

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS OF CHILDREN MINISTRY AMONG BAPTIST CHURCHES IN ABRAKA COMMUNITY OF DELTA STATE

AGBOGUN, AVWEROSUOGHENE JOSEPH

Pilgrims Baptist Church, P.O Box 122 , Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

agbogunjoseph00@gmail.com/ 08063774656

Abstract

There is moral decadence, which is much lamented as its effect dovetailed into all sectors in the Nigerian society. This challenge has proved difficult to solve, putting all social agents to their feet. The church is trying her part, but it seems that its impact is watered down the drain in this modern generation. The best approach to tackling this menace follows equipping the children with strong foundation of moral standard. Thus this study seeks to evaluate the socio-religious function of children ministry among Baptist Churches in Abraka community in Delta State. The approach includes expository and phenomenological using oral interview to elicit the opinion of the population. It is discovered that the role of the church is noticed in different areas as pertain to children including child socialization, family harmony, moral instruction, and faith foundation and growth. It concludes that church children ministry influences the child so much that the local church, family and the society are beneficiaries. This study recommended that the general public should partner with the church in making the society a suitable place to stay.

Keywords: socio-religious, children ministry, Baptist church, function.

Introduction

There are a good number of children in every growing church. The church is supposed to minister to and nurture these children towards maturity. When the children are properly attended to, there could be many effects on the church and society. But the church is not doing well in this direction rather she overlooked and underestimated the role of children ministry making her to lack dedicated and active members; inter-personal relationship is soured; and children become bonds of trouble and threats to the family and the society at large. Thus, there is need to evaluate the role of children ministry among the Baptist churches. The scope is limited to Baptist churches in Abraka. This study comprises/entails the overview of Nigerian Baptist Convention Children Ministry; brief history of Baptist Mission in Abraka, Biblical Foundation for ministering to children, the channels of ministering to children among Baptist Churches and role of children ministry in Abraka.

An Overview of Nigerian Baptist Convention Children Ministries

The Nigerian Baptist convention maybe seen as God-ordained, Christ-focused and people's growth-oriented. Based on the above, the Baptists choose to minister to every stage of life from the Bible. The children's ministries of the NBC involve reaching out to children by taking the gospel of Jesus to the children and developing them to be mature Christians who will eventually reach out to others. The aims and objectives of children's ministries of the NBC according to Ayanrinola (2017) include the following among others:

1. To lay the foundation Biblical principles in the lives of children
2. To lead children to Christ
3. To help children grow in the knowledge of Christ
4. To provide opportunity for children to witness Christ to other and
5. To help children experience true worship and mission (p. 2).

Again, the children's ministries of the Nigerian Baptist convention likewise, cover ages zero to twelve. Children are proud everywhere, both inside and outside the church. The population of children inside the church almost equals that of adults, which signifies picture hope of growth for the church if they are well catered for today. The NBC programme or ministries reach out to children from conception to 12 years; categorized as birth to 2 year (Infant) preschoolers (3-6 years), and school age children (7 to 12 years). The Baptist churches can reach the children through diverse programme, according to Ayanrinola, (2017) like Children Sunday School, Sunday Worship Service, Church Training or Discipleship, Children Choir, Sunbeam Band and Family Development Program.MC (p. 4)

Biblical Foundation for Children Ministry

Scholars worldwide have noticed that the Bible has at least a word for every life endeavour, whether directly or indirectly, which makes it a universal scholastic literature. God in His relationship with the Israelites did not overlook the children. However, Lateju (2007) said "ministering to children can be said to predate history, but we are sure that during the biblical period, it was never taken lightly" (p. 10). The prehistory seems not be handy while the biblical is recorded. There is a wide range of materials on Bible basis for ministering to children but the following will be considered.

