AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

PREVAILING VIEWS ABOUT GOD AMONG AFRICAN
CHILDREN AGED EIGHT TO ELEVEN IN SELECTED
CHURCHES IN IBADAN, OYO STATE OF NIGERIA

BY
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fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy
in Christian Education

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Student's Declaration

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I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Africa
International University or the Examiners

(Signed)_____

Foluke Bosede Ola

June, 2011

ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to find out the views of God that exist among African children and the prevalence of such views; and to examine how the demographic variables of gender, age and church denomination relate to their views of God.

The research was done in two phases. Respondents were chosen from three denominations that comprised of seven churches. One church was the site used for the first phase and the remaining six were sites for the second phase. The respondents for the first phase consisted of twenty-four children randomly selected from the first research site. They were interviewed to find out their views of God and data was analyzed qualitatively. A questionnaire was constructed from their views revealed from the first phase which was administered to 420 respondents from three denominations. Convenient sampling was done for the second phase of the research. The questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, evaluation edition 15.0.

It was revealed that children have views of God that indicate their knowledge, understanding and beliefs about the existence and nature of God, His functions, their relationship with Him. Their views depict knowledge of His abiding presence with them and the names by which they call Him. The study shows that the children's concepts of God especially the wrong and erroneous ones were influenced by the society, the teachings they receive, their needs and insecurities and their moral upbringing among many other things. There was no variance between gender and the children's image of God. However, significant differences were revealed in the views of God among children aged 8-9 and 10-11 and among children from the 3 different denominations.

To

My husband Mr. Oyewole Bature Ola

And our children

Dolapo, Tosin, Gbenga, Blessing and Mercy and Kunmi

And

All the children aged eight to eleven whom God loves and whose love He also desires

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2010), reports that there are about 2.2 billion children in the world. This figure accounts for one third of the world's population (Brewster 2005, 13). UNICEF states that 1.9 billion children live in developing countries in the continent of Africa and Asia (UNICEF, 2010). This reveals the significance of studies regarding African children as just under one third of the world's population are from the African and Asian continents. In cases such as Nigeria and Kenya, almost half of the total population, 43% and 45% respectively are younger than 15 (Population Reference Bureau 2010, Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2003, 1).

"Childhood means more than just the time between birth and attainment of adulthood. It refers to the state and condition of a child's life and to the quality of those years" (State of the World's Children 2004, 13). It is a very important time of life. It is the desire of most families to have and bring up children. However, children are at a period in life where they are most vulnerable and where serious learning takes place (Kraft 1996, 221). It is during childhood that the "seeds of faith in God" are planted in the lives of children (Dirks 2001, 84). Childhood is a time when children aged 8-11 develop their concept of God. This concept could be negative or positive. The children may view God as loving and good or wicked and punishing. The concept once developed cannot be erased. It can be suppressed; it can change but cannot be wiped out (Bellous, de Roos and Summey 2004, 203).

Boys and girls from birth to eleven years are referred to as children, youngsters, and kids. Generally children are grouped according to their developmental abilities and characteristics. These grouping are often known by specific names. There is the infants and toddlers group which is made up of youngsters from birth to the age of two or three years. The preschool group consists of children of four to five years while the group called primaries comprises of kids of six to seven years. The middle childhood group (middlers) includes children aged eight to nine years while the late childhood group (juniors) includes older kids of ten to eleven (Hall 1980, 48-76). Some churches include the pre-teen group, kids aged twelve years, in the Children's Ministries. This study focuses on two groups of children which are the middle and late childhood. It should also be noted that in this research, the word 'children' is not used in its generic sense as it means children ages eight to eleven years.

For children brought up in Christian homes the word 'God' is not new to them. This is because Christian parents in most cases are obedient to the Biblical commands in Deuteronomy 6:4-6, Proverbs 22:6 and Psalms 78 among others, where God charges parents to teach children to know, love, serve and worship Him. Children of Christian parents also see how their parents relate to God. When there is trouble their parents cry to God through prayer. When parents are happy, they thank God. Children of Christian parents attend Sunday school and children's worship services where they are told many stories about God and are also taught to obey God. Some are even threatened by parents and significant others that God will punish them. God is present in the everyday life of the 8 to 11 year olds. If this is the case then how do middle and late childhood children view or see Him?

The mental contemplation that children aged 8-11 have of God is different from that of adults. Before the twentieth century children were seen as "miniature

adults" who were to live their lives just like adults or were to be trained like animals (Goddard 1966, 174). However, with the advent of the developmental theories, things have changed. Lessons and curriculum have been developed in such a way that children's thinking and developmental stages are now taken into consideration. This is because psychologists realized that children were different from adults and should be treated as such. Now children are seen as people in their own right, who are different from one another with a potential for fulfilling their own calling in life (Goddard 1966, 174).

Children in the age group of 8-11, like all children, are gifts from God. It does not matter if they are biological or adopted they should not be considered objects to be controlled (Bunge 2004, 45). No child is a mistake because all life is planned by God (Deuteronomy 32:29). Children aged 8-11 are fearfully and wonderfully made; made in the image and likeness of God. "Happy, blessed and fortunate is the man whose quiver is full of them! They will not be put to shame when they speak with their adversaries (in gatherings) at the (cities) gates" (Psalm 127:5 AMP). It is therefore important that all children are treated with dignity and respect. It should be noted that children are able to form a concept of and understand the concept of who God is at their young age (Cully 1960, 111).

Problem Statement

Child evangelism and children's ministries have taken root within the African continent. Most denominations take the religious instruction of children as an important aspect of education in the church. It is common to see children attending Sunday school or children's worship service on a Sunday morning. The aims of these services are to help children become Christians and grow and stay in the Christian faith. It is also the desire of parents that their children grow in the "faith of their

fathers." With the introduction of the slogan "catch them young," children are taught about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the Bible and other religious concepts and doctrines right from very young ages.

Each child has developed a personal God in his or her mind. In order to know how a child is progressing spiritually and even emotionally the teacher or parent must have "some knowledge of the private God the child brings with him. No child arrives at the "house of God" without his pet God under his arm" (Rizzuto 1979, 8). It has therefore become important for the church and teachers of the children to understand and know how they perceive God. This was one issue that has motivated this study.

The images of God that 8 to 11 years olds form are vital to how they see themselves and the world around them. Children's God-images are an important factor in determining how they will grow spiritually. Today there seems to be many misconceptions about who God is and what He does. Faith built upon misconceptions cannot bring about lasting Christian growth. Research has shown that it is important that children's views of God develop and mature in a biblical way because if they do not, when they become teenagers they will have problems of faith and belief which may lead to them rejecting God (Haystead 1995, 120; Hanisch 2002, 17). Do African children have a complete correct or balanced biblical view of God? How prevalent are their views? This research was an inquiry into understanding the concept of God that exists among children aged 8-11and the prevalence of these concepts.

Purpose of Study

In order to show how important the views about God are to our Christian faith, Jeffery pointed out that "if our thinking about God is not correct then every other doctrine we apply our minds to will also be incorrect" (2002, 17). If the aim of the church is to help children to become mature Christians, then understanding their

perception of God is very important. This research was an inquiry into children's thinking about God. There have been studies on children's views of God in conjunction with their self-concepts, however, this study took a different approach. The purpose of this study was twofold: to find out the views of God that exist among African children and the prevalence of such views; and to examine how gender, age and Church denomination relate to their views of God.

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

Limited research has been done in Africa to see how African children view God. This study will therefore be useful to the academic community because it will add to the existing literature (Stonehouse and May 2010, Heller 1986, Coles 1990, Hanisch 2002, Hwang 2005, Bellous, de Roos and Summey 2004) on children's spirituality by bringing an African perspective on the issue. It will be important for Christian educators because the study will give them insights on how children perceive God, thus, assisting in planning and strategizing on how to develop the whole Christian education program for 8 to 11 year olds so that they will know and experience God.

African curriculum writers, planners and policy- makers of children's curriculum materials will also benefit from this study as it will inform them on the effects their curriculum has on the view children are developing of God. It can also serve as a guide in developing future curriculum materials with the aim of helping children develop an age-appropriate view of God.

The church in Africa, and particularly the churches used for this study, could apply the findings of this research to evaluate their children's ministry in terms of content, teaching methods and materials used to teach children about God. This study will be the basis of building a firm Christian foundation in children. The church in

Africa will also benefit by the outcome of this research because it will enable it to identify any misconceptions the children have in their view of God and then make efforts to correct these misconceptions.

Parents of children can identify and appraise their influence in the nurturing of the children's view of God with the aid of this study thereby helping the children in their faith. This research is relevant because it will help parents and educators carefully scrutinize what children actually do think about God and ways of preparing the children in developing a more mature understanding as they grow older.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to find out how children view God and the prevalence of such views as well as to examine how gender, age and denomination relate to their views of God. To pursue these purposes, the following research questions were posited:

RQ1. What are the different views African children have about God in a selected church in Ibadan?

RQ2. How prevalent are the African children's views about God among the denominations?

RQ3. How do certain demographic variables relate to African children's views of God?

Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this research the demographic variables were age, gender and church denomination. Three hypotheses were formulated. This was done after an extensive literature review, and based on the experience of the researcher in children's

ministries. These hypotheses are written in the null form and will be used to answer

research question 3.

RQ3. How do certain demographic variables relate to African children's views of

God?

H₀: 1 There is no significant relationship between the age of the children

and their views of God.

H₀: 2 There is no significant relationship between the gender of the children

participants and their views about God.

H₀: 3 There is no significant relationship between the church denomination

of the children and their views of God.

Research Assumptions

The first was that children have some perception of God which they should be

able to draw and describe. Therefore, what children think will be seen by what they

draw and how they explain their drawings. There are some views of God children

have that are more prevalent than others. Conventionally 8-11 year olds are in

Piaget's concrete operational stage of mental/cognitive development (Piaget 1972, 49-

91). However, given the accelerated pace at which children grow and develop

mentally, physically and even spiritually it is possible that older children may operate

at a higher mental level and that some can operate at the formal operational stage.

Piaget has stated that children who have "a good mental inheritance and an

environment that encourages creative experimentation may develop logical structures

at an earlier stage" (Pulaski 1980, 34). Despite the individual differences of children

"each one passes though identical periods of life although under very different

circumstances" (Beers 1986, 366). The last assumption was that children form views

as a result of the interaction of nurture, genetics and mental, emotional, social, spiritual, moral, environmental and physical experiences.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study was Nigerian children born between the years 1999 and 2003. Children older or younger than 8-11 years were excluded. It focused on children from the children's ministries of seven selected churches from 3 denominations in the urban area of Ibadan city of Oyo State in Nigeria. The churches were chosen along denominational lines. They were 4 Baptist churches, 1 Pentecostal church and 2 African Initiated churches. The findings of this research if used by denominations that are different from the selected ones should be done with caution.

Limitations of the Study

One constraint of this research was that by the time the researcher was ready to collect data all the children's sections had closed for the Christmas holidays and did not re-open for about three weeks. When the children's sections re-opened there were some Sundays on which data were scheduled to be collected but the management/ leadership of the main church would close the children's church and ask all the teachers and children to go to the main church and service. This happened in at least three churches (two denominations). It was also noticed that record keeping in the denominations was very poor so in most cases it was very hard to establish the actual population of children within the denominations. The number of available children within the denominations was a weakness of this research. In some churches the children were few and this limited sampling choices. Therefore, conventional sampling was applied. In some cases it was hard for middle childhood children to

understand or answer some questions. They had to have more attention and instructions had to be emphasized and re-emphasized.

Definition of Terms

Children: For the purpose of this research children are defined as a combination of children between middle childhood age (8-9) and late childhood age (10-11).

Children's Spirituality: This study applies the meaning of this term as being "the child's development of a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, within the context of a community of believers that fosters that relationship, as well as the child's understanding of –and response to – that relationship" (Allen 2008, 11).

View: is "a mental attitude, an opinion, idea, or belief concerning a particular subject or thing" (Brown 1993, 3578). In this study, view means a particular position or angle from which something is seen, or can be said to be a particular way of interpreting or thinking about something. Other words that are used interchangeably with view in this study are image, perception and concept.

Children's Ministry: The term will be used to mean the department within the church or Para church organization or group which organizes programs such as Sunday school, children's worship, discipleship, holiday Bible school, choir and any other programs created for children with the aim of helping them become Christians, worship, love and follow the Lord God through Jesus Christ.

Anthropomorphic: This term is used to refer to an "ascription of human form, attributes or personality to God" (Brown 1993, 87).

Symbol: In this study this word means a thing conventionally regarded as representing, typifying or recalling something else by possessing analogous qualities or by association or fact or thought (Brown 1993, 3183).

Prevailing: In the context of this study, this word is used to mean prevalent, generally accepted, common, most frequent, or the most popular.

Developmental Characteristics of Children: These are features or qualities that a child exhibits by which you can know that a child is growing and in a certain age group. "They are assumptions about the nature of human beings and, for Christians can be understood as descriptions of how God has designed people (in this case children) to develop" (Downs 1994, 73).

View of God: This phrase will be used to mean children's ideas and feelings "concerning the different potential behavioral characteristics of God" (de Roos, Iedema, and Miedema 2004, 519), which arise due to God's attributes, functions, nature, existence and His name.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Children's concepts of God along with other religious concepts have been the center of attention of religious educators for quite some time. Literature on the views African children have of God is limited, as scholars have tended to dwell on European and American children. The focus of this chapter is to survey the extant literature on the diverse views children may have of God.

African Views of God

Africans are very religious people. As Parrinder states, "most African people have clear beliefs in a Supreme God" (1968, 32). Before the coming of the missionaries and Christianity, African tribes viewed and worshiped God in their own way. Each African society has its own baskets of proverbs, stories and folk tales, special names, singing, dancing and other kinds of ceremonies which they use to describe and worship the Supreme Being. Parrinder explained that in West Africa the Mendes of Sierra Leone call God "*Ngewo*" meaning "creator God" however, Jusu who is an original Mende, contradicts this, saying the meaning of "*Ngewo*" is "great sky" (Jusu 2011). God is named *Olorun* in Yoruba which means Owner of the sky. The Kikuyu of Kenya and about twenty-five other East African tribes call God *Murungu*, "he lives on the four sacred mountains . . . is also all-pervading and invisible" (Parrinder 1968, 34-35). Parrinder further explains that a common name used for God in Zambia, Tanzania and Upper Congo is *Leza* stating that the "name

may come from a verb meaning to cherish as a mother does her child or a chief of his people" (Parrinder 1968, 35).

