are administered by strong Christians, with Christian teachers. They expressed the need for having some one entirely responsible for the work of discipleship training in schools. But they said that the school administration should provide enough time for them to reach children in schools

School teachers' Opinions on Discipleship training of children

School teachers too realized the importance of discipleship training of children in schools. It was found out that those who do the work do it in their own initiative because in the colleges where they are trained, they do not get access to the course on discipleship. They only train for academic purposes and complete their course as teachers for but not as disciplers. But because of being Christians, they do the work in helping children to be good Christians. That is why they had the concern of having someone from the church/ the school chaplain to do the work. Teacher respondents said that the office of the school is very important because it would co-ordinate between the church and the school, programming for Christian activities in the school.

Another important expression by the teachers was of facilitation by the church. They said that though they try to do the work at school, it would be effective if they follow these children in their homes. But the problem is funds which are not enough to cater

for the transport, lunch and other incentives. Therefore, their opinion was that if the church can organize funds, they can be able to follow the children in their homes and do the work to their best.

Sunday School Teachers' Opinions on discipleship training of children

It was found out that Sunday school teachers have done a commendable work in discipleship of children. They organize Sunday services for the children, games, visitations and other important children activities. They do this on voluntary basis as they are not employed by the church, and they do it whole heartedly.

The most important concern of Sunday school teachers is having a Sunday school office at the Diocesan level. This would be responsible of organizing workshops and seminars for Sunday school teachers in the whole Diocese. They said that in the past, there was a Sunday school worker at the Diocese but this office was phased out leaving children ministry in suspense.

They also suggested that the parish priest should at least meet Sunday school children in their services as children need to know that they belong to the church. They were also of the opinion that the church should have an established fund for the work of discipleship. They said that they need remuneration, money for Sunday school materials, and transport for home visitations e.t.c.

Parents' Opinion on discipleship training of children

Though it was found out that the family is the basic place for discipleship training and Christian formation of children, parents are unaware of their role. They said that they do this work on behalf of the church that initiates children into Christian belief. They believe that if church leaders are active enough, discipleship training of children would be an important aspect in children ministry.

Parents were concerned on the church establishing their own Radio station which would be used as one way of communicating to the Christians, and children inclusive. They gave examples of Radio Maria of the Roman Catholic Church, and Top Radio of the Pentecostal church which have done a commendable job to their churches because of the religious programs they have. They noted that though the Media is good in communication, the secular media always have different programs most of

which have obscene messages which are not good for children. But the media established by Christian bodies only gives Christian messages best for Christian growth.

Parents admitted that teachers are very useful in discipleship training of children at school. However, they noted that few teachers are dedicated and committed to this task. They said that some teachers are not morally upright while others are not active in attending Sunday services. Therefore, such teachers can not do the work of discipleship training to children because they are not committed Christians. With this regard, they were of the opinion that such teachers should be disciplined by the church so that they become strong in their faith in addition to regular seminars and workshops concerning discipleship and other Christian doctrines.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 Discussion and Implications of Findings

5:0 Introduction

The previous chapter was about the presentation of the findings as obtained from the field interviews, which addressed the research questions under examination, and whose results proved the Hypotheses for the study. Therefore, in this chapter, the discussion of findings and its implications will be based on the hypotheses of the study.

5.1 Hypothesis one: Discipleship training is an important tool for Christian formation of children

Discussing the findings as to per this hypothesis, I will put the following under consideration; what is involved in Christian formation, the role of Discipleship in children ministry, and goals for discipleship training.

5.1.1 What is involved in Christian Formation

Discipleship training is an important tool in Christian formation of children considering what is involved in Christian formation which is a broad Christian virtue. Christian formation begins by receiving baptism and continues gradually as a person grows. In our church, baptism of children is known as christening of children. This means that it is at baptism that the child becomes a Christian and hence a follower of Christ. This child however, is still young and needs to be nurtured so that he/she grows knowing his/her faith, and this process according to my study is what I termed Christian formation. Christian formation is dynamic; it concerns growth and development of Christian values in a person. This would be done through discipleship training which involves another person who would help those in the process of growth to be firm in their Christian faith. That is how discipleship training becomes an important tool in Christian formation of children.

In this process of Christian formation, there is constant awareness of moving toward the goal of maturing and maturity, i.e. when children are growing whether physically or spiritually, they are moving towards maturity and Christ is formed in them. Christ being formed in these children is the filter by which all teaching, nurturing, and information processing is examined. Formation is developmental, building on previous concepts and moving toward the goal of maturity in Christ. Christian formation is always related to life. This means it begins and ends in life perceptions and experiences as shaped by God for knowing Him and for a person's growth in Him.

In Christian formation, the whole person is included; spiritually, physically and mentally. This means that Christian nurture does not only deal with the spiritual aspect but the physical and intellectual aspects. In other words, it is a holistic ministry. Since persons are integrated wholes and since formation requires a holistic response, Christian formation takes into consideration the total person and seeks to tap into all parts of the whole. For instance, the findings show that Sunday School children at Ruharo Cathedral gather on Saturdays and have different activities which include sports and games. These help the child to grow with an integrated mind in Christ.

Further more, Christian formation involves openness to God and His world. Since knowing God is personal, relational and priority, a child needs to have the potential of knowing it. Also formational learning requires the child to be actively involved in interacting with the truth on a personal basis. The formator's role is conditioned by this factor, giving away responsibility for learning and opportunity for personal processing whenever possible. This process is gradual and at times, the teacher role diminishes as the child begins to apply the truth and as he/she grows old. Openness to God and His world here involves a child giving testimony on what God has done to him/her. For instance, the observation I made on 23rd September 2007, I witnessed a child giving testimony on how God led her with her parents through the journey to and from Kampala. A good example of openness to God and His world is when grown up Christians testify on how they were saved from the lust of the world i.e. adultery, idolatry, drunkenness, e.t.c. By doing this, Christians are applying the truth of their Christian faith openly and when children grow in such situation, they also do

the same. Children well disciplined are able to denounce the ways of the devil, the worldly desires and the temptations of the flesh.