First, it is important to note that homes without children tend to lack sincere joy, laughter and hope. The Bible says that Sarah said “God has brought me laughter and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me” (Genesis 21:6, NIV). Sarah the wife of Abraham made this statement at the miraculous delivery of their promised child at a very old age, an expression of joy. Contrarily, were there no other sources of joy in married homes in absence of children? Though we would not fail to appreciate that the presence of children in every home brings about several challenges but when the children are ministered to adequately, the challenges are either minimized or converted into blessings.

Second, children need to partake optimally in religious activities to allow for sustainability and continuity of religious activities and their lessons as well as the socio-religious impacts. God commanded the Israelites as they exited out of Egypt to involve children in their religious celebrations (Exodus 12:24-27). In this passage, the children should be explained to the children whenever they ask. Children have obligation to ask questions about what they did not understand. Answering such questions is a means of ministering to them. Infact, parents are commanded to teach their children through this means. Teaching can also be a calculated attempt to transmit information from one person to another.

Third, somehow children are given particular attention by God. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, God commanded parents to train their children diligently. Every good method or approach should be used as many times as possible until the lesson is understood and practiced. Again, the passage refers to the use of teaching aids, and making every encounter with the children to be profitable in disseminating God’s precepts and teachings. Perhaps, the church may assume that the Bible is referring to only biblical parents. No! All adults and parents in as much as the church is concerned. We ought to prove our parenthood by giving all we have gotten from God’s to our children. Even modern ways of learning must be exploited and be made available.

Fourth, children are capable of hearing, understanding and receiving messages from God whenever He speaks. In 1 Samuel 3:1-12, God called Samuel at about age 12. The fact that Samuel could not identify the voice of who is calling shows that children need the guidance of the adults who may stand behind the scene- a roll of teachers. Moreso, God’s selection and election is right from childhood. The earlier we make them remain in Christ the more peaceful they become to the society. Supporting this idea, God makes it crystal clear in Jeremiah 1:5 that He “knew” and “called” anyone right from the womb. What is the fate of one called or chosen from womb but not

properly brought up? Thus, the vitality of children ministry is paramount in guiding children along God-ordained track.

Fifth, in the poetic Books of the Old Testament, there is support to minister to children. Psalm 127:3-5 indicated that children are blessing from God and are helpful in combating life's situation and enemies especially when they have grown up. In my opinion, no child is useless through only the well-trained will become a blessing while others will become a reproach. In the same vein, Proverbs 22:6 encourages that children should be trained or catered for early in life to ensure a fruitful future. Still, Proverbs 13:1 introduces the fact that children are epitome of obedience that adults must take advantage to lead them to Christ.

Sixth, going into the Gospels, Jesus shown the way children should be ministered to. They should be loved, carried, talked to, played with and prayed for (Mark 10:13 – 16). One of the ways children learn is by imitation. Let us be involved in Practicing Jesus models is ministering to the children. Jesus went further to give strong warning to adults not to hinder children from coming to Him but should bring children to Him. Every child should be introduced to Christ for divine encounter, which is the core duty of children ministry.

Lastly, in the Epistles, Paul did not overlook the children, rather he admonished parents to discipline and instruct their children in the way of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). This passage particularly directs the work of teaching and discipline to fathers. How far or much are fathers involved in the children ministries of the Baptist churches today. This is a clarion call on men to be involved immensely in children upbringing. Even while in the church, the children worship service requires the attention of fathers in planning, sponsoring, as well as direct and indirect participation ministry activities.

Structure of Children Ministry in Baptist Churches

Sunbeam Band: It is a mission group for children from birth to ten years. In this programme, mission and evangelism are bequeathed to the children. Ayanrinola (2007) says that missions and evangelism are very important in Christendom because that is the heartbeat of the church and should be taught from childhood (p. 3). This Band is directly under women's Missionary Union (WMU) who designed and finances the programme for the children. The children meet with their leader(s) during the week for missions learning and emphasis.