The different names that are given to God show that Africans' perception of God differs from community to community. Some communities see God as a mother taking care of them as children, while others see God as the maker of everything. Others see God as living in the sky, so far away that He cannot be reached. The only way for Him to hear and answer the prayers of the people is to be approached through the secondary gods, spirits, and magic and so on. This is why Africans have a strong belief in lesser or secondary gods, spirits, magic, witchcraft and ancestors (Parrinder 1968, 33-66, Mbiti 1969, 43-45). In a nutshell good and bad things are attributed to God. When good things happened they were considered as God's blessing and when bad things happened, it was considered to be a punishment from God meted out by the spirits.

With the advent of the missionaries, Africans were introduced to the Bible, which is God's revelation to us and this revolutionized their view of God. The growth of the African church during the twentieth century has been a great surprise to many, "with an estimated 4 million professing Christians in 1900 . . . to over 300 million adherents by the year 2000" (Shaw 2000, 37). Africans began to see God in a new way because the "new religion adopted the ancient African belief in a Supreme Being and enlarged it. However, Christianity discouraged belief in and worship of nature gods, lesser or secondary gods" (Parrinder 1968, 146). This therefore meant that African Christians were now developing a larger and different image of God. God was now conceptualized as One who can be approached, he was no longer far, remote or distant from mankind (Turaki 2006, 55). African Christians were taught that they can approach God and that the only go-between God and people was Jesus Christ. A

new image of God was formed as Africans all over the continent were taught from the

Bible in churches, in fellowships and schools. The image of God was developed as

African Christians were introduced to the doctrine of God.

Children's Views about God in Relation to Themes within the Doctrine of God

Biblically and theologically God is revealed in the Bible from an adult

perspective and not from a child's viewpoint. However, in line with God's command

(Deuteronomy 4:1-9), children are taught aspects of the doctrine of God in church

during Bible study, the worship service, Sunday school or holiday Bible school, at

home and in the school. It is therefore important to understand the children's views of

God in relation to the doctrine of God. This section reviews the doctrine of God in

connection to children's views about God. One doctrine of God has been defined as

follows:

> There is only one God and beside Him there is no other. He is the creator of
> heaven and earth and all therein. God is eternal. He has no beginning or end.
> He is all-knowing, all-wise and almighty. God is personal. He has will and
> purpose. He is the preserver of all his creation. God reveals Himself to us as
> Father, Son and Holy Spirit while continuing to be one God. To Him belong
> our highest love, reverence and obedience. (Statements of Faith and Practice
> NBC 1993, 3)

Descriptions of God are given in terms of His attributes, names, nature,

existence, functions and work which, according to Douglas and Merrill, are displayed

on every page in the Bible (1987, 393). People have used different ways and words to

illustrate who God is to them. They describe God according to how they have

experienced Him. Lewis has described God as,

> An invisible, personal living Spirit, distinguished from all other spirits by
> several kinds of attributes: meta-physically God is self-existent, eternal and
> unchanging; intellectually God is omniscient, faithful, and wise; ethically God
> is just, merciful and loving; emotionally God detests evil, is longsuffering, and
> is compassionate; existentially God is free, authentic and omnipotent;
> relationally God is transcendent in being, immanent with his people in
> redemptive activity.(1984, 451)

Children's Views on the Existence of God

From the very commencement of the Bible we have been introduced to God

who lives and exists (Genesis1:1). God calls Himself I AM. "There was never a time

when God did not exist" (Erickson 1998, 297). He was there at the beginning and He

is and will be there at the end, hence he has the name Alpha and Omega which means

the Beginning and the End (Revelation 1:8). The Christian perspective which is from

an adult world view teaches that God exists even though one cannot see Him. God has

no beginning and no end. He simply was, is and forever shall be. "God's total

essence, all of His spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still

shows Himself to us through visible created things" (Grudem 1994, 188). God shows

Himself to us in nature, in the world around us, through people, through our

conscience, in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. Humans, have no problem believing in

God because God has put an "awareness" that He exists within all people (Romans

1:20). That is why even in the remotest villages in Africa, Africans know and believe

in the existence of the Supreme Being whom they have given different names. They

see this Supreme Being as the One who made and makes all things and the one who

holds and sustains the universe (Ndjerareou 2006, 861).

From the studies of Rizzuto (1979) she realized that knowledge of the

existence of God is brought about in the lives of children by the way adults around

them react to and talk about Him. She says,

> Socialculturally the child hears people talk respectfully about God. There are
> special people - ministers, priests, rabbis - who represent him officially. They
> speak a solemn language   with special intonations of gravity, and address
> themselves to God. The child sees special buildings, pieces of art,
> celebrations-all of which has to do with the "big person" called God . . . Most
> importantly, God is referred to as real, existing, powerful, and in charge of the
> world. (Rizzuto1979, 194)

Rizzuto would later conclude that "all children in the Western world form a God representation, one that may later be used, neglected or actively repressed" (1979, 208).

Children's Views on the Nature of God

The teaching on the nature of God is that God's being is not divided and there is no disunity in Him. There is only one God who shows Himself to us in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three persons' distinct yet united are known as the Trinity (three-in-one) and appear in verses such as John 15:26; 17:22; Galatians: 4:6 (Grudem 2007, 226). This may be difficult to understand. It is a mystery, and in being a mystery, it does not need to be understood; it only needs to be believed. "What the Trinity reveals about God and about Christianity is that the Christian God is supremely relational. The very essence of God is of the mutual self-giving love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for each other" (Black, 2010). Do the children see the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Children may have a hard time comprehending this aspect of the doctrine of God. Hanisch asserted from his study that children aged 8-11 did not even mention anything about the Trinity in their concept of God (2002, 17). Other studies show that there was a kind of confusion between God and Jesus in the minds of children (Stonehouse and May 2010, 31; Haystead 1995, 102-103). Children especially middle age (8-9), were able to understand Jesus Christ as God but associated Him being the Son of God. Stonehouse and May (2010, 31) state that when as they listened to the children in their study grapple to understand His (Jesus') unity to God the Father they were reminded of the words of Jesus in John 14:6-11. This confusion could be accredited to their cognitive development or even to how the children are taught during Sunday school, children's worship or holiday Bible School. In Africa it is

possible that the focus of the denomination may determine how this aspect of God is viewed by children aged 8-11. Some denominations dwell more on the Trinity and the unity of God than others.

Children's Views of the Names of God

The Bible makes use of more than one hundred descriptive names for God, all of which are God's revelation of Himself (Elwell 1996, 229; Bavinck 1979, 84). The name by which God is called brings about a certain image within the mind of the person listening. God's names are anthropomorphic though "given by God Himself" (Berkhof 1981, 47). The divine names of God were one way in which God revealed Himself to humankind. This is explained by God himself in Exodus 6:3 "I appeared to Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself known to them" (NIV). House (1992, 51-52) lists some of the divine names of God and their meanings as follows:

Name	Meaning or Significance	Scripture Reference
Yahweh / Jehovah	The self-existent One	Exod. 3:14, 15 Jer. 31:31-34
Yahweh Yireh	Yahweh will provide	Gen. 22:8-14.
Yahweh Nissi	God is my banner.	Exod. 17:15
Yahweh Shalom	Yahweh is peace	Judg. 6:24
Yahweh Sabbaoth	Yahweh of hosts (armies).	1 Sam. 1:3; 17:45; Ps.24:10; 46:7, 11
Yahweh Maccaddeshem	Yahweh your sanctifier	Exod. 31:13
Yahweh Nakeh	Yahweh who smites	Ezek. 1: 7:9
Yahweh Rapha	Yahweh who heals.	Exod. 15:26
Yahweh Elohim	Yahweh, the Mighty One	Judg. 5:3; Isa 17:6
Adoni	Lord, Master	Exod. 4:10-12
Elohim	Mighty One	Gen. 1:1, 26-27, 3:5
El Elyon	Most High, Strongest Mighty One	Gen.14:18, Num 24:16
El Roi	God the Mighty One who sees	Gen.16:13
El Shaddai	Almighty God or All-sufficient God	Genesis 17:1-20

Figure 1. Names of God

Children hear different names of God in the church, at home, during payers and in songs. This makes it possible for them to know God by a particular name although, it is possible they may not know or understand its meaning. It was after being taught the names of God and their meaning that a group of children prayed using the divine names of God with meaning and understanding during a special prayer time for a couple going to a foreign country (Saint-John. 2007, 1).

Children's Views on the Attributes of God

God has certain features which are known as His attributes or qualities. Systematic theologians have divided the attributes of God into two categories. The incommunicable attributes are those attributes of God that are "less shared by us" and the communicable attributes are the characteristics of the nature of God that are "more shared with us" (Grudem 1999, 71). By the onset of ages 8-11 years children's views of God in terms of His attributes are established and increase as they develop cognitively (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff 1992, 58-59). Despite the divisions this researcher has decided to review a few attributes without the benefit of categories.

God is love

The Christian perspective which is from an adult world view is that God's love is unselfish, shown by the way He gives Himself to the world. It is active, which manifested in the giving of Jesus His Son for the forgiveness of sins, care for his people and chastisement when needed (Erickson 1998, 318-320; Doherty 1998, 57). Hanisch believes that the concept of a loving God can actually be disastrous to future faith and the spiritual development of children. This is especially a danger if God does not fulfill the wants and requests of the children, which can cause a crisis of trust, which in turn can lead them to rejecting God (2002, 16-17). If this is to be taken as

true, then care should be taken to ensure that their view of a loving God is balanced and accurate.

God is holy

The Christian concept of this attribute is that God is unique, totally separated from all creation, absolutely pure and untouched and unstained by worldly evil. Thoughts of the holiness of God in people should bring about a response of "awe, reverence and silence" (Erickson 1998, 311). Children may find it hard to understand this view of God because as it seems the issue of respect and reverence for the holiness of God is seen to be missing in this generation. Children should be taught to respect and reverence God. Godly play was developed in the 1980s as a model for children's ministry to help bring about knowledge of God's holiness and the response of reverence and awe to God. Children were encouraged to contemplate and be reflective in their worship services due to the presence of God. Children who attended these services understood that God is holy (May 2006, 56). It becomes important to understand how 8-11 year olds see God in terms of His holiness especially since models like *godly play* which are directed at making sure children understand and appreciate the holiness of God are not common in churches in Africa.

God's wrath

From the Christian adult viewpoint, God "intensely hates all sin" (Grudem 1994, 206). God loves the sinner but hates his sin. God is patient and it takes time for Him to get angry. However, when God does get angry His anger does not last forever (Deuteronomy 9:7-8; Lamentations 3:31-33). There is a connection between God's wrath and God's holiness, justice and patience or longsuffering (Grudem 1994, 206). However, children may not see this connection because it is directed at adults.

Children aged 8-11 years in Heller's study "described a larger than life deity who lashes out uncontrollably when angered (1986, 80). From this study it could be seen that 8-11 year olds thought God hated them when they sinned and was ready to beat them. Most likely the model for this kind of view was their parents and especially the action of their father when angered.

God is sovereign

Psalm 46:10; Psalm 115:3 and Ephesians 1:11 are a few Bible verses where this attribute can be seen. However, the sovereignty of God is reflected throughout the Bible. Doherty (1998, 58) teaches that the God's sovereignty is understood by children in the way God created the world and everything in it, the way God controls all things, He saves and converts all people. It is common for children in their middle childhood years to view God as creator, creating things by making or building them. But as they grow older this view of God as creator metamorphoses into seeing God as creating all things in the world from nothing (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff 1992, 60). This was highlighted in studies by Deconchy (1964, 1967) as cited by Hyde. He found that French Catholic middle childhood children's idea of God was of creator or in terms of "His greatness, goodness, justice and strength and beauty." Children may not understand the word as it is abstract and adult oriented but they understand the context of God's sovereignty. Stonehouse and May (2010, 37) indicated that children demonstrate their view of this attribute as they describe God as the King of kings, the ruler of the universe, the One who holds everyone and everything in His arms, dressed in splendor, the mighty one. This can be seen in the symbols of the throne and crown that they drew.

God is omnipresent

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" This is part of Psalm 139:7-10 (*NIV*) which highlights the omnipresence of God. In trying to bring this attribute to a child's level of understanding Doherty (1998, 62) explains omnipresence of God as, "God is everywhere present in a real and personal way. There is no place where He is not." Children acknowledge the presence of God in their daily life. To some, God's presence is comforting while to others it is fearful. It becomes important for us to understand how they view God in terms of nearness or distance. Children may think of God as near, protecting them, helping them not to be afraid of the dark or He can be far and distant and not interested in them. Research has shown that it is possible for children to see God in an intimate manner by having a strong personal relationship with Him which is reflected in their participation in church activities (Heller 1986, 96-97; Hyde 1990, 65).

God is all-powerful/omnipotent

There is nothing too hard or impossible for God to do (Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37). However, God does not use His power in a way that is contrary to His will or His nature (Grudem 2007, 217). That is why it is impossible for God to lie or to do what is evil. In the studies of Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff, the omnipotence of God was reflected in the children's drawings of superman to represent God (1992, 57). However, Heller (1986, 109-110) found that children aged 8-11 saw limitations in the power of God. They believed that God was not in full control and that was why people die or there were wars, natural disasters and so on. Heller also found that the children thought that God's power is manifested within and through them as a "thoroughly inner emotional experience." The children recited times when they felt the power of God working through them to help other children in trouble or distress.

Hyde cited a research by Swanison (1939) where children ages seven to fourteen were asked to write their views of God. The children of late childhood years wrote about how great, powerful and clever God is (1990, 70). However, one question to ask is how powerful do African children see God? Do they view God as being able to protect them in all situations and circumstances or do they consider God's power as limited?

Children's Views about God as Spirit

Theologically, from an adult perspective, this attribute of God is explained as, God is Spirit and exists as an invisible spiritual being made of matter who has no parts or dimensions and can never be seen by us (Grudem 1994, 187-188). Swanison's (1939) research found out that boys were happier thinking of God as a person who cannot be seen physically but could be seen in the way He helps, guides and rules over people, while the girls thought of God in association to relationships He has with people. Many of the respondents in Swanison's research described God as spirit, but struggled with the definition, as they could not define what they meant, although some spoke of a spirit clothed in a white robe (Hyde 1990, 70). This was also noted in the research of Vianello (1980) that some children did their best not to give anthropomorphic descriptions for God but then could not describe God as Spirit and therefore refused to provide any view they have of God (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff 1992, 58). This could be due to what Heller calls a certain kind of anxiety that existed within the children he studied when it came to talking about their views of God (Heller 1986, 116-119). From the onset of middle childhood years there is an increase understanding of God's spiritual existence. This was especially evident in late childhood were the children were not as anthropomorphic when describing God but affirmed the nearness and spirituality of God (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff

1992, 58). As children grew older they were more able to understand the concept of God being a Spirit in an abstract manner (Hyde 1990, 70).