Another thing to note is that the Christian community plays a big role in Christian formation. It is in the community that children receive insight, support and opportunity to express their uniqueness as the followers of Christ. They are unique because they have just developed logical thoughts that are reversible and form part of an integrated system of action, and have developed new and more complicated intellectual structures. Their thinking is far different from that of adults. (c.f. Piaget's cognitive psychology as already seen in chapter 2 of this work). So they need to be guided by the older ones in the Christian community in order to be shaped in a Christian way. Hence forth, as these children grow as Disciples of Christ, they will also be able to lead or draw others to Christ because they are rooted in Him. This implies that Christian formation of children is not an effort of an individual but a combined effort of a Christian community that is the church (church leaders and congregation), school community, and the homes where these children are reared.

5.1.2 The role of discipleship training in children Ministry

Discipleship training in this paper is the practical part of Christian formation. According to the findings, discipleship training was simply understood by most of my respondents as a Christian helping another Christian to grow spiritually so as to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It was characterised by three main aspects of prayer, relationship and teaching. Discipleship training involves prayer because if we want children to grow in the Christian way, and if we believe that God is the one who brings about spiritual growth, then we have to spend much of the time teaching children how to pray. Christians pray because, they are seeking for God's help and guidance. It is through prayer that Christians communicate with their Creator. Therefore, children should also seek God's help and guidance through prayer. Prayer does not only provide God's help and guidance but it also involves adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. It is in prayer that Christians humble themselves before God, confess their sins before Him in quest for forgiveness, they give thanks for the provisions already given, they submit themselves and also intercede for others. It is important for children to know the importance of prayer and this would be through discipleship training.

Another aspect which was classified by the respondents was relationship between the disciplers and children relating the relationship they have with Christ. In order for children to understand and take hold of true Christian living, they must be able to see Christ in those discipling them. They should walk with them, and share their testimonies showing the love of Christ to the children. As the disciplers show the relationship they have with Christ, children will also know the love and relationship they have with Christ. Discipleship training is an activity by its nature best accomplished by means of relationship overtime. This can be related to Jesus relationship with His disciples. He chose them to be with Him. "Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him..." Mk 3:14. They spent years with Him eating, listening to His teachings to mention but a few. Therefore, Discipleship training of children strengthens their relationship with Christ.

As teaching was part of the great commission, it is part and parcel of discipleship training even today. Children will not grow as good and faithful Christians if they lack biblical teaching. Bible study is very important in discipleship training, because it contains the truth about the Christian faith. The strength of Bible study will depend upon strength of the formators of children. They need to be well versed themselves and have time for leading children in Bible study

Hence forth, discipleship training is an important aspect to an individual including children. Everyone is called into discipleship at his/her baptism. Therefore, all Christians are Disciples of Christ including children as Richardson says;

The Christian community is called into discipleship, and service individually and communally. Thus the newly baptized are given a welcome that is both personal and public, a welcome which expects the presence of God in the lives of all people. Being called by baptism into discipleship means that our learning to worship with the church, to grow in prayer, to listen to the scriptures and to serve our neighbour as ourselves.⁴⁸

According to the findings, discipleship training if well done by the appropriate people leads to maturity that is confined to spiritual growth. Children as young Disciples of Christ are well prepared to live like Christ through discipleship training. One of my respondents said that rapid growth in Christian maturity will not be attained by

⁴⁸ Richardson (2004:73)

children without showing these young ones the way. Those who are already on the way should lead these children in the same way.

Discipleship training helps in cultivating right habits and discipline to children. They grow up with Christian virtues, and know what pleases God because they are controlled by Christ. In discipleship training, children are trained to be godly and as a result they shun the satanic ways. They give themselves to God and testify Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. They continue to fellowship with Jesus through discipleship training, they feed from the word of God and they learn to walk with Him.

Discipleship training helps children to accept some experiences of life such as orphanage. Others live with foster parents because their biological parents passed away. Because of the nature of our country, some children are born and grow in poverty. Others are born of parents infected with AIDS and later on become orphans. Therefore, it was found out that discipleship training help children with this experience to cope up with such situations in their spiritual growth.

Discipleship training can help a child to develop conscience, morality, and Christian values. A child of 7-12 years can be influenced by a Christian teacher at school to be morally up right and he/she can learn that God gives self control to who ever is faithful to Him.

Discipleship training can help a child to know that he is part and parcel of a worshipping family where he experiences love in the Christian community of the home, church and school.

One of the respondents said that discipleship training can help a child of this age (7-12) to understand the meaning of Christian stewardship in that he/she understands the need to care for others and share the gifts given to him by God with others. Even she said that in teaching children about giving, they tell them to give God whatever they have. During the observation I carried out with Sunday School, I saw some children offering flowers which is a sign of being good stewards to God.

5.1.3 Goals for discipleship training

The aim of the study was to find out the role of discipleship in children ministry and why Christian Formation to children is of fundamental importance in their growth. In the previous section, I have discussed the role of discipleship in children. Now I want to look at the goals for discipleship training. Specifically, the main goal is formatting children in their Christian faith. This is a broad aim and can be looked at in the following goals which all aim at Christian formation:

- The first is strengthening children in their faith and encouraging them to remain firm and true in their faith.
- Another one is preparing children to serve God as they grow mature in faith and knowledge Him as their creator.
- The third goal is helping children to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ so that their lives would give glory to God.

One of the ways in achieving these goals was identified by my informants as reading the word of God to and with the children. This helps them to understand important doctrines of the Bible and develop right thinking as they grow. As they receive Biblical teachings from their mentors, they believe in these teachings and have righteous desires. They also apply these teachings to their own lives and this helps them to grow as faithful Christians. Michael Anthony⁴⁹ says that what children's ministry need in this next generation is not religious educators but faith modelers and disciplers. It is not our goal to raise a generation of religious minds but rather faithful hearts.

5.2 Hypothesis two: Homes and schools in collaboration with the church are appropriate agencies of Discipleship training in Christian formation of children

In discussing findings according to this hypothesis, I have tried to separate them because both are two different entities, and even their roles are different. I will first discuss issues concerning the homes, and then the schools and the last will be the church's responsibility in Christian formation of children.

⁴⁹ Michael J. Anthony(2001:216), *Introducing Christian Education Foundations for Twenty-First Century*

5.2.1 How a home can be an appropriate agency of Christian formation of children

Homes can be appropriate agencies for Christian formation of children because God designed them as the primary arena for carrying on the most important functions of people in this life. As already noted that the home is a little church, it acts as the centre of worship as heads of families gather their families to pray, sing praises and read the word of God, hence becoming a small church to all family members. Again the home is the primary institution for education as parents train children for a life service to God through spiritual, academic and life skills preparation.