Children Ministry is very important in the household of God. This ministry is meant to care for the spiritual, physical and moral growth of the young ones in the congregation. The ministry is

purpose to teach, cancel and visit the children, meet their parents occasionally to enhance all round development of such children to the glory of God. Egbe Irawo (a society for children) was included among the five societies organized in 1916 by the Rev. A. Scott Patterson, Southern Baptist Missionary from America. Mrs. George Green, wife of the first Baptist Medical Missionary to Nigeria, had a great interest in little children and did a lot to encourage young people.

When Baptist Women Missionary League was organized in 1919, *Egbe Irawo* was recognized as part of this league. So the Sunbeam Band has grown up with Women's Missionary Society. Gradually, groups of children were brought together in villages and towns and they were taught scripture verses and choruses. A director was appointed to take care of Sunbeam.

Sunbeam Programme includes: Sunbeam memory verses contest, Sunbeam day camp, Sunbeam Weekly programme, Sunbeam week, Sunbeam Band mission study, Sunbeam prayer calendar, Sunbeam magazine, Evangelism, and Visitation. **Sunbeam Meeting** holds for one hour in a chosen day of the week, especially the day when their parents are holding their own meetings. The Sunbeams have their own uniform (White and Cream Color), Badge and Cap, which are used on special occasions. **Sunbeam Band Watchwords** are: Jesus Said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8: 12); also Jesus Said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5: 14); and therefore, "Let your light so shine" (Matthew 5: 16).

Girls' Auxiliary (G.A): this is an organization for girls between the ages of 10 and 16, who love Christ and want to serve Him. They also want to be part of Christ great missionary movement around the world. It has to-fold purpose: to develop the missionary zeal and response to Christian girls; and to girls to Jesus Christ and encourage a worldwide service for Christ. In every church, preaching station and school where it is possible, the girls should be organized into junior and intermediate groups. While the junior Gas are girls of ages 10-12, the intermediates are of 13-16. Each group has its own officers and meets in separate places weekly.

When Women Missionary Union (WMU) started in 1919 in Nigerian Baptist convention, the Girls' Auxiliary was also included. In 1925, the Girls' Auxiliary was officially recognized by the WMU as an important member of her family. The Girls' Auxiliary watchword is: "Arise and Shine for your Light has come and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon you." (Isaiah 60:1). The hymn of mission is titled: "We've a Story to Tell" and their colours are green, white and gold. The

emblem contains a white star with the gold monogram on it and on a green octave engraved with gold. The star represents their star ideals. The colours of the emblem are full of meanings: green stands for growth or development; white for purity; and gold for sincerity.

The Girls' Auxiliary allegiance is knowing that many people live in spiritual darkness and giving attention to Christ's commands, I pledge my loyalty to Jesus Christ, his church and its activities; attempting with God's help to abide in him through prayer; to advance in wisdom by bible study; to acknowledge my stewardship of prosperity, time, money and personality; to adorn myself with good work; and to accept the challenge of the great commission. The Girls' Auxiliary aim remains to learn conditions about themselves and around the world; to guard their minds against evil; to keep their bodies clean and acceptable to God; to put selfishness out of their hearts; to take part in all our denomination does; and to make Jesus Christ known all over the world.

Royal Ambassador (R.A): The Royal Ambassadors is the name of a Baptist organization for boys between the ages 10 and 24-an international missionary organization found in the following continent; African, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. The Royal Ambassador worldwide started in 1908 the United States of America among the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), USA. The Royal Ambassadors recently celebrated its centenary in 2008. The Royal Ambassadors is also paramilitary organization.

The Royal Ambassadors in Nigeria is called Royal Ambassador of Nigeria (RAN) and was founded in Nigeria in the 1920's by the southern Baptist convention (SBC), USA; and came to Nigeria as one of the world's leading organization for Boys. The Royal Ambassadors was sponsored by the women's Missionary Union until 1954 when it was proposed that the Men of the Nigerian Baptist Convention took over the work of the Royal Ambassadors in Nigeria. The situation that led to the proposal of Men and Boy's Department in 1961 which served both men and boys, then later became the defunct Men's Missionary Union and Youths Department, now known as Missionary Organization Department since 1998.