Children's Views about God in Anthropomorphic Language

The use of anthropomorphic language to describe the actions and activities of God contributes to the formation of an imagination of how and what God looks like in the minds of Children. Children hear descriptive adjectives and anthropomorphic words used to describe God every day and it is from these words among many other things that they draw a mental picture of God. This mental picture of God has been seen to be important by childhood researchers because in their opinion it "is an approximation of their experience of God" (Hood 2004, 245). Studying the views of God of 3,658 children between the ages of seven to thirteen from both Christian and non-Christian backgrounds Hanisch found out that the older the children "the less often they choose an anthropomorphic representation of God." However, there was a distinctive increase in anthropomorphism among the nine-year-old boys which could be seen in how they drew God (2002, 11). The Bible reveals God to humankind in numerous anthropomorphic images.

Anthropomorphic actions attributed to God

Human actions such as knowing (Genesis 18:21), remembering (Genesis 8:1, Exodus 2:24), seeing (Genesis 1:10), hearing (Exodus 2:24), smelling (Genesis 8:21), tasting (Psalms 11:15), sitting (Psalms 9:7), rising (Psalms 68:1), walking (Leviticus 26:12), wiping away tears ((Isaiah 25:5) and standing (Psalm 10:1) are highlighted in the Bible as attributed to God (Grudem 2007, 158). When God is described as standing or sitting, straight away children imagine God with a body that has arms and legs with a head that has ears for hearing, eyes for seeing, a mouth and tongue for

tasting. Eight to eleven year olds have been noted in drawing God smiling as an indication that he is happy (Stonehouse and May 2010, 35). It should therefore be assumed if they drew God frowning, it would then be to show that He is not very happy about something.

Anthropomorphic emotions attributed to God

The Bible uses certain human emotions in its description of how God feels. Grudem identifies them as "joy (Isaiah 25:5) grief (Psalm 78:40, Isaiah 63:10), anger (Jeremiah 7:18-19), love (John 3:16), hatred (Deuteronomy 16:22), wrath (Psalm 2:5)." He further stresses that God can be pleased as seen in Colossians 3:20, full of pain as stated in Genesis 6:6, compassionate as highlighted in Jonah 4:2 and even jealous as seen in Exodus 20:5, Joel 2:18 and Nahum 1:2, (2007, 158). As children hear God being associated with these emotions they can connect and form a perception of God because they too can relate to and understand these emotions. The only thing is that they can actually form a wrong perception of God as they link how they feel with how God feels. A good example of this is jealousy as an emotion attributed to God. It is important to note that this is not a negative emotion like that exhibited by humans. Therefore, if children hear the word jealousy and associate it with how they sometimes feel when a friend has got something they want but cannot have, they would form a wrong view of God. Would the anthropomorphic descriptions African children give of God deviate from the norm because of their African perspective, age, gender or different denominations?

Anthropomorphic physique attributed to God

God does not have a physical body, as the Bible tells us that God is Spirit (John 4:24). Nevertheless, the Bible "uses various parts of the human body to describe

God's activities in a metaphorical way" (Grudem 2007, 158). Although these descriptions are used in a figurative manner, children are very concrete in their thinking and understand things in the way they hear them. This is reflected in studies (Heller, 1986, Coles 1990, Hanisch 2002, Stonehouse and May 2010) where children have been asked to draw God and they draw a person with a face, body, hands and legs. The Bible describes God as having a face or a countenance (Exodus 33:20, 23; Psalm 27:8; Isaiah 63:9; Revelations 22:4). Psalm 11:4 illustrates how God uses his eyes and eyelids to observe and look at people. Isaiah 59:1 depicts God as hearing with his ears and saving with his arm. Deuteronomy 8:3 and Job 11:5 give a picture of God having lips and a mouth and speaking. Isaiah 30:27 shows God as having lips of wrath, tongue which is a "consuming fire," breath like a "rushing torrent" and a neck. Psalm 8:3 and Isaiah 66:1 show a picture of God having fingers and feet respectively. Deuteronomy 33:10 portrays God as having a nose which he uses to smell the offerings of people and Genesis 6:6 describe God as having a heart with which he feels.

When Coles asked children to draw God, out of the 293 pictures Coles collected 244 viewed God as just a face and a neck. The children did not draw a full body of God as they did for Jesus Christ. He noticed reluctance in the children to draw beyond the "representation of God's face" (Coles 1990, 41). Could this be because the children were now realizing that God is holy and there is certain awe around Him? Or because they were seeing God less of a human and more in terms of His spiritual nature? Would African children draw or describe God in the same way or would there be differences? Would African children want to draw God?

Children's Views of God in Relation to other Common Themes

Children's Views about God as a Human Being

There are many male images of God in the Bible. Hanisch affirmed this from his research saying that, "most children who drew God, chose to draw Him as a man in an anthropomorphic fashion" (Hanisch 2002, 8). God has been called the "bridegroom (Isaiah 61:10), husband (Isaiah 54:5), father (Deuteronomy 32:6), judge and king (Isaiah 33:22), man of war (Exodus 15:3), builder and maker (Hebrew 11:10), shepherd (Psalm 23:1), physician (Exodus15:26)" (Grudem 1994, 158). Biblical descriptions as stated above can form an image in the mind of the hearer. The child who hears God addressed as a physician, due to their concrete cognitive nature, may think of their local doctor. If the doctor is nice then they may associate nice and good feelings with the thought of God as a doctor. However, if those thoughts of the doctor are of hatred, fear and dislike these thoughts may spill over to their image of God.

The Bible also describes God with female images, especially motherhood, which can be seen in Isaiah 42:14, 66:13, where God is seen as a mother who loves and takes care of her children (Freedman 2000, 511). Godin and Hallwz's (1964) research emphasized that the image children had of God resembled the parent that they like the best who in most cases their mother (Hyde 1990, 86). However, the description of God as a father is more common than God as a mother. Nevertheless, research has shown that children do acknowledge the motherly traits of God even if they do not see God as a woman (Heller 1986, 96). Nevertheless, in the study by Godin and Hallwz (1964) it was seen that the image of God resembled the parent that children like the best, who was usually their mothers (Hyde 1990, 86).

There are many places in the Bible where God is seen as a father who both loves and disciplines his children (Hebrews12:5-6). Sometimes the discipline and punishment of God is stressed so much that children do not see God disciplining in love but with vengeance and hatred. God has been depicted as being a friend of people. This can be seen in James 2:23 where it says, "Abraham believed God . . . and he was called God's friend" (NIV). This can bring about a conflicting view of God among children. One day children see Him as a friend and good, another day as hateful and wicked. In this case "this God concept is unpredictable and undependable" (Heller 1986, 88-90).

Children's Views about God in a Symbolic Manner

There are many things in creation that can be used as symbols in order to reveal to humankind something about God (Romans 1:18-21). Grudem quotes Herman Bavinck's list of descriptions and comparisons of God that are taken from creation:

> God is compared to a lion (Isa. 61:10), an eagle (Deut. 32:11), a lamb (Isa. 53:7), a hen (Matt. 23:37), the sun (Ps. 84:11), the morning star (Rev. 22:16), a light (Ps. 27:1), a torch (Rev. 21:23), a fire (Heb. 12:29), a fountain (Ps. 36:9), a rock (Deut. 32:4), a hiding place (Ps.119:114), a tower (Ps. 18:10), a moth (Ps. 39:11), a shadow (Ps. 91:1), a shield (Ps. 84:11), a temple (Rev. 21:22). (Grudem 2007, 158)

As children advance in age they tend to associate symbols, especially religious symbols with their God concept (Harms 1944, 114-119). It should be noted in the studies of Stonehouse and May (2010), Hanisch (2002) and Heller (1986) that some of the above descriptions were examples of symbols that children 9-11 used when describing their views of God. German religious educator Hermann Siegenthaler asked three hundred and fifty kids aged five to sixteen to draw their picture of God. Children aged 8-11 turned to reality to draw their pictures. They used objects and

religious symbols such as the eye of God or hands to describe their view of God (Hanisch 2002, 6). They drew or talked of eyes to show He sees all people and also depicted hands that bless, provide and protect. Hanisch also cites the work of a Swiss professor, Anton Bucher who conducted two studies with 8-11 year olds to learn about how they moved from anthropomorphic to symbolic representations in their view of God. From their drawings he found that, "as the children grew older they no longer depict God as a human being, but symbolically as nature, light, church, a triangle or as relationship between people" (Hanisch 2002, 6). He also noted that girls drew more symbols and used more symbolic representations to show their image of God than boys the same age (Hanisch 2002, 11).

There are certain symbols that are associated with Christianity, symbols such as the cross, the crown, the empty tomb, purple for royalty, light, and a throne. It therefore becomes important to identify what symbols African children have in relation to God and what they mean.

Children's Views of God as having Magical Qualities

In 1964 Roland Goldman published his doctoral dissertation titled *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* which had a great impact on the religious education of children. The findings of Goldman were that children see "God as some sort of superman with special magical qualities and with supernatural signs to symbolize that power" (Elias 1983, 48-53). Superman is a child's image of someone who is good and who has great powers and is more powerful than all people. With this in mind children ascribe superpowers to God. Hyde (1990, 25) explained that Goldman's research highlighted the importance of mental ability and age to the development of religious thinking. Goldman suggested that the Bible and religion in general should not be taught to children of late childhood years and below because

they were not mentally developed to think religiously (Lee 1988, 160-162). However, his results and findings encountered much criticism in the field of children's religious research. One major criticism against his research was that Goldman did not take the affective domain into consideration. Elias firmly stated that, "because a child cannot articulate an understanding of religious concepts is no reason for stating that religious symbols, words, gestures stories do not affect him at an emotional or affective level" (1983, 55). Theologically, the stand of Goldman can also be criticized because his position goes against the Word of God which commands the teaching of children from childhood (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalms 78: 1-7; 2 Timothy 3:14, 15).

<div align="center">Developmental Characteristics of Children</div>

This section describes children in Nigeria and their general developmental characteristics as they relate to their concepts of God. It then identifies factors that influence their views of God and attempts to highlight how misconceptions in their views of God arise.

Middle childhood, children aged eight to nine, and late childhood, children aged ten to eleven, in Nigeria, are usually in class' 4 to 6 in primary school and class 1 or 2 in junior secondary school. In most cases they can speak their local dialect fluently and if they are city children or go to school they can also speak English, although for some they may not be fluent. Children along with all toddlers, preschoolers and pre-teens/teenagers, are the future of any nation and of any church. Today's children in Africa, like children all over the world, when given the opportunity, can develop a deep love and trust for God and can also seek His guidance for decisions they make (Cunningham 1992,144-148).

Children in the churches have different backgrounds. They come from different tribes and reside in cities and villages. They may speak a different 'mother tongue,'

although, the English language in most cases is common to all that reside in the cities. They live in different places and have different socio-economic backgrounds. Nevertheless, they have certain things in common. Generally, children are grouped according to their developmental abilities and characteristics. These developmental characteristics are "descriptions of how God has designed people to develop" (Downs 1994, 73). Theorists such as Jean Piaget (1972), Erik Erickson (1963), Kohlberg (1966) and James Fowler (1981) gave descriptions of steps for children's development of the concept of God in their respective theories. This segment will examine how their theories account for the development of the children's image of God.

Physical Characteristics

Generally children are active, have great appetites, take pleasure in outdoor sport activity, enjoy team activities and work that calls for collaboration (Anthony 2001, 212). The physical growth of children aged eight to nine years is slow and steady unlike the fast rate of preschool years. However, as the kids move to the age of ten to eleven their growth starts to accelerate. This is because they are by that time nearing the stage of puberty which manifests in bodily changes. Middle childhood girls and boys have similar physical abilities. However, as they get older girls develop more weight and height than the boys but the boys become stronger and can endure more than the girls (Buzzelli 1992, 2; Anthony 2001, 213; Eberle 1986, 137). By the age of eleven, both the boys and girls have nearly all attained between eighty and ninety percent of the height they will be as adults (Buzzelli 1992, 2).

Healthy physical development and growth is a very important factor toward children's views of God. Children who love their physique and are not ashamed of their physical characteristics have positive self-esteem and a good concept of self.

Studies (Hwang 2005, Buri and Mueller 1987) have shown that a positive self-concept is needed in order to have a positive God concept. It has however been difficult to determine the view that physically challenged children have of God.

Moral Characteristics

Lawrence Kohlberg presented a moral dilemma to a number of individuals so as to understand the way they reasoned morally. His finding revealed that moral judgment is divided into three levels of two age- related stages each. Kohlberg's Cognitive Theory of Moral Development sheds light on the reasons why and motivations for moral decisions made within each stage (Kohlberg 1966, 1-30). The levels are preconventional, conventional and postconventional. Individuals within the stages in preconventional levels reason out moral issues with the aim of doing "what is best for me." People in the two stages of the conventional level are interested in doing "what is best for the group." Finally individuals with the two stages of Kohlberg's postconventional level reason out moral issues with the attitude of doing "what is best for mankind" (Yount 1996, 108-112).

Eight to eleven year olds fall within the preconventional and the conventional levels of Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory. Middle childhood children are in the second stage known as the native reward orientation stage of the preconventional level (Estep Jr. and Kuest 2001, 75-76). This is the stage where what is good and right is something that brings self-satisfaction and sometimes satisfies the needs of others (Kohlberg 1966, 1-30). Children do what is right to get rewards and if they do something for a person they expect that person to do something for them, that is only fair (Stonehouse 1998, 101-103). With the above in mind, it can be understood that their moral development contributes to their God concept. This is because they see God as reciprocal, that is, when they do good they expect God to bless them and when

they do bad they actually expect to be punished. Sin and wrongdoing bring about feelings of guilt and fear in their lives. Children are very conscious that the Lord punishes and blesses. They are in the habit of bargaining on moral issues, "Let's make a deal" or "If you are good to me I will be good to you" (Yount 1996, 110).

Late childhood children up to early pre-teen years are in the third level of Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development which is called the conventional level (Yount 1996, 110-111). They respond to the society's expectation to judge what is right and what is wrong. They become morally good because they want to obey the rules. They are now beginning to understand that rules need to be kept (Beechick 1981, 38-39). It is important to note that moral decisions made by the children are anchored on the "approval of others, family expectations, traditional values and rules of one's social group" (Yount 1996, 110-111). This is a time when children should know and understand that God has rules that are to be obeyed. Obeying these rules should not be out of fear but out of love for a loving God.