When we consider the words of Harro cited in Chapter 2 of literature review that the most important agency of Christian nurture is the family, the basic building block of the society, homes become the appropriate agencies of Christian nurture. Spiritual journey and Christian growth start from the home. This means that parents need to be aware of their children's spiritual journey. They need to be available and attend to their children especially in matters concerning christian formation. They need to model for their children what it means to be followers of Christ. They need to teach their children and engage them in daily conversations about God, His truths, love and forgiveness.

The home can be a better agency of Christian formation by playing her role of acting as a domestic church for the members of the family especially the children. The "domestic church", is hugely significant for the formation of children as Disciples of Christ thus a good place for discipleship training of children. In fact, the home is, I believe, God's ultimate school of discipleship training! Why? It is in our families that we face perhaps both the greatest challenges of being strong in our faith or being shaky or loose in our faith.

Parents as spiritual mentors of children need to know that God is at work in the "little church" of the family – in that community of people who know more of all their weaknesses and frailties than anybody else. It is in the home that faith is most keenly shaped and proved through instructions by parents. In the practice of Christian home life, children are taught to love and know God as their Father and Creator. They are taught that God forgives all those who ask for forgiveness, and that He is a loving

God. It is in the home that children learn of the need for God, and His grace for forgiveness. Children will have the spirit of forgiveness from the home imitating their parents and other older people.

The home can be an appropriate place for the discipleship training of children as it is a God given opportunity which has many opportunities of extending God's Kingdom. God gives to us the most immediate opportunities for Christian love and service in and through our very own homes! In the household we have innumerable opportunities to serve, to forgive, to listen, to care, to encourage e.t.c. Moreover, each household is uniquely positioned in God's world to serve and give witness on His behalf to others: no other household has the same set of neighbours, friends and acquaintances as the particular home. Each home is different and the nearest friends should be the children. Each "little church", the home is called to explore its own unique calling within the "big church" of God. The little or small church is led by the parent, and when these gather together they make a big church led by a church leader (In our Anglican church it is the Priest/ clergy or the Lay-reader).

For most Christian children and young people, the home is the primary place of faith nurture. God's design is that each home be a place of *catching* faith. Catching here is an adjective meaning infectious, likely to be imitated, attractive or captivating. In homes of catching faith, Jesus is not merely known about but worshipped, thanked, served and prayed to in the course of daily life. Catching faith is faith that is firmly intertwined with the daily routines and habits of family members in their life together. How family members are with one another as people of faith, day in and day out, makes a deep and lasting impression on each other's lives.

Successful children's ministry is not only limited to Sunday school, children's church, vacation Bible schools or other programs which are based at the church premises. But, it should primarily be based in homes where parents must be available and equipped to model faith and answer questions by children in a way that is age-appropriate. This means that church leaders should not only wait for children on Sundays or any other designated days at the church, but should find them in the homes and equip parents with enough material for this purpose.

A home can also be an appropriate agency of discipleship as parents are normally very important in shaping the religious and spiritual lives of their children, even though they may not realize it. Many of the attitudes and statements that children communicate to their parents do not exactly express great admiration and gratitude for and readiness to listen to, emulate or freely obey their parents. Many parents therefore, appear to come to the conclusion that they have lost their influence in shaping the lives of their children, that they no longer make any significant difference. But to some extent, this conclusion is mistaken and a misconception. Children's attitudes, verbal utterances, and immediate behaviours are often not the best evidence with which to estimate parental influence in their lives. Parents should not lose hope in instilling Christian values to their children with love. They should continue teaching and guiding their children in the way they want them to be.

For better or worse, most parents in fact still do profoundly influence their children – often more than do their peers. This often includes parental influence in children's religious and spiritual lives. Simply by living and interacting with their children, most parents establish expectations, model life practices, set boundaries, and make demands – all of which cannot help but influence children. Most children and their parents may not realize it, but it is obvious that the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modelled and taught to them by their parents.

To sum it up, the home is the most powerful influence on children. The home sets an example of commitment to their Christian faith especially when parents take their children every Sunday for church services; when they encourage their children to develop good habits of prayer and Bible study at home; and when they are willing to share their testimony with their children. However, there are challenges which might affect the work of Christian formation in the home.

Challenges within discipleship training of children in the home

The home as a basic place for Christian formation faces some challenges within the work of Discipleship training of children. Parents seem to have little time for discipleship training of their children. The only opportunity parents have is during prayers before they go to bed or when they gather on the table for meals. Otherwise, they are always busy with whatever business they are engaged in. Civil servants are engaged with office work, others with business and those in rural places are busy with cultivation.

Discipling children is not like discipling old people. The language used and the way parents communicate to children matters so much. Even the language used when preaching children is not the same as when one is preaching to the adults. Some one to do this should have knowledge on the basics of teaching children. The challenge therefore is that most parents lack the language and basics of teaching.

Another challenge that was expressed by Sunday School teachers was that men are not committed to the work of children as women. Even in homes, men have little time with their children. Most of the work of children is left to women all the time. Men have been bound to their cultural and traditional beliefs which let children to be with their mothers until the age of initiation. Even with today's modernity, men are not at home with their families. They are in recreation places chatting with other men. So they have little or no time to attend to their children. And in the church, they look at children's work as the work for females.

Another big challenge of discipleship training of children in a home is families of two religious backgrounds. Some families have more than one religion. Some are traditionalists not fully rooted to Christianity. They come to church for baptism and when they go home, they return to their ancestral worship dedicating their children to gods. This is a serious matter in some parts of Africa especially those who believe in African beliefs and customs. There are also Christian families with two Christian religions/beliefs. A man might be an Anglican while the wife is a Roman Catholic and they do not go to the same church. As a result, children follow one of the parents or they divide them according to their sex, i.e. male children attending with their father and the female children with their mother. Therefore, there is a big problem in

discipleship training of children with conflicting religious ideologies. There is concern that such families should agree on one religious belief so that they are able to disciple their children in a proper Christian way without different religious teachings.