Cardinal Objectives are: Helping Boys in personal, spiritual development and discipleship; Equipping members for mission Action; Ensuring Educational and career development of Boys; Promoting social awareness, responsibility and responsiveness; Promoting personal and corporate discipline and cohesion; Promoting personal commitment demonstrated in stewardship of life,

Churchmanship denominational interest, and understanding as well as appreciation of Baptist beliefs and practices; and Enabling members' personality, potentiality, and dignity development.

Royal Ambassadors is the name of a Baptist Missionary Organization for Nigerian boys between the ages of ten (10) and Twenty Four (24). Royal Ambassadors is also an international organization, in many countries of the world where there are Baptists. This organization is found on the continents of Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. Royal Ambassadors work began in the United State of America in 1908. It was started in Nigeria in the 1920's. In Nigeria, the Women's Missionary Union sponsored the organization from the beginning until 1954. At that time, it was thought that the Men of the Nigerian Baptist Convention should sponsor the boys work. In 1961 the Department of Men and boys' work was proposed and the Royal Ambassadors became a part of this Department.

The Royal Ambassadors motto is found in 2 Corinthians 5:20: We are ambassadors for Christ."Vision is: Touching the lives of boys and impacting the eternity of men! Founding Goals are: to become well informed; responsible follower of Christ to have Christ-like concern for all people; to carry the message of Christ around the world; to work with others in sharing Christ; and to keep myself clean and healthy in mind and body.

Objectives include: helping boys in personal spiritual development and discipleship; equipping members for mission action; ensuring educational and career development of boys; promoting social awareness, responsibility and responsiveness; promoting personal and corporate discipline and cohesion; promoting personal commitment demonstrated in stewardship of life, churchmanship and denominational interest, and understanding as well as appreciation of Baptist beliefs and practices; and enabling members' personality, potentiality, and dignity development.

Royal Ambassadors Pledge: As a Royal Ambassador I will do my best:

To become a well-informed, responsible follower of Christ;

To have a Christ-like concern for all people;

To carry the message of Christ around the world;

To work with others in sharing Christ; and

To keep myself clean and healthy in mind and body

Other Channels of Ministering to Children in Baptist Churches

The children's ministry of the Nigerian Baptist convention covers the following areas:

- a) **Children's Sunday School:** This is a Bible study class for children on Sunday morning that commences around 9am according to the church worship time. The Sunday school teachers meet during the week to preview the lesson. The children are classified into different age groups like play group, pre-nursery, primary 1-3, 4-6, etc. The teachers do the follow-up during the week.
- b) **Children Worship Service:** Children's worship service is designed to allow the children to worship God in their own way and language they understand. At this level, in rural area, the vernacular is encouraged. All necessary liturgical items to make worship meaningful and messages down to the level of the children are employed. The teachers also meet during the week to preview and prepare for Sunday worship activities.
- c) **Children's choir:** Churches should teach children church music that includes voice training, instrumentation, hymnody, etc. Churches should teach children how to read notes, and sing hymns and choruses with good and sound theology. Choirmasters should encourage gifted children to compose new choruses and songs. It should be noted that the children's choir are to minister in the children church and not to be featured in the adult worship service except on special occasions, though not their detriment.
- d) **Children Church Training or Discipleship:** It is a discipleship ground for children. It takes place on Sunday Evenings as part of evening worship or during the Home fellowship time. It has the same pattern with the Sunday school in terms of age grading and expectations of teachers.
- e) **Holding Holiday Bible School and Bible Clubs:** They are additional programme of Bible teaching for children. The holiday Bible School is a three to five days activity from 9am to 12 noon. It is usually done during the holidays to keep the children busy and instructed for the Lord.
- f) **Family Development Programme:** This is designed to minister to parents, teachers and children according to Doherty (2003). In the Baptist, churches are encourages to organize

programme that will minister to parents because children's ministry without reaching out to parents may not bring lasting fruits. The children spent more quality time with parents especially in African perspective.