Faith Characteristics

In Harms' groundbreaking research, children of different ages were asked to think and draw their perception of God. It was found that children aged eight to eleven were in the realistic stage in faith development. God was no longer a fairy tale but now real. In their drawing, religious symbols were commonly used to depict their view of God (Harms 1944, 114-117). Years later James Fowler propounded a Faith Development Theory called the Stages of Faith (1981). This theory expounds on "how" faith develops in six stages leaning heavily on the works of Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg. His theory does not look at content but structure (Yount 1996, 122). Fowler states that everyone is born with the inherent ability to believe and have faith. At birth to three years toddlers have infancy and undifferentiated faith. The stages of faith are:

intuitive-projective faith (ages 3-7), mythic-literal (ages 7-11), synthetic- conventional (ages 12-18), individuate/ reflective (ages18-30), conjunctive faith (ages 30-40) and universalizing faith (ages 40 and above) (Fowler 1981, 119-213).

Fowler explains that middle and late childhood children are in the Mythic-Literal Stage of Faith (Fowler 1981, 119-213) where imagination decreases and reality increases. What this means is that in developing their concept of God the children sort out make–belief from reality and hold onto reality (Downs 1994, 115; Stonehouse 1998, 159). This is a stage where listening to Bible stories is a major factor in the development of faith and the development of their view of God. They love listening to and retelling stories. Listening to the whole biblical story is very important in the formation of the children's concept of God.

Lamport (1990) conducted a study to find the age at which children receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Two hundred and fifty seven Christian adults between the ages of 30-89 were asked at what age they think people become Christians. Their response was that 60% of all respondents said people become Christians between the ages of nine to twenty (Lamport 1990, 19-22). The childhood years are therefore important years for faith development. Affirming this, Anthony says that middle and late childhood children are at the stage where they realize their need for salvation and the care of God in their daily activities. They can tell their friends about Jesus and become more committed to things going on in the church (2001, 213). The children are coming into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ as God is becoming more and more real to them.

Cognitive Characteristics

The intellectual development in middle and late childhood also influences children's concept of God. Jean Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development (1952) has been used to help researchers understand children's views concerning God. Piaget propounded that as children grow they mature intellectually. This intellectual development is divided into four consecutive stages. The period of sensorimotor intelligence, which is from birth to two years, the period of preoperational intelligence (2-7 years), concrete operational stage (8-11years) and formal operational stages (ages 11 and above) (Piaget 1972, 49-91).

Eight to eleven year olds are in Piaget's concrete operational stage of cognitive development. This is a time in their life where "children can reason logically, can organize their thoughts into coherent total structures and arrange them into hierarchic or sequential relationship" (Pulaski 1980, 55). Piaget says all operations in this stage "must remain concrete because they cannot think on an abstract level" (Piaget 1972, 49-91). They must see physical things in order to understand them. Images and views are instruments of knowledge and therefore depend on cognitive functions (Pulaski 1980, 114). Concrete operational mental development helps children develop a whole new perspective of God. Gradually, their minds are able to accommodate new and different ways that other individuals see God. They can include different people's opinions into the ways they think about God. Children are also able to learn the same things of God and understand it from a new angle.

Middle kids have started to manipulate data mentally, think in a logical manner, understand symbols, concept of time, and can now place events in their sequential and chronological order (Freese 1986, 71; Stonehouse 1998, 80-81). Their

developing cognitive abilities go a long way in helping them to understand God in new ways. However they are very concrete in their thinking. To the middle childhood child, for God to be everywhere He must have wings to fly. As kids enter the late childhood years, their mental capability gets better and some late childhood children will enter the formal operational stage of cognitive development and will begin to think abstractly although in a limited manner (Freese 1986, 72). If this happens, they begin to think about and see God in a whole new abstract manner, forming mental abstract images of God in their mind. This is the reason why some children use symbolic language to describe an abstract concept of God, especially when it is impossible to think of any words that could explain it (Child 2004, 63-64).

Psychosocial Characteristics

Erik Erickson's theory of psychosocial development (1963) illustrates the eight critical periods in the life cycle of a man. Each stage of life has its problems and conflicts. It is important that the individual overcomes these problems or he/she will have problem all through life. These stages are basic trust versus basic mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation and ego integrity versus despair (Erikson 1963, 247-274).

Psychologists cite Erik Erickson's Psychosocial Theory of Personality Development to state how children develop a view of God by attachment, as they trust parents and significant others around them. Infants and toddlers, (birth to two years) are totally dependent on their parents, caregivers and significant elders in their lives. If they are loved, treated well, taken care of when wet or hungry they develop a sense of trust and contentment for the people taking care of them (Yount 1992, 49). These good feelings are then transferred to God. However, if they were not looked after in a

good manner then they develop a sense of mistrust and distrust people and transfer these same feelings to God.

Eight to eleven year olds are in the fourth stage, which is called the Industry versus Inferiority stage of Erik Erikson's Theory of Personal Development. Middle childhood children are ready to leave the play world and start real work in school and in the church. At this stage young middle children develop emotionally as they "learn to handle the utensils, the tools and the weapons used by the big people" (Erikson 1963, 247-274). Once they can use them, or have success at tasks they attempt, they then build up a sense of industry. Eight to nine year olds like to stay and play with children of the same sex. They are careful when choosing friends and are beginning to become less attached to family and more able to do things on their own or with friends and playmates (Anthony 2001, 212). This notwithstanding, Eberle affirms that the family is still very important in the life of the child and especially the father's influence (1986, 139). Children in middle childhood exhibit a wide range of emotions such as "fear, guilt, anger and so on" (Anthony 2001, 212). Their emotional output can affect their concept of God. A child who feels guilty or fearful may view God as either punishing or forgiving.

The coming of puberty brings with it different kinds of emotional responses in children aged 10-11 with some feeling irritated, others shy or ashamed. Emotional conflicts with parents also start at this age. Ten to eleven year olds are loyal to their friends and gangs, play along sex lines, love hero stories and are greatly influenced by their peers (Hall 1980, 76). Peer influence can be emotionally positive or negative. Erikson states that this is a delicate stage socially because late childhood kids face the danger of feeling inferior if they think that they are not as good as their peers (Erickson 1962, 247-274). Once children are able to build up a sense of industry, then

they will be emotionally stable. They will trust themselves and God as well. However, if they fail in learning how to deal with the issues in their lives they will feel inferior. A child who feels inferior may not be able to see God in terms of His attributes of goodness, loving, faithful and so on.

<div align="center">Factors that Influence Children's Views of God</div>

The way children see God is as a result of different experiences and situations they have experienced over time. The purpose of this section is to highlight some of the factors that influence children's views of God. These factors include the family, the church, electronic and print media, the environment, the social background of the children and the culture they live in.

The Family

A child's view of God does not just happen overnight but is as a result of a gradual process. Parents are very influential when it comes to how their children see God. Rizzuto affirms this as she writes, "It is out of the matrix of facts and fantasies, wishes, hope and fears in the exchange of those incredible beings called parents that the image of God is concocted" (1979, 7). Lawrence points out that since children do not have direct physical experiences of God in the same way they do with their parents, as they interact with their parents and the world, they form content for the word "God." They do this as they begin to connect reminiscences of people who have looked after them, especially either or both parents, with the concept of God (Lawrence 1997, 214).

The concept children have of God starts right from birth by the positive emotional attachment they have with their parents and significant others. These feelings are then transferred to God. Erikson sees mothers as very important in the

formation of trust in children. "Mothers create a sense of trust in their children by the kind of administration which in its quality combines sensitive care of the baby's individual needs and a firm sense of personal trustworthiness within the trusted framework of their culture's life style" (Erikson 1963, 247-274). De Roos, Iedema and Miedema conducted a study to find out if the mother's religious denomination and their personal concept of God affected their child-rearing practices which in turn may affect their children's concept of God. What they found was that mothers who had a loving idea of God, had children whose perception of God was positive. In addition their study brought out the fact that the way children were brought up also affected the way children viewed God (de Roos, Iedema and Miedema 2004, 529).

Fathers too are a very important factor on how their children see God. In the Bible, Jesus taught us to address God as "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9). Therefore, the first mental image of children is of God as a man and as a father and the major father example they have is their own father. What that means is that the image of 'God the Father' is influenced by the relationship a child has with his/her earthly father and the concept of God as the children's Heavenly Father can be negative if they had an abusive or absentee father (Choun and Lawson 1998, 282). This was acknowledged in the research done by Vianello and his colleagues in the 80s. They studied 437 children of ages six to fourteen to find out what influence their parents had on the way they thought about God. They found that the image both boys and girls had indicated that their perception of God was "more like a father than a mother." It was also noted in the same research that, "the God-father correlation is highest for nine- and ten year olds" (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff 1992, 61-62). However, this result was somewhat different from the result of a research by Deconchy (1964, 1967) as cited in Hyde who found out that boys in middle childhood did not see God as Father as much

as boys in late-childhood and teenage years (Hyde 1990, 77). What this means is that boys in the 80s associated the actions of their earthly fathers with those of God at an earlier age than boys in the 60s. Fathers were having an earlier influence on how their boys conceptualize God.

The context in which a child grows up goes a long way to influence the way he or she sees and believes in things. In the old African society, most village families used to live in family houses. The nuclear and extended family lived together. Thus, children lived with their parents and grandparents. In the evenings, they would all sit together and grandparents would tell stories, hence helping with the formation of the image their grandchildren had of God. In a study by Allen (2002), children repeated great and touching stories told to them by their grandparents of how the Lord helped and is helping them through life (Allen, and Oschwald 2008, 352).

Take the example of a 10-year old Ethiopian boy who had this to say of his grandfather, "My grandfather says, I love you. Keep your relationship right with God. Always pray before you go to bed and give thanks before you eat" (Essayas 2009). This Ethiopian grandfather contributed to help this late childhood child form an image of God as loving, trustworthy and One who answers prayers and should be obeyed.

The Church

A church that takes ministering to children as a command from God and therefore invests her resources in teaching children and training teachers on the doctrine of God has a great effect on how the children will view God. Hwang indicated in her study that children who were regular church members had a more positive view of God than those who only attended church sporadically. She stressed that the teaching children received on Sunday and the sermons they listened to influenced their Christian identity in relation to God and consequently their

perception of God (Hwang 2005, 299). If God is always presented as the One who punishes, who is stern, and who has many rules which His children must follow, then the perception children will develop will not be that of a loving God, who loves them and has a good plan for them. To show that the church is important in how children develop their views of God, MacLean (1930) as cited by Hyde was of the opinion that it was teaching and not age that was responsible for the development of children's ideas of God (Hyde 1990, 80).

As Hwang highlighted in her study, the classroom setting and the teacher's personality go a long way in helping a child to like the church and all that comes from the church. The teacher must be able to project God in a positive light to the children through teachings and actions (Hwang 2005, 299-300). Children who like the teacher tend to like, enjoy and learn the subject they are being taught. In cases where children have a bad relationship with their parents, it can be compensated with a good relationship with their Sunday school teachers and thus help to bring about a positive view of God in the eyes of the children (Bellous, de Roos and Summey 2004, 212). Their study shows that children's ministry teachers can also play a very vital role in redeeming the views of God that children who are from abusive families or problematic societies have.

The content of the curriculum used by the church to teach children is also very important in the formation of children's views of God. At ages 8-11, they need a balanced view of God which should be taught in a realistic and accurate manner. Harms stated that, "improper educational activity can destroy the healthy development of the child's religious experience . . ." (1944, 120). Different denominations use different curriculum for their children. The church curriculum should be based on African concepts with African illustrations. There should be some

elements of contextualization because, as Harms stated, middle and late childhood children are in the age group that "responds best to rationalistic enlightenment and conscious experience of the main content and form of religion" (1944, 121). It is very important that the curriculum used to teach these children highlights everyday experiences and uses illustrations which they can relate to in a realistic manner.

Electronic and Print Media

With the advent of media globalization, the world has become a global village. Middle and Late childhood children are known as Generation M or the Media Generation (Rideout, Roberts and Foehr, 2005, 38). Children, especially those in the cities and big towns have access to television and cable networks, and other kinds of media such as video, radio, compact discs, mobile phones, just to mention a few. They have video games and computers with internet access; even some children own mobile phones. Having the latest digital and electrical gadgets is fashionable. Television plays a major role in how children acquire their views, values, culture and style (Berns 2001, 368). There are many Christian cartoon programs, films, comics and books which go a long way in influencing children's views of God. Super Book is an example of a Christian cartoon program that influenced many children's views of God in the 1990s. Most cartoons do not give a face or body to depict God. In films He is usually represented with a voice and in comics or books the reader will read what God says from speech balloons originating from the sky. The cartoon film titled the Prince of Egypt (1998) and the popular film of the Ten Commandments (1956) are good examples of this. The deep, strong, firm voice used for God in these films leaves children to imagine what God looks like.

Many of the so called Christian materials on the internet have the tendency of being biblically unsound and can give children a wrong view of God. *Christian Kids*

Top 100 Web Sites- Researched and Rated by Kids, for Kids gave a list of certain graded sites that consist of "fun stuff for tween and teens 8 to 14." The grades were for parents to know what to expect from the sites before allowing their children to hook up to them (Christian Kids Best Resource n. d). This becomes so important since the internet is a jungle and not everything that has a Christian name is actually Christian.

Books are important because children love stories. Taking a cue from Fowler's Faith Development Theory, one way children increase in faith is through stories but not stories of gods but the Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Story books that capture the distinctiveness of the Christian faith, and teach about God are good at this stage. As they hear and read these stories they will be able to develop their own faith identity and their own views and concepts of God (Stonehouse 1998, 162-164). "Children are building their images of God day-by childhood-day. We should help them in this wherever we can, and books can be an exquisite avenue to God" (O'Sullivan 2006, 55).

Books can build wrong views of God among children. One book that has been causing concern among Christian groups in 2010 is a book titled "*Conversations with God for Teens*". Ishola warns that "the author purports to answer various questions asked by kids using the "voice of God". However, the "answers" that he gives are not Bible-based and go against the very infallible word of God" (Ishola 2010, 1). If this book is read by children it would give them a very wrong view of God. It has been seen that children are in the reading age, therefore a study such as this can actually help define topics on God that children can and should read. However this can only be done after finding out what their prevalent views of God are.

The Environment and Social Background

The environment where children belong goes a long way to affect their ideas of God. To explain this Hanisch stated that children "turn to reality and derive their ideas of God from the religion experienced in their environment" (2002, 6). Pnevmatikos (2002, 97) in his study asked children to draw the house where God lives and what he found out was that children built houses where God lived "based on their everyday experiences coming from their social and religious environment." Children usually cannot picture God outside what they see in their environment or immediate experience. The political and religious climate in many countries across Africa is one in which children experience war, tribal killings, election violence, religious riots, hunger and poverty. Children who live in safe environments where gangs and armed robbers are not a problem do not see God as 'protector' because safety issues have never been a problem. To a large extent, how children view God is also related to their psychological needs (Pnevmatikos 2002, 95).