5.2.2 How a school can be an appropriate agency of Christian formation of children

It is of vital importance for Christians to send their children to Christian schools because the school reinforces the home as the biblical directives and admonitions to parents are exercised by the teachers. They exist to help parents in fulfilling the responsibility of educating children. Therefore, during the school day, teachers stand in the place of parents hence they should be people whom the children will try to imitate especially in the Christian belief.

Luke 6: 40 reveals that a pupil after he/she has been fully trained will be like his/her teacher. *"...but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher"*.

The school can be an appropriate agency of discipleship as a teacher plays an important role of acting as an educator and parent at school. When the child joins school, he/she gets into contact with a new environment and new relationship of a teacher-pupil in which he/she has to adjust. This is because the teacher will likely be the first adult outside his/her immediate family. Therefore, the teacher has to use this chance in helping the school children who come to school to grow firm in their Christian faith. This would be a continuous process of nurturing as it extends from the parents to the teachers. Children will feel at home if they are welcomed at school and loved by their teachers.

The school becomes an agency of discipleship training if it fosters good Christian discipline to children. Some parents choose to send their children to Christian schools hoping that there is better discipline than other schools. This means that Christian schools are expected to have disciplined teachers who would enforce discipline in the school as anticipated by the parents. It is obvious that schools are always academic oriented. But when the school has well disciplined teachers, the academics of that school will also be more rigorous and pupils will always excel. And this is why Christian parents send their children to Christian schools. Christian schools because of the better moral influence on children should have positive learning environment and

all these are there because of good Christian teachers, good Christian administrators and management.

Another thing to note is that the values expressed in Christian schools are those from the families. What one believes is expressed in Education. Education cannot be expressed in a vacuum. All cultures and subcultures educate their children with the predominant values held by that culture. No truth, fact, or educational philosophy can be neutral or value-free. All education, therefore, is ultimately value-oriented. All in all, education is more than academics. Education is not theologically neutral and it is not even politically neutral. Parents can not afford to be neutral where their children are concerned. Parents can provide them a coherent, consistent education when what is taught and conceived in the classroom is what is expected by the home and the church. Moreover, schools are built by the parents/christians on church's foundation.

Parents also expect Christian School Education to be Biblio-centric. Christian schools must know that the underlying philosophy behind Christian school education is more important than just academics. Good academic training is, of course, essential preparation for life in this complex society. The level of learning in most Christian schools should be well above the national average. Christian schools should offer spiritual training which may not be available in non-Christian schools. Christian schools can teach the whole child, the whole truth, the whole time; academically, spiritually, physically, and socially in the same way that Jesus developed as a child, which may not be in no-christian schools.

Education in Christian school classrooms should be Christ-centred. Christ should be the centre of life in Christian schools and every thing should reflect Christ. Only in Christian schools can children learn within the context of a Christ-centred world view. One of the parents had this to say;

"I myself recognize the positive influence that Christian school teachers had on me when I was in primary School. I was born in a non Christian family but joined a Christian school. I was influenced by the teachers and at the end of it; I was baptized even before my parents. Then later on my parents too became Christians".

This shows that the teacher influence is extended from the school to the home. If this informant did not convert while at school, I think it would take long for his parents to convert to Christianity.

Most importantly, both the home and the Church, are not enough to train and influence children in today's society. Many forces, values, and messages bombard the children: home, school, church, television, friends, music, magazines, and e.t.c.

Today, children receive conflicting ideas, values and laden messages from television, radio stations, music, and friends. These might divert children's Christian or religious perception if they are not well guided by their educators or mentors. Children need to be in an educational environment in which their teachers are deeply committed to Jesus Christ and to a Christian philosophy of education. They need to learn from educational materials that are Biblically-integrated. They need to know that Jesus Christ makes a difference in their learning. That environment only exists for the children and in Christian schools.

Christian parents need to send their children prepared to weather the demands of life. When the weather outside is harsh, parents send their children out with the right clothing. The right education is like the right clothing for the children. Children need to be equipped for the unpredictable weather of a complex world. They should learn in a climate of strong Christian values and a Christ-centred curriculum, an environment where all children can pass the test before they take it. Christian school education is preparation to weather the demands of life.

5.2.3 The Responsibility of the Church in Christian formation of Children

Alongside and in support of homes, the church has a very big responsibility in Christian nurture of children. The church consists of the leaders who are trained and entrusted with the work and the Christians who are normally known as the congregation since they congregate in the church building. Therefore, the church and her congregation are called upon to give children and young people experiences of "catching" faith in the larger body of Christ. This will be effective when the church leader is more responsible and effective at his/her work. No family, in and of itself, has sufficient perspective, resources or capabilities to nurture children into life long discipleship without an effective leader. For children and young people to grow into

Christian maturity, they need to learn what it is to practice their faith within their bigger and most important family, the family of the baptized, which is the church. Congregations become places of “catching” faith as they integrate with children and young people into all aspects of their life together, so that the faith of older generations can “rub off” onto younger persons as they are together in the church in mutual relationship.

It is the church’s responsibility to provide children with “clouds of witnesses” (c.f. Hebrews 12:1), real life models of faith who can cheer them on, pray for them, and care for them as they grow into their baptismal identity. When children grow within a congregation, that is firmly strong in Christian faith, they will also follow suit hence becoming future “clouds of witness” when they are grown ups.

The church has to support families to develop “catchy” patterns of faith by offering helpful resources and ongoing encouragement. This support may be through regular pastoral visits, organising workshops for parents, and providing children Bibles and Prayer Books to parents. The church can also try to support the poor families by providing relief aid to them. Such families need shelter, food and clothes which are the basic needs of any family. When this support is provided to such families, they feel that they are members of that congregation. Some new Christian faiths that have infiltrated Uganda come targeting these families and such families have been taken by these new churches because of the relief received from these new churches.

One of the ways for Christian formation to children is through Sunday school services. These are very important to children’s spiritual growth and Christian nurture of children. In Sunday school, discipleship training can easily be done by those entrusted for the work. Sunday school work needs trained Sunday school teachers. It should be the church’s initiative to establish Sunday school classes and then train Sunday school teachers to do the work.

In order for the work to be effective, the leaders of the church are responsible for organising refresher courses to those concerned with children ministry especially in the field of discipleship training. Among those to be included in such courses are the church leaders, school teachers, Sunday school teachers, God parents, discipleship

team and the Sunday school teachers. In addition to these seminars and workshops, church leaders should try to sensitize the whole church community to team together in the work of children.