Socio-religious functions of Children Ministry among Baptist Churches in Abraka Community

Children ministry in churches has a lot of benefits to all sundries, both at the immediate and remote setting. Whatever the church does to improve human living affects the society. Some areas to be covered in eliciting information from respondents for discussion includes: Family harmony, Child socialization, Faith/spiritual foundation and continuity and moral instruction and Development. The above aligns with the social-religious role of children ministry among Baptist churches in Abraka community.

Family Harmony: The emotion shown by children before and after attending any activities in the church goes a long way to determine how they behave at home. From my personal observation, during the meetings of the children, there is usually fullness of joy, occasioned by full participation. This joy and merriment are transported unto the family. It is opined that children workers or facilitators try as much as possible for children to leave the scene of activities with happiness and interest. (Interview with Esiere Gabriel, 2019). The children go home to meet their parents telling stories they learned and showing works they did in their activities books and other puzzle or drawings. In fact, Ihwighwu Blessing (Interview with, 2019) could not hold herself back from expressing the laughter caused by her little daughter each time she returns from sunbeam weekly activities. Everyone in the family shares in the joy. For those whose children lack such opportunity something is eluding them.

Again, children workers in the church own it a duty to visit the children at home. Lateju (2007) lends her voice to the fact that a time of visiting the family of a child culminates in ministering to the entire family. Peter Omajemite (interview with, 2019) says that on his visit to a particular family sometimes ago, the boy who was about 8 years old called the parents and siblings that his personal pastor has come to visit and everyone must entertain him. He further says that when he and his team were about to leave the home, the boy called the parents to kneel down so that his pastor (Daddy in the Lord) will bless them all. Family harmony is obviously fostered. It is possible that some parents have not prayed together for sometimes before then echoed. (Interview with Oghenechovwiere Patience, 2019).

In another vein, Oserayohwo Okiemute (Interview with, 2019) submits that children are capable of praying for the harmony and peaceful co-existence of the family. Their petitions are usually granted by God because of their strong faith, innocence and sincerity. Children ministry has an aspect called family life in which parents are ministered to through workshop, prayers, among others. This usually helps to facilitates family harmony. Parents and children talk about their need and challenges; and prayers are rendered in line with them. (interview with Anokwuru Clara, 2019). Again, Umukoro Kelvin (Interview with, 2019) submits that family harmony is enhanced as both parents and children are encouraged to participate in family daily devotion. George Vogrin (2014) states that daily family devotion is important for the spiritual growth of children and unity of the family. ChildrenMinistry in churches generates the interest to participate in all religious activities at home.

Child socialization: Socialization according to Okon (2018) is one of the processes through which people are taught or learn to be proficient members of a society or it describes the way people come understand societal norms and expectations; to accept society's beliefs; and to be aware of societal values in the view of (p. 110). Harlow and Harlow (1962) emphasize the necessity for early social contact for little ones by conducting a series of experiments studying how rhesus monkeys, which behave a lot like people, are affected by isolation as babies and concluded that social comfort was of greater value than food to children. It is through socialization that the child is integrated into the meaningful structure of society. In the opinion of Eseroghene Patience (Interview with, 2019) child socialization involves interpersonal relationship between the child and his environment, both animate and inanimate constituents.

Religion remains a formidable agent of socialization in every society. In line with this view, Okon (2018) states that although religion may be a personal thing, there is a communal dimension whereby young people are often initiated to the various rites of passage and processes of atonement (P.118). No real living religion is practiced by an individual; rather it must involve two or more people. Does every religion afford children good opportunity for socialization? According to Ohwoyovwe, (Interview with, 2019).the communal dimension brings about interaction and socialization influences. Every religion brings people together for worship and fellowship, whereby there is interchanging of knowledge. When children are involved, learning is made easy and central.