Torstenson-Ed reported the findings of studies by Hartman in 1986 and 2003 on the effect of the environment on children's concept of God which stated that "a secularized society raises secular children" (2006, 36). Secular children will not be concerned about God nor the things of God. In this materialistic world children who are brought up without God will not see God as being important and keeping the world together.

The Culture

Culture is the way of life of a people. In Africa the culture of one tribe or village is different from the next. The culture and tribe to which a child lives within Africa will also have an effect on his or her view of God. How Africans saw God was greatly determined by the social set up of the tribe or village they lived. Taking into

consideration that the culture can influence children's view of God, then children in Africa should have a good knowledge about who God is because generally Africa is a spiritual continent and has a spiritual world view (Jusu 2009). In societies where the idea of kingship is strong and the king is remote from the people, their conception of the Supreme God will follow the same pattern (McVeigh 1974, 55). However, in tribes and communities where the culture of the people is still rooted in African traditional religion, this can cloud the view children have of God. In a particular state in Nigeria, it was reported that the king of the land asked all the traditionalists, witches and wizards to make sacrifices and to offer curses to ward of the attacks of armed robbers and kidnappers which had been disturbing the state. As a result of the fear of the curses in this African traditional society, all the robbers ran to the king to ask him to remove the curse on them (Adunnibabe 2010). The erosion of old age traditional values in the society of today is responsible insecurities and other problems in the society. If the studies of Hartman (1986) cited in Hyde (1980) and Rizzuto (1979) are to be taken into consideration then this kind of society will produce children who will not see that God is all-powerful because the culture is saying that God is powerless and witchcraft as well as African traditional religion with its false gods are stronger than the One true God.

<div align="center">Misconceptions of Children's Views of God</div>

McDowell (1952) as explained by Hyde researched to see if children really understood theological words and terminologies about the concept of God based on what they were being taught. He also wanted to see how anthropomorphic their perception of God was. His finding was that children had many misconceptions and erroneous ideas of God (Hyde 1990, 80). A child evangelist wrote, "What the children

are, how they pray, how they worship, how they live their life and how they handle

their problems all depend upon their concept or understanding of God" (Doherty

2000, vi). Therefore, any misconceptions in regards to their image of God can have

disastrous effects both now and even in the future.

Fahs (1930) as cited in Hyde (1990, 81) is of the opinion that children do not

need to perceive God in the same way adults do. This is because thinking of God like

adults could be disturbing and may bring problems to the emotional development of

their lives. It is wrong to give the children the impression that God is wicked or cruel,

spying on them, just waiting to punish them when they are naughty or when they

commit sin. If this happens, then children would have a wrong view of God and not

want him around. Just the thought that God is near could be distressing.

The environment in which the children grow up has a great effect on how they

see God. An environment that does not encourage the image of God to develop as the

they grow up can bring about misconception in their view of God. Hanisch (2002)

explains how children develop wrong concept about God due to their environment,

> In a non-religious environment young people stick to their childlike image of
> God which they develop at an early age. This image includes the expectation
> that God should take care of all the problems there are on earth. The fact that
> he does not according to this expectation shows that God is powerless or non-
> existence. The result is a negative attitude toward God and religion in the East
> German society. (Hanisch 2002, 11)

To reiterate this, the continent of Africa is a place where the prosperity gospel

thrives. Children who are brought up listening to the prosperity gospel will develop a

misconception of God, especially when situations do not go as expected. They may

see God as not being able to provide or act as the preacher has said. A statement like

"With God, no evil can happyen (sic) to you" (Adeleke 2006, 77) is wrong and can

give a very wrong impression to the children. To emphasize this point, common

children's songs that are not theologically sound with verses like, "me I no go suffer, I

no go beg for bread because God of miracles na my Papa oh, na my Papa oh," which

is translated "I will not suffer and I will have all I need because God of miracles is my

father," can cause misconceptions in the view children have of God.

Children's ministry teachers contribute in no small manner to children's

misconceptions of God. The use of abstract words such as omnipresent, omnipotent,

and omniscient when teaching child about God can give rise to faulty views of God

among them. This can take place especially when teachers do not explain these

abstract words on a level the children can understand. Intellectual overstimulation,

where children are taught more than they can understand or comprehend at a time

(Wakefield and Clark 1986, 358-359) can also cause misconception in their views of

God.

The usage of figurative speech can also aid in the development of mistaken

beliefs children have of God. One area where this can happen is when explaining the

Trinity to them. LeBar gives an example of explaining the Trinity in plain concrete

language. She says, "as there are three members of the same family, mother, father

and son, yet all are one family so there is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit yet one

God" (1952, 142). Explaining the Trinity like this is very common within

Christendom. Some teachers use an egg, triangle or an apple for their illustration. It is

very easy for children to form misconceptions from illustrations. When this happens

". . . what was intended to illustrate may bewilder instead" (LeBar 1952, 156).

Misunderstanding of the doctrine of God can arise within the hearts and minds

of children through the use of misleading visual or teaching aids (Wakefield and

Clark 1986, 359). This must be taken seriously, especially because of the new trend of

contextualization during teaching. Hanisch noted that 20% of the 3658 respondents of

his research aged nine to fourteen drew God with a halo, the idea of which they were

likely to have gotten from Christian art (2001, 14). The wrong use of symbols, objects and pictures can create misconceptions about God. Teachers and parents may want to "Press so hard to drive home a certain truth through using symbols that we can cause a child to confuse a symbol with a reality" (Gangel 1985, 187).

The lack of involvement of men in children's ministry is a problem that can bring about flawed views of God among children. As it is now, especially for the boys, the issue of God and religion in general is seen as a woman's affair (Mambo 2009). Therefore, God will be remote and not someone to get close to or whom they should be interested in since He is for the girls and women alone. Children who have wicked or absent fathers may see God as such.

Curriculum materials and books can cause children to have a faulty view about God. A popular children's devotional used by children far and wide in Nigeria, and especially in Ibadan, portrays God as someone who revenges and punishes people. "Tit for tat is a term meaning 'do me, I do you.' Today we read about the tit for tat of God" (Adeleke 2006, 157). In trying to contextualize our terms the author may do more harm than good because the term 'do me I do you' is a negative term which connotes revenge similar to the expression "an eye for an eye." What this means is God will revenge with evil when children commit sin. This is just one example of a few which when learnt by children will give them a misconception about God.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Due to the policy of 'catch them young for the Lord' adopted by most African churches, children as well infants and toddlers, preschoolers, pre-teens and teenagers are taught about God. How they perceive God is very important because this is the foundation of their faith and spiritual growth. The image African children have of God is therefore an important research topic. Studies have shown that God is

conceptualized by children according to His existence, nature, name, attributes, as a human and as a spirit, with anthropological language with symbols and magical qualities. This section has discussed African views of God, the doctrine of God and how it relates to the concept children have of God. It also reflected on developmental characteristics with respect to their view of God, pondered on factors that have majors influence on how children view God and identified how misconceptions can arise in the view African children have of God.

Views, ideas, opinions and images in childhood are very important because they give birth to what children will believe for the rest of their lives. It is vital that Christian educators find ways of knowing and understanding the personal God of children and then connecting Him to God as revealed in the Scriptures. If this is done educators can help children produce the transformation that is needed to help them (children) develop views of God that will lead to Christian maturity (Bellous, de Roos and Summey 2004, 216).

This study focused on children aged eight to eleven and their views of God. The limitation of literature pertaining to African children's views of God and the importance of such views highlights the necessity for this research. Additionally, it is hoped that aspects derived from this study will be of benefit to the children's ministries, parents and educational departments of the church because a greater understanding of how children view God will assist them in designing curriculums and preparing children's programs.

Design and Methodological Literature Review

This section is an attempt to look at the works of other researchers who have studied children's concepts of God throughout the years. Researchers studying children's views of God and of other religious concepts, have asked children to draw

their perceptions or concepts and explain their drawings by answering questions or by telling stories about what they have drawn. Drawings have been used by counselors to see what goes on in the minds of children. They have also been used by psychologists to see the cognitive development of children (Cherney, Seiwert, Dickey and Flichtbeil 2006, 127).

However, there have also been some educationists, researchers and Christians who dispute at the use of pictures to discover children's views of God. Theologically, Christians criticize the use of such research methods. This is because God specifically warned the Israelites that since they did not see any "form" representing Him when He spoke to them, they were not to make an idol, or images of any shape whether formed like a man or a woman to represent God (Deuteronomy 4:15-19, Exodus 20:1-4, Leviticus 26:1). One warning Slater (n. d., 6-7) gives is that asking children to draw God may give the false impression and encourage them to think that God can be drawn. However, the justification of using drawings to describe God begins from acknowledging certain assumptions. First is that the understanding of God is something everyone experiences in their own unique way. This is a supernatural process, thus each individual expression of God would be subjective. These experiences are observable and thus can be expressed verbally and with images (Cole 2011, 6). A researcher needs to observe the cognitive state of children as far as their concept of God is concerned. To do this in a manner that is as objective as possible some Christian religious researchers have used drawings to peep into the minds of children to see how they understand God. Hanisch (2002, 3- 4) explains that his reasons for drawings as a collection method, he said, "When we ask young people today to draw their images of God the intention is not to create devotional images.

The only purpose of the assignment to draw pictures of God is to find out what ideas of God children and young people have."

One of the first studies to use drawings of pictures as a way of collecting data was done by Harms in 1944 titled *The Development of Religious Experiences in Children*. Four thousand children with an age range of three to eighteen were asked to imagine what God looked like, and then draw on a paper what image came to their mind. When the kids had finished drawing, they were told to write on the back what the pictures represented or to give some additional information (Harms 1944, 114). This style of research was as a response to earlier work by C. G. Jung who found that "the most important part of religious experiences cannot at all be transmitted by a verbal language but can be expressed pictorially and symbolically" (Harms 1944, 112). Harms explained that in "order to investigate the psychological world of the child experimentally and to ensure really enlightening results, it is imperative that we invent nonverbal methods which actually correspond to the status of the child's mentality" (Harms 1944, 113). In the opinion of Cherney, Seiwert, Dickey and Flichtbeil (2006, 128), children are concrete in their thinking and cannot express all things verbally. Pictures can therefore stand in for the real thing aiding children to explain things that otherwise they cannot put in words. Stonehouse and May (2010, 2-3), stated that their rationale for using drawings was that it enhanced the thinking processes and helped the children to articulate their perception. Through pictures one can take a look into the minds of children and get an understanding of their thinking.

This stand seemed to be refuted by Pitts (1976) as cited in Hyde (1990, 75) who after conducting a research where children were asked to draw, realized that children may have ideas and views which they could not reproduce in a pictorial form. This is because asking children to draw means that one is standing on the assumption that

children can think visually in an anthropomorphic manner (Hyde 1990, 75). This could be a limitation to the use of this method. One way to curb this is to ask the children to verbally explain what they attempt to draw.

The second phase of this research is quantitative in nature. Quantitative methods such as descriptive opinion surveys (questionnaires) have also been used in research to find out people's perception or concept of God. Likert-type items built from common themes have been used to measure the perception of God by researchers (Hoffman, Grimes and Acoba 2005, 10). "A Likert scale is a measurement that asks individuals to check the extent of their agreement or disagreement with various statements about a topic" (Gall, Gall and Borg 1999, 280). This scale is significant because it helps the researcher look at the respondents' view on a certain thing under study. Generally, the scales are designed in such a way that they have a statement to which the respondent would answer one of the five following responses "strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree" (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996, 273). "Through the use of questions or by getting people's expressed reaction to statements, a sample of their opinions is obtained. From this statement of opinion one may infer–what they really believe" (Best and Kahn 2003, 317). Therefore, to know people's view of a concept researchers have asked "people directly how they feel about a subject" They do this by using a questionnaire that has open or closed ended questions, or by writing a list of statements and asking the respondents to agree or disagree with them (Best and Kahn 2003, 317). Using questionnaires with children can have its challenges. One of which is that children may answer questions they may not actually understand the meaning although they get the answer correct. However, the researcher must make sure they are as simple as possible and very easy to understand.

McDowell (1952) cited in Hyde developed a test of statements to investigate the understanding of theological terminology concerning God among children and adolescents. His major difficulty was trying to determine which of the immature statements of the children were true and which ones were not (Hyde 1990, 79). Bowden's (1958) as mentioned in Hyde developed a questionnaire measuring the anthropomorphic thinking of children. However, it was deemed to have validity problems by the theological and philosophical assessors because of items they believed were difficult for children to understand. The items consisted of statements such as "God created man in his own image, so he must be like us to look at" or God is more like a spirit than anything else we can think of," and "people who think clearly conclude that God has no form (Hyde 1990, 77). Other researchers who have used written questionnaires with open and closed ended questions to discover what children think about God are MacLean (1930), Hyde (1959, 1965), Stevens (1975), Bradshaw (1949), among many others (Hyde 1990, 64-82).

The Chi Square (χ^2) is a statistical technique which is commonly used by researchers to find out if there is a non-causative relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Chi Square is used to find out if two frequency distributions or sets of categorical data are different from each other (Gall, Gall and Borg 1999, 180). With the use of the Chi Square, the researcher can either accept or reject the null hypothesis. One advantage of using the Chi Square as a technique for data analysis is that its results can be generalized to a population which has similar characteristics with the sample (Gall, Gall and Borg 1999, 166).

Certain conditions must be met for a researcher to be able to use the Chi Square. For instance primary data must be in discrete categories and frequency counts

and variables must be independent of each other (Gall, Gall and Borg 1999, 180).

When the cells in the table are 3x2 or more, then the formula for the Chi Square is

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

f_o is the observed frequency in a particular cell. f_e is the expected frequency in a particular cell. To find the expected frequency for each cell the following formula (Bernard 1995, 436) is to be applied:

$$f_e \quad = \quad \frac{(f_e \text{ column}) (f_e \text{ row})}{\text{Grand total}}$$

However, when the table is 2^{x2} with four cells, the formula for calculating the Chi Square (Bernard 1995, 446) is

$$\chi^2 = \frac{N (1ad-bc1-N/2)^2}{(a+b) (c+d) + (a+c) + (b+d)}$$

N is the sum of all the cells which is actually the sample size, while a, b, c, and d are the individual number of cells. For the null hypothesis to be rejected, then the computed value of χ^2 at a significant level of .05 must be higher than the critical Chi-Square value (Best and Kahn 2003, 420-422). The level of significance is low so that there is less chance of rejecting a hypothesis that is true and committing a type one error. There are "regular Chi-Square probability tables" for checking the "summed values of Chi-square and the degrees of freedom" (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996, 156).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives a detailed description of the methods and procedures that were used for this research. The purpose of this study is to understand the views of God that exist among African children. It also seeks to find out how prevalent these views are and to examine how gender, age and church denomination relate to the views children have of God.