Church leaders are entangled with many programs in the church. These include preparing for Sunday services, administration/ office work, instruction of couples to be married in the church, presiding over a diversity of meetings, e.t.c. It is therefore, important among his/her programs to plan for meeting children in schools and homes. It is his/her responsibility to follow his/her young flock wherever they are.

Most churches in our Diocese do not have separate Halls which would be used as meeting places for Sunday school children especially for their Sunday services. However, it is fortunate that almost every church especially parish churches have schools within their compounds. It is the duty of the church leader to liaise with the school administration for classrooms to accommodate Sunday school services.

In as much as the church wants to have a sustainable discipleship training pattern; her leadership are responsible in organizing out reach missions to children. These are very important even to the whole congregation because they draw many people even of other religions to hear the gospel. Moreover, in charismatic churches, out reach missions and crusades are one of the sources of maintaining the young enthusiastic Christians in the church.

Most importantly, no work can be done without finances. This is an important aspect in the ministry. The church should put much effort in providing funds for children ministry particularly for discipleship training. Those involved in discipleship training programs need funds to cater for transport and other materials which are crucial for children ministry.

The findings of this study show that the church has a big responsibility of Christian formation since all Christians are initiated in and through the church. This is why the church should equip all her congregation with enough materials of handling children especially to keep them in the Christian track. The church teaming up with the homes and the schools have a noble role of formatting children into the Disciples of Christ.

Challenges within discipleship training of children to the church

The findings from this study show that there are many challenges within the work of discipleship training of children. First and foremost, the people responsible for this work lack commitment. Church leaders are committed to other programs looking at children ministry as minor. Commitment also extends to Christians who could volunteer to work as disciplers or Sunday School teachers. Few Christians who accept are mostly females, which is another challenge to men. The teachers at school also lack commitment. The respondent teachers noted that not all school teachers are committed to the work of discipleship. One of these teacher respondents said that they are about 15 teachers in the whole school but only 2 are committed to the work. Others are only committed to their teaching profession disregarding the work of God.

Another challenge is of time and space. This is a challenge to almost all the parties concerning with discipling children. Church leaders have not put aside time for children ministry. One of the Sunday School teachers said that church leaders hardly join Sunday school services. Children need to see their pastors giving them blessings in their service. They said the work is completely entrusted to them where as they are not fully employed by the church. Since they are part time workers, they only come on Sundays and other chosen days when they seem to be free from their usual responsibilities at school those who are school teachers.

Any project to be sustainable, it needs funds for its sustainability. Children ministry should be seen as a project for the church which should be cared for. However, it is a big challenge that the church has no budget for this ministry. The disciplers do not have money for transport. They find themselves using their own personal money. Even one of the church leaders cited this as one of the problems met in discipleship because it involves pastoral visits which need transport and other essential needful.

The Bible says that the harvest truly is plentiful but the labourers are few (c.f. Matt. 9:37). There is a lot of work to be done with children but few Christians are willing to do the work. When you compare a number of children who attend the Sunday School to their teacher you get surprised the teacher/children ratio is indescribable.

As already seen that the mass media plays an important role, the challenge is that the church rarely uses it. Children like the programs on TVs, Radios e.t.c. Some of these programs are not good for children but they like them. For instance, in our local News Paper known as Orumuri, there is a page of Shwenkazi (maternal aunt). This page talks about sexual issues and when children and youth come across this paper, they have to pluck off the page from the News papers because they are anxious to know what is written in the paper. There is also a lot of pornography on the media; nude pictures, blue movies on the TVs. e.t.c. All these need to be addressed in the process of discipleship training of children.

Another challenge today is that the society is rotten with immorality. There is deviant behaviour among the adolescents and even within the whole society. The children grow in such a society seeing all sorts of immorality. Some grow in slums, others are born of prostitutes. This is a very big challenge especially to the church. Because such children need a lot of attention by the church and other spiritual mentors so that they come out from such environment and have a feeling that they belong to a Christian community.

Uganda which is the country of my study is a third World country which is faced with many families with poverty background. There is a vicious circle of poverty in Uganda. Many people are born in poor families and inherit this poverty which affects their offspring. This affects children especially in rural families where children are born in poor families to the extent that at baptism parents borrow clothes for the festival and never go back to church because of lack of clothes. This is a challenge to the church because these children have to be reached. This affects churches in rural areas where few Christians attend churches because they are destitute living on absolute poverty.

In Uganda, there are many mushrooming churches with different teachings. These try to incite youth and children to join them. Some come with gifts and incentives to make converts. When these go to rural areas which are affected with poverty and they give free clothes to families, these families tend to convert to the new faith. This also brings competition and confusion in the society.

As noted earlier that reading the word of God is important in ministering to children, some families have no Bibles and Prayer Books to use while others are illiterates who can not write or read. Even the church has few or none children Bibles to use in Sunday School. Bibles and Prayer Books are scarce and expensive. Few Christians manage to buy them. Urban churches have resorted to printing the service and all the readings on papers disregarding the use of these Sacred Books.

It is very important, for the church leaders who are responsible for the establishment of children ministry in the church, to find means of addressing these challenges so that they are minimized or alleviated which would lead to effective discipleship training of children in and even outside the church.

CHAPTER SIX

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

Findings of this study show that Discipleship training plays an important role in children ministry especially in church growth and Christian nurture of children. It strengthens and brightens the religious curiosity of children. They grow firmly rooted in their belief as Christians and are ready to testify for Christ. Children who are nurtured and trained in the Lord are excited about their faith and experiences of witnessing for Christ in the church at home and even in school because they are well formed into committed Christians. They share their enthusiasm with their families and friends in the process of their growth, and later on, they become useful to the church, home, school and the whole society. As stewards of God's children, parents are responsible for helping children grow physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Churches have a responsibility toward children, too, since children become Christians as soon as they are brought to church for baptism. Henceforth, the church has to provide an environment in which children are safe, taught at an age-appropriate level, and are encouraged to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. The school also has to create more avenues for nurturing children spiritually in addition to the goal of academic achievement.