People seek to obtain rewards in their social gathering; children are not exempted. Adewale (1994) opines that associating with another person may be intrinsically rewarding as in love and sociability or it may bring rewards that are extrinsic to the association itself, such as advice and help from colleague and neighbors (P.4). Ogbefi (Interview with, 2019) says that children learn to show love to God and others as they participate in the children classes. Loving God and others is central in the curriculum of children ministry. Emetua (Interview with, 2019) comments the effort and advantage of children ministry in his church when he said that his daughter overcome shyness and aggression through recitation activities and counsel of children church leaders.

Moreover, Lateju (2007) mention some of the ways children can be ministered to viz: providing for physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of the children even as their spiritual needs are being catered for; raising mentors for children, and looking for, listening to, learning about and loving children. Children learn from whatsoever is being shown to them in course of relationship and socializing with teachers in the church. The social needs of children being catered for help them develop adequately socially because children learn by imitation. In the view of Diegbe (Interview with, 2019) all human needs are important and anyone met draws the child closer and makes them sociable. Once a relationship with a child is defined and targeted, it brings a desired result in the child as this is the goal of our children ministry.

Young people should be deliberately taught that social life is not only in the physical, but that there is an invisible domain which is equally relevant to man. This introduction to the metaphysical domain should be guided thoroughly. Adewale (1994) submits that another dimension of socialization process which is intrinsically religious is to intimate children at the formative years with the idea of the sacred (P.6). This could have positive moral consequences. This suggest that all human religions should be involve ion teaching religious elements and ideas to their children early enough to win and retain them in parents' religious practices. Oghenerhoro (Interview with, 2019) reiterates the necessities of catching children early enough for Christ when he said that the rate at which young people are taking part in immoral and anti-social practices in the society is alarming. The only way to solve the epidemic is by cutting their supply among the children are introduced to religious activities early, religious forms the background of their social life.

Faith Foundation and Growth: Faith transmission and preservation are not done in vacuum but deliberately inputting it into younger generation who must practice it. Lateju (2007) apparently

agrees with the ideas of teaching children for continuity when says: the church of God needs children for continuity, as they are the future church, which must depend on them for survival. Imene (Interview with, 2019) says that the children today are the youth tomorrow and Adult a day after. Thus the church must acidulously equip her children ministry for good result. Iwaka (Interview with, 2019) asserts that any church that neglect her children ministry has shot herself on the foot. No church has the hope of having solid foundation and future fruitfulness without a blossoming children ministry.

The reason why children ministry is important to the church is because any life affected at that age stands tall and strong in the church. Lateju (2007) further states that about 85% of people give their lives to Christ between 4-14 years of age (p.21). Eghwudje Patience (Interview with, 2019) opines that those who grew up in a particular church make better active membership than those who came when they are already adults. So most nominal church members are those who repented adulthood. Most church crises are caused by such members. Their spirituality is shallow and commitment weak, except in rare cases when such individuals had practically personal encounter or experiences with God. This is similar with Paul's example in the New Testament. Paul's dramatic and spontaneous encounter with the Lord help him to translate his Zeal, knowledge and boldness into preaching the gospel bar.

Growing up in the church deepens one's experiences with God. Enakireri Christiana (Interview with, 2019) says that the experiences of a child who underwent all organizational training and experience in the Baptist church of light and faith is firmly founded. The tendency of falling in love with Baptist beliefs practices and activities is rare. Enakireri goes further to state that even if such child is a female and marries to a man from other dominations, she never forgets her childhood experiences. Thus, there is much reflections and comparison with experiences in the new demotion. Such people often call for adaptation and borrowing of practices into the new church.