Design and Research Strategy

The study was conducted using the method known as Exploratory Sequential Design. It is a mixed method approach where research data was collected sequentially in two phases. In Exploratory Sequential Design the procedure was to first gather qualitative data to explore a phenomenon. The qualitative data was then used to develop the instrument used to collect quantitative data (Creswell 2002, 567). The reason for using exploratory design was that this method enabled the researcher to get respondents' descriptions of their view of God first-hand and then test the prevalence of these ideas and find out if there is any relationship between the respondent's age, gender, denomination, and their concepts of God. "The two data method collection procedures were independent of each other and are typically presented in phases" (Creswell 2002, 567).

The first phase was to collect descriptive qualitative data which was used to answer the first research question. Themes prevalent in children's views of God were identified and generated from the descriptive qualitative data. The second phase of the

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study used the views of God which emerged from the qualitative data to formulate an

instrument in the form of a questionnaire which was then used to collect quantitative

data. The analysis of the second phase data collection of this study was used to

provide answers for the second and third research questions.

Entry and Ethical Considerations

For the first part of this research, the location of the site was Oritamefa Baptist

church. This is the Mother Church of the Church where the researcher worships in

Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria. The researcher is familiar with the children and teachers

of this church. This made it easier to collect qualitative data. The researcher

personally visited the senior pastor, explained what the study was about and presented

a cover letter from office of the Deputy Vice of Chancellor Academic Affairs

(DVCAA) from Africa International University (AIU) to conduct this research with

children aged eight to eleven from the church (Appendix 4). The researcher presented

the same letter explaining the aim of the research at the other six research sites which

were different from the first site.

All respondents in this study were given full respect by the researcher when

collecting data for the different phases of this study. This was done by informing the

respondents that their participation was voluntary and by asking them if they wanted

to participate. When they showed their willingness to participate respondents were

informed that if they did not want to answer a question they were not forced to do so.

To guard the identity of the respondents in the first phase of this research, all were

given pseudonyms while in the second part the respondents were not required to write

their names on the questionnaire. The pictures were also given codes and were

classified in age groups of eight to nine and ten to eleven.

Description of the Population

The population for the first phase of the research comprised of children aged eight to eleven years, who regularly attend the worship service of the children's Church of Oritamefa Baptist Church as indicated by the records. Many come to church with their parents while some come on their own because their parents are not members of the church. The records showed that the total numbers of 8-11 year olds that worshipped at least three times a month were on an average of one hundred and twenty one (Ayanrinola and Daramola 2010). Therefore, the population for this phase of the research was one hundred and twenty one respondents. The reason for choosing this church was that it is a big church which has a large population of children.

The population for the second phase of the research consisted of all children who worshipped in the research sites. The research sites were Oke-Ado, Iwo Road and Bodija-Ashi Baptist churches, Glory Tabernacle Ministers and Christ Apostolic Oke Agbara and Holiness churches. All these churches are situated in the urban area of Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria. It was not possible for this researcher to gain access to the Redeemed Churches as proposed so with permission of the supervisor the church denomination was changed to that of Glory Tabernacle Ministries also situated in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria. The denominations were purposefully chosen because they produce their indigenous curriculum material to teach their children and all their churches are using them. This was important for this research because the children being studied are African children taught by African teachers with an African made curriculum.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The population for the qualitative phase of the research consisted of children aged eight to eleven from Oritamefa Baptist church. Random sampling was used to

select the sample for this group. Random sampling is a situation where "individuals are chosen in such a way that each has an equal and independent chance of being selected" (Best and Kahn 2003, 13). The target number of children for this sample was twenty four (24) from the population of one hundred and twenty-one. The breakdown of the sample was two groups of twelve middle and twelve late childhood respondents divided equally along age and gender lines. The one hundred and twenty-one children were grouped using age and gender. Using the list given to the researcher by the children's ministry director, the names of all girls of eight years were put in one group, and boys of eight years into another group. The same process was applied for the other children aged (9 years, 10 years, and 11 years). When this was completed there were eight (8) groups. The names of the children in each stratum was written on a piece of paper and put into a basket. There were eight baskets and the researcher pulled three pieces of paper from each basket to form a sample of size of twenty-four (24) respondents. The names of children chosen were not returned to the basket after each draw.

The demographic distribution of the respondents interviewed is as recorded in Table 1. The respondents were given pseudonyms due to ethical considerations. The respondents were divided equally along gender and age. Each respondent had his or her individual name. These names started with the initials BY for boys and GL for girls. Both the male and female respondents were then represented by numbers 1 to 12. BY1, BY2 and BY3 are the pseudonyms for boys aged 8 years while GL1, GL2 and GL3 represent the pseudonyms for female respondents of 8 years. BY4, BY5, BY6 and GL4, GL5 and GL6 were names given to male and female respondents who were nine years respectively. Boys and girls of ten and eleven years were given BY7

to BY12 and GL7 to GL12 respectively. The pictures were also coded using small

letters of the alphabet (Appendix 2).

Table 1: Pseudonyms with gender and age of respondents

Pseudonyms for Boys	Age	Pseudonyms for Girls	Age
BY1	8	GL1	8
BY2	8	GL2	8
BY3	8	GL3	8
BY4	9	GL4	9
BY5	9	GL5	9
BY6	9	GL6	9
BY7	10	GL7	10
BY8	10	GL8	10
BY9	10	GL9	10
BY10	11	GL10	11
BY11	11	GL11	11
BY12	11	GL12	11

Convenient sampling of the children was employed for the second phases of

this study. All the children who were in the church on the day of data collection were

given questionnaires. This was because one aim of the research is to find prevailing

views of children therefore, questionnaires needed to be given to as many respondents

as possible. Questionnaires given to and returned by children who were not members

of the sampled churches were discarded. Appendix 6 consists of a table summarizing

the sample of all seven sites.

Data Collection Instrument Design

The purpose of this research was to find out the views African children have

of God and how prevalent these views of God are. To realize this purpose, three

Research Questions were posited. Appendixes 1 and 4 contain items that were

designed to help collect information that answered the RQs.

RQ 1: What are the different views African children have about God in a selected church in Ibadan? Items 1 to 15 in Appendix 1 were used to collect qualitative data that provided the information required to answer this RQ. The items required the respondents to draw a picture of God and themselves, to explain and tell stories about their pictures and to answer questions in the interview guide.

RQ 2: How prevalent are the African children's views about God among the denominations?

Parts 2 and 3 of Appendix 5 were designed to collect information relevant to RQ 2. Part 2 consisting of 8 survey type questions with (yes or no) response categories collected views about God and Part 3 is a Likert Scale consisting of three response categories (agree, not sure and disagree) which collected information about the perceptions children have about God.

RQ3: How do certain demographic variables relate to African children's views of God?   Three hypotheses were formulated to aid the answering of RQ3. Three demographic variables were investigated in terms of how they might be related to the views of God; these were age, gender and denomination. Part 1 of the questionnaire in Appendix 5 collected information to this effect. In light of these demographic variables, three research hypotheses, written in the null form were generated. Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the age of the children and their views of God.

 Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the gender of the children participants and their views about God.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the church denominations of the children and their views of God.

Thus, the independent variables in this research are gender, age and Church denomination while the dependent variables are the responses given by the children as shown in items 1 – 37 in Part 3 of the questionnaire items in Appendix 5. For each of the hypotheses, items 1-37 in Part 3 were investigated to see how the responses to items in Part 3 vary with items in Part 1.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the age of the children and their views of God. Item 2 from Part 1 and items 1-37 in Part 3 as shown in Appendix 5 were used to collect information for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the gender of the children participants and their views about God. Item 1 of Part 1 of the questionnaire was used to collect information on the age of the respondents while items 1-37 of Part 3 as seen in Appendix 5 were used to collect information on respondent's views of God. Therefore, items in Part 1 and 3 were used to test this hypothesis. Item 3 Part 1 and items 1-37 in Part 3 were instrumental for collecting data to answer Hypothesis 3. Item 3, Part 1 collected data about the church denomination of the respondents while items 1-37 in Part 3 were used to collect information on the respondents views of God.

For items 1-37 in Part 3 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose any one of the three options to the statements that show their views of God. These options were 'agree', 'maybe' and 'disagree.' The responses were allocated a weight of 3 for 'agree', 2 for 'maybe' and 1 for 'disagree'. The values were used by the researcher to rank the answers of the respondents during analysis. The instrument comprised of closed-ended questions because they limited the responses the respondents gave, thus limiting answers to views already found.

Data Collection Procedures

During the collection of data the child becomes the teacher, the interview is the lesson and the researcher the student. It is the job of the researcher to listen, learn, look at the pictures and make sense of all that has been seen and heard (Coles 1990, 27). For the first part of this study the respondents were given a plain sheet of paper, a pencil and colouring pencils. They were asked to draw a picture of God on the plain sheet of paper provided, after which they were asked to explain and tell stories about their pictures using the interview guide (see Appendix 1).

This researcher used a tape recorder for all the interviews. The advantage of using a tape recorder is that it "provides a detailed record of the interview" (Creswell 2002, 211-212). The use of tape recorder guarded against the researcher forgetting any statement or answer given by the respondents. All personal details and codes for respondents for this phase of data collection were recorded in Table 4 of Appendix 2, while themes and sub themes derived from interviews were recorded in Appendix 3.

For the second phase of this study the researcher used research assistants to collect data. Data was collected simultaneously in two different churches each Sunday for three weeks when most of the children in the target group were available. The researcher had a first meeting with the person in charge of the children's ministries of each of the six research sites. After that meeting then had a meeting with the Sunday school teachers who aided in administering the questionnaires. In all meetings the researcher explained what the assistants were to do, how they were to administer the questionnaire, and any other issue that could arise during the administration of the questionnaire. The researcher also explained that the respondents needed at least 40 minutes to answer the questions.

Data Analysis Procedures

The aim of this study is to identify the views of God that exist among African children and the prevalence of such views. It also seeks to examine how gender, age and denomination relate to the views children have of God. Research data for this study were collected sequentially in two phases, through interviews and with questionnaires. Data collected were also analyzed in two phases. The aim of the data analysis and interpretation was to answer the three research questions presented in this research.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What are the different views African children have about God in a selected church in Ibadan?

The first phase of this research was designed to answer RQ1. A structured interview was used to collect information related to this RQ. The interview was recorded on tape which was later transcribed into English. For each interview, the researcher read the transcribed data over and over again to get a "feel of the data". Thereafter, categories of identical responses were identified and coded accordingly. The codes assigned to the categories were recorded in a code book (Appendix 2) for consistence. By the 24th interview, no more new response categories emerged and the interview process stopped. The categories that emerged were again coded and similar categories were put into themes. These themes described the African children's views about God.

Research Question 2

RQ2: How prevalent are the African children's views about God among the denominations?

The prevalence of the themes collected in the analysis of RQ 1 were examined using RQ 2. The themes were presented to the respondents (420) in a survey type questionnaire. The data that emerged were processed using the SPSS. Simple frequency counts of those who subscribed to each theme as a descriptor of God was taken.

Research Question 3

RQ3. How do certain demographic variables relate to African children' views of God?

This RQ solicits information about the effects some demographic factors might have on the views children have about God. Three hypotheses related to gender, age and Church denomination were cast.

Data collected in respect of each of the hypotheses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The Chi-Square test of independence was used because data was collected on an ordinal scale. The theoretical framework of the Chi-square test of independence allows the researcher to compare observed frequencies of the variables with their expected variables. It is the difference between these two that may determine dependence or independence of the variables.

The data obtained were fed into the Package and the Chi-Square values computed for each hypothesis. The researcher computed the Pearson Chi Square Test with 2 degrees of freedom for H_o1 and H_o2 while H_o3 was calculated at 4 degrees of freedom as computed by the SPSS. The level of significance for this research is 0.05. This means that the researcher accepts a 5% risk of making a type 1 error. For the three hypotheses, a decision was made to either reject or fail to reject the null hypotheses. For all the hypothesis, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis when χ^2

≥ critical value for the tabulated Chi-square at the given degrees of freedom and level of confidence.

Validation of Instrument

Rationale and cautious judgment were used to develop each question included in the interview protocol and the final prototype instrument. A panel comprising of four jurors was given the two instruments to test their validity. One juror was a practicing children minister and the other an experienced teacher currently working with children. The other two jurors were experts in the field of Christian education and lecturers in the Christian Education department of Africa International University. The jurors scrutinized the items in both instruments for the two phases of data collection and gave their suggestions on the validity of each in terms of consistency, difficulty level, and appropriateness to research goals. They were asked to look for items they felt were difficult for respondents to understand or were not in line with the research objectives. After the exercise some items in the quantitative instrument were rephrased because they were considered too long, repetitive questions were ignored completely and not included in the final instruments.

Pilot Study

For an instrument to be reliable it must be dependable, accurate, stable, consistent and predictable. The reliability of an instrument tests its internal consistency. The reliability tests the repeatability of the instrument. If it is repeated on another sample it is reliable if the scores are similar from two different tests. Testing and re-testing the instrument is the best way of checking the reliability of an instrument (Creswell 2002, 181-183). Two pilot studies were carried out at different times for this research. The first pre-test was conducted on a group of eight children,

who were regular church members. This was to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the semi-structured interview guide questions for the first phase of this research before it was actually used on the selected sample. This helped the researcher find out that the interview for children who were 8 years took longer than the rest. Also in the course of the interviews it was seen that the children had difficulty in answering item 11 of the structured interview. The wordings were changed and the children were then able to give their answers without further difficulty. The second pilot test was carried out on the designed questionnaire using children from a Pentecostal church different from the selected churches for this research. Fifteen children were given the questionnaire and the instructions and questions were read out to them especially for the middle childhood children. They were then asked to answer them. An allocated time of 30 minutes was given to the respondents to answer the questions. When the time was up the questionnaires were collected. Not all the respondents in the middle aged group answered the questions within the allotted time. They used an extra 10 minutes. This helped the researcher know that the allotted time given for collecting the data on the sites should be up to 40 minutes. Respondents were asked to point out any question they did not understand or could not answer. The respondents stated that they were a little confused with items 35 and 36. These two questions were re-written and a drawing was used by the side to give a pictorial understanding of the meaning of the question. The researcher singled out these two items and asked as many children she came in contact with to answer the questions and to explain why they answered it that way and when satisfied that the questions could be understood by the children they were included in the questionnaire. For the quantitative instrument the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha reliability test was performed on the research data using the SPSS of the scaled items 1-37 in Part 3 of

the questionnaire. The Alpha value for all the items was more than 0.07. Kerlinger

(1973, 662), states that a value of 0.7 is considered to be the cut off for acceptance

and unacceptable reliability.