Discipleship training of children in the church is most likely to occur where there is a combination of a leader who takes the responsibility to oversee the strategy and vision of children ministry and a team of assistants who are skilled in relating to children. These assistants would include Sunday school teachers, school teachers and other Christians trained for discipling children. Though effective discipleship training occurs in homes due to parents who are responsible as stewards, the church embraces all the faculties of discipleship training since it is where Christianity begins. After the ceremony of baptism, children are put back in the hands of their sponsors and parents. However, the church continues to welcome them on Sundays for worship services, the cause for establishment of Sunday school classes.

The spiritual needs of children are ministered through children's ministry program. If the church wants to have a healthy future, it is essential that it has a viable children's ministry. The purpose of this paper is to help churches develop an effective children's ministry, emphasis put on discipleship training of children as is the most appropriate tool for Christian nurture of children. As we have seen in previous chapters, children become Christians at baptism. And when they leave the font, they need to be followed so as to be taught and strengthened in their faith. It is in discipleship training that children will know the relationship they have with God and even with other Christians. Discipleship training entails Christian caring. Children need to know that they are cared for by the appropriate agencies of discipleship. When they feel that they are cared for, they learn to trust those in their care, and realise that they are in the same folk of Christians.

From the literature reviewed and from the findings, discipleship training is seen as virtually important in children ministry for Christian formation of children. The three institutions which were termed as agencies of discipleship play a complementary role in children ministry. It was found out that discipleship training is carried out well in the home where the child is born, in the church where the child is christened, and in the school where the child goes to acquire knowledge and education status. Though discipleship training plays a very big role in children ministry, as an important tool for Christian formation of children, there are other classified factors which may also influence Christian formation of children and these include the community and the mass media. These are crucial as they can condition the spirituality of children in any circumstance since they are within the environment in which children grow.

Conclusively, discipleship training plays a very big role in children ministry if we want to have a living church. It is good to instil Christian virtues to children who are still young because they easily grasp what they are taught. Moreover, we have a saying in our language which says; "*akati kainikwa kakiri kabitsi*" that if you want to bend a tree, you bend it when it is still fresh or young. This implies that if we want to get good committed Christians, it is better to begin with children. This will be through enhancement of Christian formation to children and mostly emphasizing discipleship training which is the practical part of Christian formation.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendations to Church Leaders

In order for the church to enhance and foster the work of Christian formation to children, church leaders should have a clear focus on the vision of children's ministry. The church is believed to be built on three stones namely; the foundation, the wall, and the roof. Figuratively, the foundation is the children, the wall is the youth and the roof is the adult Christians. This pictorial symbol does not mean that children carry the youth as the wall is built on the foundation. Children are still young with delicate and weak bones. However, it symbolises that before any building stands, the first to be on the ground is the foundation. This means that the building grows from foundation, to the wall and then the roof (from bottom to top). Likewise, a person grows from childhood, youth and then adulthood. Strong buildings are built on strong foundations. Therefore, the church will not stand without all the three stones, the foundation being the most important for any building to stand, children as foundation must be a priority in church growth. With this regard, church leaders should make sure that the foundation of the church is strong thus making children ministry a priority. When children are firmly brought up as strong Christians, they will reach the age of youth when they are strong and then as they grow to adulthood, they will protect the church.

The strength of the church is built upon the strength of the Christian homes. If the homes are not built up in the Lord, then efforts of church leaders is wasted. Since homes are seen as small churches and parents as pastors in leading family prayers, it is important for church leaders to teach parents of their role in Christian formation of their children. Church leaders must encourage the parents in their churches to take seriously their role of pastors in their homes. The Church should also provide parents with opportunities to learn more about what their children are being taught. Again, churches should be intentional in efforts to reach parents and equip them with whatever is necessary in discipleship training of their children.

Church leaders should try to make regular follow-ups to children after they are accepted in the church through baptism. Follow-up is very important because it is a discipleship process in a believer's life after he/she makes decision for Christ. Though

children do not make decisions themselves, God parents make decisions on their behalf, so they are followers of Christ who need to be followed up in the process of their growth. Follow-ups help young believers to grow mature and learn to become multiplying disciples in helping others to grow. Most importantly, follow-ups when emphasized on create a strong loving relationship and fellowship between children and their formators and God their Creator.

The church should encourage children to share their faith with others. This can be done by establishing cell groups in villages to reach all children in homes. This would encourage children to have fellowship groups of which the church leader should be responsible for, with the help of his/her assistants.

The church should have an office responsible for discipleship training. Since discipleship training of children is very important, an office should be established with a discipleship coordinator who has the following qualities:

- One who is spirit filled with a living testimony. He/she himself/herself should be a disciple ready to disciple others and he/she should be led by the Holy Spirit.
- One who has organizational skills which would help him/her to organize the work especially when he/she has too much to accomplish. Thinking about such in his/her entirety can be overwhelming and discouraging. But by breaking them down into smaller more manageable pieces/organizing them so that they do not seem to be as difficult to achieve.
- Strong desire for children ministry; the person to take this office should be one who loves to associate with children. He/she should have this gift so that the work of discipleship training of children is enhanced.

During the course of the study, it was found out that Ankole Diocese does not have a separate office for children ministry. The office is integrated within youth ministry under the office of Diocesan Missions' Co-ordinator. The Youth Worker is mostly concerned with the youth leaving behind children, and according to Christian education, these are two different ministries. Therefore, in order for the church to be effective in discipleship training of children, there should be a separate office for children ministry. The office should be responsible for monitoring all the activities of

children in the Diocese and measures for training volunteers to help in nurturing children would be put forward. This would make children ministry stronger even in the grass root churches deep in the villages.

Christian Schools should have Christian teachers and administrators. Christian schools in Uganda are church founded but aided by the government of Uganda under Education Ministry. However, the governing body or management is the church. The government recruits and provides salaries for the teachers and gives other necessary requirements. Our Diocese has an Education Secretary who is responsible for all Christian schools. It is therefore important for this office to liaise with the ministry of education so that Christian schools are given Christian administrators/Head teachers. It would be difficult to enhance Christian formation to school children if the Head teacher is of another denomination. Even the teachers should be of the foundation body of the school if the church wants the school to become a good environment for Christian formation of children.