A good foundation usually allows for rapid growth but poor foundation brings collapse in journal of faith. The question is: are parents conscious of the need to facilitate spiritual and faith foundation for their children? In attempt to answer the question above, Enoughwure Cordelier (Interview with, 2019) has the opinion that the major reason why parents especially mothers want their children to attend the church with them is to give them elementary steps of faith and spiritual development. Thus, parents must be certain that their children has the unique opportunity that will

cause faith development in the church in the same vein, the church leadership ensures that adequate provision and preparation are made to enable the children encounter Christ and take a step forward in faith development. But Oghenerhoro Patience opines that a child who is not interested in church activities cannot grow spiritually. The experiences in the activities are meant for training the mind of the child.

Moral Instruction: the church is at the centre of children moral instruction, especially in Africa. Moral development enhances spiritual or faith development and vice-a-verse. Moure (2017) submits that almost all families in a given community teach the same moral codes. This is because the families determine the content of morality or the moral standard. Churches in Urban Centres comprise of families from different communities and moral standards. This is why teaching morality in the church comes with great challenges. Umukoro (Interview with, 2019) opines that it is easy for churches to teach morality to children because they appeal to the Holy Bible as supreme authority.

Many religions have value frameworks regarding personal behaviour meant to guide adherents in determining between wrong and right. The center of moral instruction is helping children to develop the capacity to shun wrong behavior and embrace right ones in most times. According to Elias Wiebe (1989) the first step of the church to nurture morality into their young generation starts with supporting and visiting expectant mothers to help build sensitivity to others in the child. Nurture here includes keeping children in check by loving restraint and ongoing relations of trust and care. In this case, the church prepares and helps parents in taking care of their children moral needs.

In addition, Lateju (2007) submits that some of the ways the church influences the moral life of the children include having discipleship class for them; providing role-model for each child or group; providing moral leader; providing books and other materials for children, as well as fostering mentor-mentee relationship (p.36). The church has a lot to do and must be quick in doing. Eseroghene Patience (Interview with, 2019) quite agrees that the church has several plans and equipment to foster moral instruction in children but she lacks human resource that can be trained to do the work. This is where leadership plays a serious role. To this end, every conscious leader make effort to recruit adequate manpower and get them trained and assign them to duty-the Baptist church is trying a lot.

Again, the experience of the child can be influenced in the sanctuary by objects and symbol that riposte Christian nurture and morals. Since moral issues are real life or practical. Events, Wiebe Elias (1989) is of the opinion that children must be given the opportunity to consider genuine moral problems, moral dilemmas, and to experience real social and cognitive conflict. Most likely, the teachers' task is to stretch moral reasoning, aiding the child in perceiving issues, reasoning, and making moral decision. All of those may be applied in future of the child Endeavour.

Conclusion

The children ministry of the Baptist church is well-structured; equipped; and stands very effective. The Church works out the goal of socialization of societal member starting from infancy to old age. Church children ministry has a lot to contribute to child growth, well-being, socialization, family harmony, and moral instruction. Thus church children ministry has the capacity to influence every child so much that the local church, family and the society benefit from it. Priests have the onus of responsibility in choosing where their children are gloomed to have a balanced spiritual and moral development. If parents fail to lay a solid foundation for their children's moral, social and spiritual growth, someone will definitely do that outside the home. This can be dangerous as the personal foundation of the person matters in this. The public should seek partnership with the church in making the society a suitable place to stay as children are adequately equipped for a balanced social life. This study has supported the fact the church children ministry is a veritable means of reaching, nurturing and bringing up children to affect our society positively.