Questionnaire Returns

A questionnaire with forty-four items was developed to represent the views of

God that surfaced in the first part of this study. The researcher and research assistants

were responsible for administering the questionnaires. A total of 431 questionnaires

were administered in three denominations in Ibadan area of Oyo State. The

denominations comprised of three Baptist churches, two Christ Apostolic churches

and one Pentecostal church. However, only 420 (97.45%) questionnaires were

ascertained to be usable for analysis, as 11 (2.55%) were either incomplete or filled by

children not within the stipulated sample population. The researcher was able to

identify children within the target sample by the name of church or the age of the

respondents. All children in attendance were sampled. Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the

demographic distribution of the respondents in respect of gender, age and church

denomination for the second phase of this research.

Table 2: Gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	GIRL	230	54.8	54.8	54.8
	BOY	190	45.2	45.2	100.0
	Total	420	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 is a report on the profile of the respondents in terms of their gender. It

explains that 230 (54.8%) of the respondents are girls and (190) 45.2% respondents

are boys. This shows that the girls are in the majority.

Table 3: Age grouping of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 8-9 YEARS	208	49.5	49.5	49.5
10-11 YEARS	212	50.5	50.5	100.0
Total	420	100.0	100.0	

There is an almost equal distribution of the respondents within the two age groups as can be seen in Table 3. Two hundred and eight of the respondents (49.5%) are middle children aged eight and nine years, while 212 (50.5%) are late children aged ten and eleven years.

Table 4: Name of church

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid BAPTIST	156	37.1	37.1	37.1
Christ Apostolic CH	149	35.5	35.5	72.6
GLORY TABERNACLE	115	27.4	27.4	100.0
Total	420	100.0	100.0	

The respondents consist of children from three denominations, namely the Baptist, Christ Apostolic Church and Glory Tabernacle. Table 4 reveals that the 156 (37.1%) of the respondents are Baptist, while 149 (35.1%) of the respondents are from the Christ Apostolic denomination and 115 (27.4%) are from the Pentecostal denomination, Glory Tabernacle Ministries.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction to the Findings

The purpose of this research was to find out the views of God that exist among African Children and the prevalence of such views. Another purpose was to examine how gender, age and Church denomination relate to their views of God. This study adopted an exploratory sequential design, which is a mixed method approach, where data was collected sequentially in two phases. The first phase was qualitative and the second was quantitative. The findings of this research are presented in three main parts. The first consists of analysis and findings of the first part of the research where qualitative data was collected. This section gives the answers to RQ 1. The second part consists of reports on the second phase of the research where quantitative data was collected which answers RQ 2 and RQ 3. The third part consists of interpretations and discussions of the findings from the two phases of the study.

Different views African Children have about God

Research Question 1

RQ1. What are the different views African children have about God in a selected church in Ibadan?

Twenty-four children were asked 15 questions (See Appendix 1) to find out what their views of God were. From their answers it was revealed that the children's views about God were expressed in ways that generated five major themes. The

themes were (a) the existence and nature of God, (b) the functions of God, (c) relationships with God, (d) the presence of God, (e) African and other names for God.

The existence and nature of God

The existence and nature of God was one theme through which the children's views of God reflected during the interviews. The twenty four children interviewed believed in and had knowledge of God. Through their drawing and in discussions it could be seen that the children saw God as an angel, a person or a spirit. Almost half of the pictures of the middle children reflected God as having wings (Appendix 7). BY2 explains that God "looks like an angel somehow . . . An angel, He has wings and He is like flying." The wings were described as "angel feathers" used by God to "fly and to protect" (BY5), with the destination being "heaven" or "anywhere He wants" (BY6 and GL5). While this view was common with the middle children even BY12 had a similar concept.

One view of God that arose under this theme was the fact that God is a spirit. The children in this group did not see God as a "human being." That spirit was depicted as a ghost. To explain this BY11 said, God was "a spirit because He is not a human being." BY1 stated, "God looks like maybe like a ghost." God as a ghost or spirit did not bring about a fearful reaction from children as most ghosts would. Children who drew God as spirit showed this by drawing no facial features on their pictures. . ". . . I drew God with no face because I thought He is a spirit . . . but I did not draw a face for me because I cannot draw well" (BY3). BY9 said, "I don't know how God looks like exactly but in the drawing I think that is how God looks like." He drew a big man with no face. Although this respondent drew a person to show his view of God, the fact that there was no face meant that God to him was a spirit. BY11 explained that, "He, (God) is a spirit so no one can see how He looks like" and as

spirit God, "can appear in a flame for fire, He can appear in wind." The respondents who saw God as spirit also had a view of an unseen God. "I have never seen God before so I cannot say He looks like this . . . He is a spirit" (GL7).

Another concept children have of God is also that God is a person. God as a man was not just an ordinary man but a "mighty man" (BY3). While BY4 agrees that God "looks like a human being" however he says God is "seven times bigger". As put by GL11 God is an "old learned man." GL1, GL3 and BY1 were of the opinion that "One respondent said, "God looks like everybody because He made us in His own image" (GL8). Children who drew God as a human being did so by giving God a face, eyes to "see everywhere" hair on his head, a mouth, in some cases a beard showing his "age" or "superiority over other members of the Godhead" (GL10). Children called God the Lion of Judah, which was viewed by GL5 as a "strong man or king," while others who had the concept of God being the lion of Judah did not know the meaning. Children viewed God as "the Supreme Being" who is "Almighty and Strong." BY11 emphasized this when he said, "I drew muscles to show strength, power, authority, the lines show that He is not a human and that He is more superior to human beings."

It was evident that the children viewed God as a king. As the interviews unfolded it became visible that children mention certain symbols which were associated with their views and concepts of God. These symbols were grouped together according to their similarities. The respondents viewed God with royal symbols. They viewed God as royalty and seeing a king reminded them of God because that is how many of them pictured God. This actually could be seen in their drawings. GL11 explains, "My picture is about God and in that picture God is here, he is like a king. A king normally wears a cloak so this is the king's cloak and this is his

crown. And the king is like a shiny star and the cloak is somehow like a coat so it is a coat of majestic wonders and God is love." This eleven year old girl's thoughts are re-echoed when the respondents were discussing their pictures. "God looks like a king," (GL1, GL2) sitting on a "throne" or a "golden chair" putting on a "golden crown with plenty of stars" wearing "a flowing garment" (GL9, BY4 and BY8).

One child described her view of God as king with the African name *Oba awon oba* which means "King of kings." The nine year old girl explained, "If they have a king in every village, so he is the one who makes them king and He is the one who controls them, that is why I am calling Him (King of kings) *Oba awon oba"* (GL6). God was also viewed as *Olorun*, GL9 explained its meaning "King of the heavens," while BY7 stated that *Olorun* means God is "the controller of everything." GL9 said she learnt the name *Olorun* from her mummy, she added "in Yoruba, it means the king, the king of heavens, but I still say God." She had heard her mother use the names to address God during prayer time and so she too picked up the name and used it for God. God was also addressed by the child as "king of this world."

All but one of the respondents had the idea of God as a "man" or a "male figure." Even those who saw God as a spirit saw God as a masculine spirit. The only dissenting voice was that of GL5 who explained,

> He could be both man or female (sic). I think God is both a female and male. Examples are when maybe a female comes to ask for help from Him and it is concerning female issues. He can answer like a female. He will behave as if He is a female and behave like a female. He acts like a male when you talk to Him like a father.

The above respondent was the only one of twenty four respondents, who drew God as a woman (Appendix 7). This could be her way of expressing her belief that God made man in His own image and likeness and so since she is a female God then comes too and behaves to females in a feminine manner. This was because the image

of God as a female was not popular with the respondents as was the image of God as a man. Another view under the existence theme was the similarities between Jesus and God. There seemed to be a mix-up between God and Jesus. This seemed to be common among the middle children. Statements like "God's blood washes my sins away" by BY1 or as BY8 explained, "God resembles Jesus a bit" portrayed this fact. BY2 explained that "God was a human being when He was on earth. His name was Emmanuel that means God with us. But now He is in heaven as Jesus" (BY2). In the picture of GL12 she used the colour red to show how she linked God with Jesus since according to her she had "never seen God." Her idea of God was of Jesus because she has seen Jesus (on television) but has never seen God. When the children were asked to mention names for God all of them interviewed mentioned names given to Jesus such as Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, Counselor and Saviour.

Religious Media, especially pictures, play a significant role in children's concept of equating God and Jesus. Religious media comprised of Christian books and gospel music, devotional books and pictures. BY1and B6 both said that "pictures of God in the house" and "God's photo in the church," respectively remind them of God. The researcher went to look for the "photo of God" in the church and found it to be a picture of the representation of Jesus. But then to the respondents Jesus and God are the same and seeing the picture seem to be the same as seeing the picture of God.

Gospel music and Christian songs are also associated with their views of God. "When I hear some songs I imagine God, Christian songs like Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty" (GL9). Songs that BY9 sings in school do something within his heart and make him think about God.

The understanding or knowledge of God as Trinity also reflected in most of the interviews and in the drawings. "God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are a Trinity.

They are the one who join together to make a covenant" explained BY5. BY8 clarified his view of the Trinity as consisting of three souls. This knowledge came from what he had either been told, taught or had overheard. He says, "Yes Jesus is God because they say that God has three souls in Him which is God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. He has three Persons." However, it seemed that from most of the pictures and explanations, children showed an understanding of two persons of the Trinity, for some it was the Father and Son; while for others it was the Father and the Holy Spirit. However, the most outstanding example of God as the Trinity was that of GL10 who elucidated,

> This is God and these two represent God the Father and God the Holy Spirit and God is love. They are all one. This is a beard. I drew God's beard to represent that this is God. (That is why the picture Jesus and the Holy Spirit had no beard) The picture of God is bigger because God is the owner of all the earth and is the one who made them (the Son and the Holy Spirit) and is the owner of everything. Because this represents the son of God and Jesus Christ will sit on the right side of God. The Holy Spirit too, I gave a crown because He represents God, they are all in one.

To show Oneness of the Trinity this child had drawn the three faces inside one heart shape.

Another view under the existence theme was that certain people were viewed to be like God. Twelve respondents viewed the pastor to be like God. Reasons they gave were because he is "anointed," and "prays most of the time" or "God speaks through Him" and he "teaches and preaches" Five children had the opinion that their father had the same features of God. A father, as the head of the house who "does his quiet time, counsel's people and preaches" or "behaves well" and who constantly advises the child, is like God (BY8). BY4 also gave a similar example of why his father had the same characteristics as God, which was because he was the one who directed their daily prayer meeting. Mothers can also, in the view of the children,

have the characteristics of God. A mother who dislikes sin, is accessible and has a good relationship with her children, assists and encourages them as well, is the one who has the same characteristics with God (GL7). BY3 picked his mum because of her accessibility and the food she gives him. GL11 explained that there, "Are two, my mum and my sister, my mum is a gentle person, kind, she is very open minded, easy going and fun and my elder sister sometimes she shouts and gets angry when she gets angry about 14% so the other side she is just fun and a very very nice sister."

Children also saw themselves as having the same characteristics as God. BY11 is a good example of this, he says "I feel His presence everyday because He protects me I can see it in my daily life that He likes me and when God likes you it means that you are His follower." Eight respondents answered that nobody, no earthly person is like God. The reason according to GL4 was that, "I have never seen anyone who has the face of God" because as GL8 put it "God is spirit." The final person who in the view of the respondents was like God was their Sunday school teacher. "She preaches to us according to God's will and I know that and how she speaks used to touch my mind" (BY12).

There are certain colours associated with God, as seen from the interview. These colours are red, white and purple. God's flowing garment "has to be white" (GL9). Not only are God's clothes seen as white, even God is deemed to be "white, somehow, white, white, very well" (BY12). The reason for these children dressing God in white or assuming that He is white could be because white is a colour which is associated with holiness and purity. God is Holy. One child says he sees God when he prays. "I used to see some traces like lines, I used to see colours. I see purple, red all these colours" (BY3). This boy has the view that God is associated with colours. White and red are also part of the wordless book colours used to evangelize children.

However, purple is not. Purple is a colour which generally represents royalty. It is the colour kings and queens use. GL12 drew God and coloured a part of her drawing red. She was the only one who used any kind of colour to paint the pictures drawn. GL12 explained the reason she did this. "The red is the one I see on television. It is the robe. I watched it on the *Passion of Christ*. Jesus is the person who wore the robe in the *Passion of Christ*. I drew it on God because I do not know what God looks like, because I have never seen God before."

From the interviews with the twenty-four children it was seen that they had certain anthropomorphic language which showed what kind of views they had about God. The respondents viewed God as having feelings and emotions such as being happy, joyful and smiling, getting angry, forgiving people and showing mercy and being sad. Sixteen respondents are of the opinion that God can get angry. It is sin that makes Him angry. However as GL5 puts it, "God gets angry slowly but He gets happy again. He does not get angry for a long time." Sin is the object of anger. In the opinion of the children God is sad when His people fight and don't live in peace (GL5). All twenty-four respondents believe that God does punish people. His punishment is seen as judgment time for sins committed. God punishes people "when they need it," states BY3 and to him needing it is when a person has failed to listen to the gospel message and continues committing sin.

The concept of God as a judge who will judge everyone could be seen in the picture of God drawn by BY11. He explained, "I drew God with a fork, like a harvester. He will come and harvest all His people . . . the belt show that He cannot stand lies and that He cannot stand sinners also." GL7 explained what God does to sinners. "He can just say, you this people you do not serve me and I will punish you

for that. He makes them poor if they were rich before, he may make them poor and he may just tell them that, you this people now am going to make you poor or anything."

GL2 believes that the punishment of God can lead to death, and she is not alone in this opinion, as BY1, BY2, BY11 and GL11 are all in agreement. Listening to what the respondents say, one may think that God is wicked, however BY10 does not think so. He said, "He punishes people for their sins and here on earth he could punish people with sickness, he could punish a nation together with famine or wars and after here on earth he could punish people with hell." He concluded by saying "God is not wicked." This seems to be the common opinion. It may be because they are of the opinion that everything God does is "good and correct." This could be illustrated by this eleven year old girl who said, "Everything He does is perfect and everything He does is always perfect" (GL11). The respondents believe that if God does punish at all, it is because the people have caused it by their sin, disbelief or behavior.