Christian schools should have chaplains concerned with spiritual matters of the school. The schools I visited during my field work expressed the concern of not having chaplains. In our Diocese, chaplains are posted to Secondary Schools but not Primary schools. In most cases, these are Pastors who have teaching profession with Diplomas or/and Degrees in Education. There are church workers in our Diocese who have Grade Three Teachers' certificate but they are either posted as teachers in schools by the government or in churches as Lay-readers by the church administration. These teachers would be resourceful if they are posted as chaplain-teachers in Primary schools to take the responsibility of Christian nurture of children in schools.

It is important for the church to find potential workers and train them for ministry. For the case of church leaders who go for theological training, emphasis should be on Christian education which embraces all the ministries within the church. The church in selecting those to be trained for the ministry should make proper scrutiny in order to have workers who are capable in enhancing christian education especially children ministry. Even it would be of great importance if the church trains school chaplains,

Sunday school teachers who would enhance the work of children in the church. These should be well equipped with the necessary materials needed for the work of children.

Establishing a fund for motivating workers for the service; funds are very crucial in the ministry of the church. All the church programs need money. According to the information gathered from the field, children ministry lacks funds to facilitate those who work with children. Even it was found out that the churches that have no trained Sunday School teachers is due to lack of funds for training them. Therefore, it is important for the church to establish a fund specifically for the children ministry and the purpose of this fund should be for facilitating those in charge of discipleship training of children. This fund can help in training and equipping the disciplers of children.

Information from my respondents shows that some churches organise meetings and seminars concerning parenting of children. Therefore, much emphasis should be put in organizing regular workshops and seminars for parents and God parents. These seminars are very important because they are one of the ways parents and godparents will be reminded of their role in discipling children. Parents as leaders of their small churches in their homes need to be equipped with the knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrine. This would be through these seminars and workshops. Also godparents who took the oaths on behalf of children need to be reminded of what they promised during the baptism of children.

Refresher courses for school teachers and church leaders/workers are vital for the welfare of the church, community and individuals themselves. They are important because they refresh newly the workers on their duties. When these workers, for instance the church workers finish training and they are posted in their work places, they concentrate on their work and do not get time for reviewing on what they learned from the colleges. I, therefore, suggest that at least every year there should be refresher courses which should embrace all the necessary programs for the church.

Use of media: the church should try to use the media as a means of communicating to children. As we already noted media being one of the challenges, children are keen in it. They like watching TVs, Videos, listening to Radios and even reading the News

papers and magazines. For instance in *The New Vision*, one of the Uganda's News Papers, there is a page called children vision. This page can be used by the church in discipling children. This can be verified by what was reported in *The New Vision* of 22/2/2008 (Weekly » Children's Vision » Face of God winners) about Pictures drawn by children showing the face of God. This shows that the Media can potentially influence Christian formation if used as medium of communication to children. Even it is good in disseminating the gospel to those who do not regularly attend the church services.

6.2.2 Recommendations to Parents

As we have already seen that the home is the basic institution of Christian formation of children, parents need to be aware of their role in their children's spiritual journey. They need to be available and ready to answer their children when they ask them questions concerning their belief. Children are very inquisitive and have many ideas which need attention by their parents. This was seen in Chapter Two on Piaget's psychology when he says that the child has a host of ideas about the physical and the natural world, which differ from those of adults. For example, children always want to know why God is addressed as our Father and hence children have their fathers. It is good for parents to be well versed with what to say when such questions arise from their children. Parents also need to model for their children what it means to be followers of Christ. The way parents relate themselves to God matters. They must be keen in reading the word of God, in praying and sharing testimony to their children in order to lead an exemplary life in the home, and this will lead children to follow suit. They need to teach their children, and engage them in daily conversations about God, His truths, love and forgiveness.

My respondents confirmed the role of the parents in bringing children to the church for baptism and other church services. They testified that they grew as strong Christians because of their parents' and sponsors' responsibility in nurturing them. They also said that it is their responsibility to take their children in the church and continue guiding them as young Christians who need spiritual food. The church leaders I interviewed had the concern that some parents are not all that responsible for bringing their children to the church. Concerning this issue therefore, parents should try to bring their children to the church when they are still young. They should bring

them for baptism and then always come with them for Sunday services until when they are ready to join Sunday school classes. It would be unfortunate for the parents who do not care about christening their children when they are still infants because they would have failed their obligation as care takers of God's gifts and heritage(c.f. Ps. 127:3 "Behold children are heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward."). In addition to this, parents should allow their children to attend Sunday school classes. When children grow in such a worshipping situation, they strengthen their faith and become devout Christians as they grow.

There is at times when you find religious differences in families among the parents which even extend to the children. Some families have two different religious backgrounds as already seen in challenges within discipleship training of children in the home. A father may be an Anglican while a mother is a Roman Catholic or vice versa. Such families in our Diocese, parents attend services in different churches. Boys go with their father, whereas girls go with their mother in another church. If it is not the case, all children may go with their father while the mother goes alone to her church. Such families would find it difficult to disciple their children because of the doctrinal differences within their religions. Therefore it would be of necessity for the couple to decide on one particular Christian denomination before having children, so that children are born when such differences are not there and they are brought and initiated in one particular church.

Parents need to find good practicing Christians for good godparents who are of deep faith, and devoted to their Christian faith. Godparents promise to guide children in their faith and help them grow in the Christian way. Good godparents fulfil their obligation of baptism and confirmation and are trustworthy witnesses of the faith and are able to help children in the path of salvation. They should always stay in touch with their god children which would be easier for them to help them in their Christian faith as they took an oath on their behalf.

It was found out that some parents do not have enough time to be with their children. Some are taken by the offices and others by the nature of their business. I therefore suggest that it would be vital for parents to minimize on their busy schedules and have enough time for their children. Children always need to feel the presence of their

parents all the time. In addition to this, parents should avoid using a person of different belief or denomination as a house keeper, because he/she might bring in divergent views on Christian belief hence retarding the growth of the children's faith.

Effective communication in the family/home is very important and it contributes powerfully to family relations which fosters Christian nurture to children. When communication lacks between husband and wife, it also lacks between parents and children. This becomes a barrier to the relationship in all the members of the family. When there is no relationship, there is nothing in common and this brings spiritual retardation in the family hence no spiritual development of children. The important part of children's spiritual development and well being is the relationship they have with their parents.