REFERENCE

- Adewale A. S. (1994). *The Interaction of Religious in Nigeria*. Osogbo: Sudan Communication Press.
- Arawore, E. (1983). *History of the Church in Urhoboland – A.D 1900-1983*. Ughelli: Akpovire Printing Press.
- Ayanrinola, C. (2007). Children and Worship in Life Education Division. *Manual for Training Children's Workers*. Ibadan: Baptist Press Ltd.
- Dorherty, S. (2003). *How to Evangelize Children*. Lisburn: Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.
- Harlow, H. F. and M. K. Harlow (1962). Social Deprivation in Monkeys in *Scientific American*. November: 137-146. Retrieved from <http://opentextbc.ca/introduction on 5/7/2019>
- Lateju, R. (2007) Leading a child to Christ to Christ and Helping the child Begin a Spiritual and Moral Journey (Discipleship) in Life Education Division. *Manual for Training Children's Workers*. Ibadan: Baptist Press Ltd.
- Lateju, R. (2007). Why Ministering to Children? In Family Life Education Division. *Manual for Training Children's Worker 1*, Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Limited
- Moure, A. (2017) How Is Family Important to the Development of Morality available @ <http://www.familyhealth.com> Retrieved on 15/8/2019.
- Okon, E.E (2018). Religion as Instrument of Socialization and Social Control in *European Scientific Journal*. November Edition vol.8 (26).
- Roy-Omoni, A. (2007). *History of Baptist Mission in Abraka 1*. Ughelli: Free Salvation Printing Press.
- Vogrin, G. (2014). Strengthening Family Relationships via Children Ministry in *Important Keys in Strengthening Harmony at Home*. Pennsylvania: Kimberly and Lisa press.
- Wiebe, E. (1989). Children Nurture: Parents, Christian Education, and Moral Growth. *Direction Journal* Vol.18:1 pp.67-74
- Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria (2018). *Girls' Auxiliary Guidebook* Ibadan: Baptist convention press ltd.

Interview

- Interview with Imene, Paul (42), Businessman & Deacon, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Abraka 2/7/2019
- Interview with Iwaka, Oke (32), Businessman, United Baptist Church, Abraka, 30/6/2019

Interview with Eghwudje Patience, (28) Parent and trader, Calvary Baptist Church, Abraka, 29/6/2019

Interview with Enakireri Christiana (40) Parent and Children Worker, Emmanuel Baptist Church, 29/6/2019

Interview with Enughwure Cordelia (53), Parent and Civil Servant, First Baptist Church, Ekrejeta-Abraka, 26/6/2019

Interview with Pst (Mrs) Oghenerhoro Patience, (38), Civil Servant & Children Counselor, Emmanuel Baptist Church Abraka, 24/6/2019

Interview with Eseoghene Patience (32), Civil Servant and children ministry worker, Omega Baptist Church, Abraka on 2016/2019

Interview with Ohwoyovwe Jane (52), a Parent and Civil Servant, Mt. Zion Baptist Church on 22/6/2019

Interview with Ogbefi, Loveth (48), a Parent and Farmer, First Baptist Church, Urhuoka-Abraka on 28/6/19

Interview with Emetua, Blessing (40), a Parent and Businessman, First Baptist Church, Urhuoka-Abraka, on 28/6/2019

Interview with Diegbe Efeturin (41), a Civil Servant and children ministry worker, Emmanuel BC, 20/6/19

Interview with Umukoro, Kelvin (49), a Parent and Civil Servant, First Baptist church, Ekrejeta-Abraka on 15/5/2019.

Interview with Revd Mrs. Clara I. Anokwuru (52), Parent and Children Ministry Pastor Calvary Baptist church, Abraka on 4/6/2019.

Interview with Pastor Gabriel Esiere (32), Children Pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Abraka on 2015/2019

Interview with Mrs. Blessing Ihwighwu (34), Parent and Trader, United Baptist Church. Abraka 28/5/19.

Interview with Pastor Omajemite Peter (43), Children Pastor, United Baptist Church, Abraka, 10/4/19

Interview with Oghenechiovwiere, Patience (64), Civil Servant and caregiver, First Baptist Church, Urhuoka-Abraka.