Wise parental control is another aspect to be emphasized in Christian nurture of children. The way parents set boundaries and exercise discipline is vital in Christian nurture of children. The approach parents use to discipline their children shape the emotional climate in the family, the child's personality, character and response to the Gospel. If the parents are always rude to their children, children will not have positive attitude towards whatever they will be taught concerning God. Parents should know that they represent God to their children.

Parental nurturing by both parents is of vital importance because it involves parental acts and attitudes of love which enhance and nurture the well being of children.

In many churches, the children's ministry tasks tend to fall solely on the shoulders of women, making it difficult for boys and girls to understand the role of men in God's kingdom. It is important for young children to see men and women modelling what it means to be a Christian. This is especially true if they do not see godly role models in their homes. In this respect, both parents should work as a team in discipleship training of their children and also be exemplary to their children in order, for proper Christian formation to take place.

6.2.3 Recommendations to school administration

Since it was found out that schools also have a role to play in discipleship training of children, teaching of religious studies should be a priority in all Christian schools. The emphasis should be on Christian religious education hence teaching about the word of God. The word of God should be taught as truth in schools hence helping pupils to understand that they were wonderfully created in the image of God. This will lead them to know the truth of the gospel and they will be encouraged to know Jesus as their saviour. They will be led to deeper understanding of the Bible through fellowships, chapel programs and Bible studies at school.

Christian schools should encourage Christian organisations as part of extra-curricular activities in the school. These organisations such as Scripture Union, Girls and Boys Brigade are very important to school children for they strengthen their beliefs. This would depend on the commitment and devotedness of the school administrators to the Christian faith. I would therefore, suggest that school administrators should try to cater for Christian organisations in the school time table. These organisations can be avenues for discipleship training of children in schools.

Administrators, teachers and non teaching staff in a Christian school should be committed Christians who not only know Jesus Christ but who have Christ like behaviour in their lives, classrooms and even in leadership. By being like this, pupils will emulate their teachers and become good followers of Christ. This is important as it is one of the aspects of discipleship training.

6.2. 4 Area for further Research

During the course of this study, some aspects were seen to be important in children ministry especially in matters concerning women taking a lead in Christian nurture of children. I therefore, advance for further investigation on why women are keen and active in Christian nurture of children than men.

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2:

Interview Guide

Topic: Christian Formation to Children (7-12 years) in Ankole Diocese- Uganda; The role of Discipleship training in Children Ministry

General information

Name.....

Age.....

Occupation.....

Interview guide for church leaders

(a) Questions on the church leaders responsibilities

1. How long have served the church in Ankole Diocese?
2. When did you become a Christian? (Were you baptized when you were a child or when you were old?)
3. If you were baptized when you were a child, how were you nurtured as a young Christian?
4. Who do you think were responsible for this noble task?
5. I would like you to briefly describe your responsibilities within your church.
6. What other responsibilities do you have out side the church?
7. What kind of ministries do you have in the church for enhancing Christian Education?
8. Concerning children ministry, what kind of programs does the church design for them?

(b) Questions on Christian formation

9. How can children between the ages of 7-12 be rooted in Christ?
10. In which ways do you think Christian upbringing is important to children?
11. Can you briefly identify the factors you think can influence Christian formation of children?

(c) Questions on Discipleship

12. Who are the followers of Christ (disciples of Christ)?
13. Who do you think are responsible for discipling children?
14. What steps have you put forward in discipling children?
15. What impact can discipleship of children bring to the following; church, home, school and individual children?
16. What challenges do you meet in discipling children between ages 7-12?

Others

17. How often do you visit homes in your church?
18. Can you tell me the experience you find in Christian homes?
19. In which ways have you helped the parents to nurture their children in a Christian way?
20. How often do you visit schools?
21. Which programs does the church involve school children?

Interview guide for Parents/Teachers

1. When did you become a Christian?
2. How many children do you have who are between 7 and 12 years?
3. At what age do you baptize your children?
4. Can you give reasons why you baptize your children at this age?
5. How often do you attend Sunday services?
6. a) Do you go with your children to attend the services?
b) If yes, which services do they attend?
7. How often do you pray with your children at home?
8. How have you nurtured your children in a Christian way of living?
9. In which way has the church helped you in Christian nurture of your children?
10. What do you think is the school's role in Christian upbringing?
11. Can you give your view on the relationship between the church, the home and the school?

I will use the above questions on Christian formation and Discipleship

Additional questions for teachers

1. What steps has the school put forward for the formation of Christian pupils?
2. How often do you have worship services in the school?
3. How does the school collaborate with the church and parents in Christian nurture of the children?
4. What Christian activities do you engage in school children especially those between the ages 7-12?

Appendix 3:

Photographs taken from the field



The Priest in procession of the school children's service in the cathedral



Praise and worship team



A pupil leading prayers in children worship in the Cathedral



A school child reading the Lesson



The priest preaching to school children in the cathedral



A Sunday School teacher with his children in a local church Ibanda Archdeaconry

Appendix 3: An extract from the News Paper

Weekly » Children's Vision » Face of God winners

Face of God winners

Friday, 22nd February, 2008

God's face is full of the following:



Evelyn Katasi

Each child gets a bicycle, adults get sh25,000 for voting

By Lydia Namubiru

TEN children have won the face of god Children's painting competition. Evelyn Katasi of Global Junior School and Ronah Murunga of Konge Parents School are the two top winners. Their drawings got the highest number of votes from the grown up readers of Saturday Vision. Eight other children are winners as well.

All the winners should come and collect their bicycles on the 1st of March at 10:00am from the New Vision head office in Kampala. The office is on Plot 2/4, 3rd Street, Industrial area.

We started the competition in December.

Children were supposed to draw pictures of what they think god looks like. We are very happy that very many of you participated.

We got 433 beautiful pictures from children all over the country. From all those that we got every week, we selected the best eight pictures and put them in the Saturday Vision. A total of 48 drawings appeared in the papers.

The grown up readers voted for the best of those that were in the newspaper. The 10 winners are those who got most of the votes.

Even the grown ups have won some prizes! Ten of the adults who voted get sh25,000 each. These adult winners were selected in a raffle at the New Vision offices.

They are also named on this page with the winning children.

A big thank you to every one who took part in the competition. If you did not win a prize, do not worry. Children's Vision is going to organise other competitions for you to win prizes.

Take part in each one and win! win! win!