God also gets happy. This emotion of God can be seen from the smiling pictures of BY4, GL4, GL6 and GL5. He smiles when His children are with Him (BY2) and smiles when He is happy (BY4) and smiles because he has joy and does not frown (GL4). "God likes us to be good girls and boys" (GL7). When we listen to him and obey him it makes him happy (GL4).

Children's expectation of God (functions of God)

Through the interviews it was seen that children had certain views on what are the functions of God. The functions of God, according to children were (a) protection, (b) provision of daily needs (c) instruction in education (d) rulership through leaders (e) speaking and warning them.

The respondents viewed God as being very active in their everyday life. He is seen to protect the respondents from danger. Ten respondents had one story or the other to tell of how God saved them from either an accident, witches, armed robbers or some bad situation. God is seen as a Saviour who protects children as they go out to school or to play or when they are in their homes (GL8). BY10 illustrated this, "For example, going to school every day there is this road we take from our house and people say that there are blood sucking demons because there are always accidents there from time to time, but we pass there now and then every day and God is protecting us." GL1 explained that God protects her and ended by saying "He gives me safe journey." They are not alone as BY7 gives one example of how in his opinion God has saved them from an accident. "We were travelling on our way to airport and were side by side with a speeding trailer. All of a sudden the trailer swerved to our lane. My dad had to veer of the road. We were not hurt because God delivered us." BY5 also attested to this by saying "God will protect and keep me against all of Satan's plans by not making me to die in accidents."

Four respondents called God by the name Saviour. It is possible that the name Saviour used for God was not used in the context of Saviour as used for Jesus. Children who called God Saviour meant that God saves them from something physical that takes place in their daily life. God saved them from accidents or thugs or from the evil one or armed robbers. It therefore becomes very important to understand the context in which the name Saviour is being used by the children and what they mean when they call God that name. GL7 said of God,

> He is my redeemer the meaning is that He redeems my life. The meaning of redeem is save. One day I was very sick so in the evening of that day I regained my strength and I thank God for that. That is why I call Him my redeemer.

One can clearly see that God is viewed as Saviour because of His protective function.

The respondents also acknowledged that "God provides for them" and "takes care of their family" (BY2). The provision could be seen in terms of physical things such as "shelter, food and all other things" such as "money", "water" and "clothes." God provides things that cannot be seen as well, things such as "good health" for sick family members, "peace and harmony" within the family. The concept of the provision of God can be seen in the very personal requests the respondents asked from God such as "give my daddy a good job" (GL4) or "provide my school fees" (BY3). In Nigeria school fees is a daily need of children, as many parents, especially those who do not have jobs, struggle to pay the fees. Children suffer the humiliation of being sent away from school for unpaid fees.

God provides for them because the respondents believe that God wants them to live in peace and happiness. He is to them the Prince of peace, that maybe why children see God as someone who provides all their daily needs. God does not want them to suffer. It is God who provides "peace in their families," makes sure there is "no trouble" brings about their "comfort" (BY3: GL2). In their view God wants them to be happy. GL11 expounded the feelings of many other respondents when she said,

> God likes His children to do good. God likes it when His children obey Him. God likes when his children are very very happy and God likes peace. Because when there is sadness, where there is sadness, there is the tendency to be much more conflict because when you are sad you will be stressed and you will start shouting at people and you will just get angry easily. God doesn't like that, he likes people to be very happy.

Fifteen respondents were of the view that God is called the Prince of peace. It was only GL12 who described God as "the Prince who gives peace." During the interviews the respondents highlighted the functions of God as the owner and giver of peace. GL5 and BY3 both agreed that "He gives us peace in our family" while GL3

stated that God "allows peace in Nigeria." Could it be that they are calling God the Prince of peace because of His functions?

God is very present in the educational life of the children. The common view was that God guides them by giving educational instructions. In the views of the respondents, God knows all things. He is the one who gives "wisdom" and "knowledge" both to teachers and to students. GL9 highlighted this as she said, "He (God) helps our teachers to teach us what is right . . . He helps us understand what we are being taught." GL2 stated that in school God helped her to know what she was doing. It was noted that all children expect God to assists them come first or to do well in their examinations. "In my school he makes me pass my exam a lot because when I was in primary school I never came second it is only first, first, first"(BY9). BY8 thought that the interview was a competition, so apart from praying he does well in school it was his request that God should help him do very well in the competition which was actually the interview. GL10 explains that, "In my school he gives me wisdom, knowledge . . . in whatever my teacher teaches me and makes me to understand and pass my examination."

It is the view of the children that God is working through the leaders in the state, especially the governor. Children believe that God rules and reigns through people. God is seen to be actively at work within the governor, making the governor "improve the city." God "touches" the governor, thereby making him do what is "right for the citizens of Nigeria" (BY9). GL9 attributed to God, giving us "good leaders" and keeping the city safe from "wicked leaders." God is responsible for the daily running of the state, as "He gives the government money to do the roads, to improve the education and the hospitals" (BY4). According to BY10 "Even though we still complain about our government and everything, at least to an extent we know

that God is still keeping us together as one people." It can also be seen that the respondents see God as the almighty God who is the ruler of the rulers of the world. He keeps Muslims from bombing the city of Ibadan, like they did in Jos (BY11). God is there to settle problems GL11 has with teachers, save BY7 from "trailer accidents" and to keep armed robbers away from BY8. God is all-powerful (omnipotent), and present everywhere (omnipresent). God is seen as the "one who rules and reigns" by GL6, and BY12 included that "God reigns in all of the world." As such to God was ascribed, the one who possesses, holds and owns all things. BY11 described God as being "the owner of the universe, the everlasting one." To BY11 God's ownership of things stems from the fact that He is eternal and lives forever.

God's personal relationship to children

In listening to their views of God, it emerged that the respondents had a relationship with God. God was not some 'abstract matter' but was a Living Person, present in their daily lives with whom they had a relationship. Common views among the respondents were, God was my father, my friend, my creator and sustainer and the owner of the universe.

Thirteen respondents viewed God as the creator. They described God as the one who made them and who made heaven and earth (GL6). BY9 acknowledged that "God created us in in His own image and He took us as His children." God was also described as "my maker" by GL12. God's actions of "caring for me" by BY2 were seen as friendly and he declared that in his view God was a "Friend to me." God is also called *Chineke* in a common Nigerian language, which according to BY7 means "creator." Children gave examples of elements of nature and creation, which reminded the children of God the creator, things such as animals, insects and flowers, moon, stars, sun, wind, rain and fire. BY10 gave reasons for this, "Err; in our

environment when rain is falling and it has finished the rainbow is one thing. Then before a storm and the wind is blowing and the trees are blowing to the side I also remember God because my mummy used to tell me that that is their own way of worshipping God." The wind and fire were vehicles through which God as spirit can appear (BY11). GL10 explains that looking at God's creation the "stars" and the "moon," seeing how they "shine brightly and how it looks beautiful, I then think how beautiful God is." This eleven-year old girl sees God as beautiful and His beauty is reflected in His creation. That is why in their view God is called the Rose of Sharon, which to them means God is beautiful. "God is like shining star" (GL11). The stars also help respondents describe God is abode in heaven, which is "high above the sky" (GL9).

In the view of all the respondents, God is their father, however it seems this father is not to be compared with their earthly father. God was described as "my Heavenly Father" (GL3) or "the Father of my father" (GL11), "my spiritual father" (BY4) or "Wonderful father" (BY6) and even as "a close father" (GL4) and "father of the fatherless" (BY12).   BY11 went on to describe how different is God as Father and his earthly father. God is "our heavenly father because He is the owner of heaven and He is our father because He cannot disappoint us but our earthly father can disappoint us." BY9 explained further, "God is my father and I understand that because He really does a lot of things and if I ask from Him He does it for me." One name that children called God was Everlasting Father. In BY5's opinion God is the father who "cannot die." BY3 explains this further as God is the "eternal father who lives or stands forever." GL12 said God is called Everlasting Father because it is God who "gives everlasting life." BY2 gives the meaning of Everlasting Father, "God is a good father to everybody in Nigeria".

Children have an attitude of gratefulness and appreciation to God for all He has done for them. Worship and songs seem to be a very important way children say thank you to God. GL3 believes that God is telling her that she should continue to sing for all He is going to do for her. Children are of the opinion that not to worship God or worshipping other gods is sin (GL10).They are to worship God and to sing praise to God no matter what, in both good and bad times. To them "even God sings praise worship on His throne" (GL4), and God wanted them to worship Him. GL5 was one child that echoed throughout the interview. "I am saying thank you Father. I worship you. I adore you. I give you all the glory. You are worthy to be praised because you have done great things in my life. And I pray I will not turn into evil and I thank you Father."

> GL5 believed God was happy and liked how she worshipped him,
>
> God is saying my daughter, I like how you are worshipping me. That it may be well, that may you live long and He will continue to bless me like that and He advises me that I should continue to do good and I should not turn into evil. I have done good things by serving Him, by adoring Him, by not worshipping any other god but Him.
>
> It is the view of children that God wants them to trust Him totally. They show

that God is totally dependable as they ask Him to guide their steps, to help them in their daily, and weekly affairs, and also to keep them from trouble. BY11 illustrated this as he said, "I tell Him to guide my steps. I tell him to see me through my daily affairs and my weekly affairs that I should not get into trouble." BY10 understands that he must trust totally on God for the issues of life so he asked for "His grace because I know I cannot do it alone." BY11 highlights this as he states that God likes faithful people. "God is saying that I should not be… doing any immorality because he does not like it. Immorality means to do things in your own way and you did not even ask God for it" (GL7). To this ten year-old immorality is not depending and

trusting on God. It is doing things your way. This is because it is her opinion that God

wants total trust and dependence on Him. "Faithful people is (sic) like you should not

doubt that you should trust on to Him and hold on to Him for what He has promised"

(BY11). BY10 gives an example of his total trust in God; showing that He knows

God knows the best for his life. He says,

> God is everything to me, for example waking up in the morning and
> everything. Sometimes I know I just take things for granted at times when I
> just think of it. I know that there are people who sleep and don't wake up.
> There are people who can't eat or can't breathe. I am just there like enjoying
> everything and I know that God is my sustainer. I can't do anything without
> Him.

The view that God wants children to obey also came out strongly in the

interviews. Looking at the two pictures she had drawn, GL12 said God was telling

her to be obedient. BY7 also shared her opinion. "God is saying. . . God is saying that

I should be obedient and tell the truth all the times. I should not tell lies." All the

eight-year old boys affirmed that, "God likes obedience." BY1 added, ". . . obedience

to His Word." BY4 emphasizes, "He likes when people obey Him. . . when people

obey His commandments." GL9 expounded on this by saying, "God does not like

people who do not obey His rules," which according to BY12 include, disobeying

"your mummy or daddy or your elderly ones or you abuse the prophet of God." It is

their very strong view that God demands obedience from them. BY11 believes, "God

is saying that I should obey His word, follow His word, be careful, be obedient in

church, be obedient, like part of the Ten Commandments says honor your mother and

father so that your days may be long."

It is also the view of children that God likes "honest" and "truthful" people.

He therefore wants them to be honest and truthful. This also was a prevailing view.

God dislikes "stealing" and "lying." God is not interested in "dishonesty" and does

not appreciate "stealing" because as rightly expressed "it can bring us into sin" (BY1).

One child, when asked to describe the picture he drew, described his dialogue with God saying, "I am promising Him that now henceforth I don't have anything to do with lies again" (BY11). This view seems so strong to this child that he promised not to tell lies. GL7 could hear God telling her not to tell lies as she explained, "God is saying that I should not be…be lying."

Children interviewed were also of the view that God has an interest in the words they speak. One of the things God disliked was "backbiting," which was described as "talking too much" (BY2) and abusing people, especially men of God (BY12). Children aged 8-9 were more for this idea. It is also the children's beliefs that God dislikes rough play. He wants them to play in a way that they will not injure themselves. Therefore fighting or anything that brought about fights was out of the question as it was seen as sinful play and made God unhappy. Knives, blades, loaded guns and contaminated things that they should not pick up were on the list of things that God did not want them to play with (GL6).

Children are also of the view that God speaks to their minds, giving them warnings and even instructions. God warned BY1 not to follow the crowd to commit sin. BY12 gave an example of when he was in danger and God asked him to move away from the danger and he obeyed. BY9 believes God is saying, "I should come closer to Him, I should come closer to Him, I should come closer to Him so that I should be able to see the kingdom of God." It was observed that most respondents believed that God speaks to them and it actually affects how they think and behave. A good example happened during the interview to show this fact. The interview took longer than it should have and GL8 said "God said I should have patience." This particular girl stayed until the end, was the last person for that day and she did not complain. All the respondents do hear God speaking to them and giving them

instructions in their minds. Ten out of the twenty-four respondents viewed God as counselor. This was one of the names they called God. They could not explain why they viewed God as counselor however, only BY3 offered an explanation as he said, "Like we are, if we are confused about the devil and God, He can counsel us." In the interview there were many instances where the respondents talked about God being the one who gives instructions, guides them and warns them about certain things.

The respondents also hear God speaking to them when they observe their devotions. Devotions consist of praying and reading their Bibles. GL6 says, "All I have in mind is that anytime I do my quiet time and read my Bible He talks to me, that I should always continue and I should always pray about all what I don't get." GL9 explains that the instruction she gets from God during her quiet time is how she is to live during the day. God gives her "directions." It could be seen that in the view of children, God speaks to them during their devotion time. Morning devotion was seen to be a very important meeting place with God because as BY5 put it, "there He can speak to you." GL3 stressed that devotion was a bonding time with God. "It is a time of getting closer to God. You get close to Him by reading your Bible. I read my Bible everyday" (GL3). Devotional or quiet time books were channels through which God spoke to the children, in their opinion. BY7 says he uses *Daily Power*, GL11 uses *Open Heavens* and she brings to light how she hears God speaking during her devotion time

> . . . sometimes especially when I am praying, sometimes because the devotional I use my pastor and teachers say that when you are praying you should before you really conclude and everything after you have said your prayers and your appreciation, you should give a little pause for God's response and when God is responding you will feel His presence near you.

God speaks to BY8 through the Bible as he confirms that "All what God tells me is through the Bible." The Bible is such a strong reminder of God and that He talks to children that BY12 says,

> Because if Satan tempts me to do this thing, I will almost go then I will just be looking around, then I will see the Bible then if I see the Bible my mind will tell me something, then it will just be as if God told me to not do this thing then I will not do it.

The Bible is not the only book that child feel God uses to speak to them. GL6 illustrates this when she said,

> In my environment I see Bibles, I see people selling good things about what people write. People selling good things reminds me of what God has done for us, about the good things he has done and that is why some authors write about Him that He is a good God and He cares for us. There are books, like a book that teaches us about when a prince was born, he became very bad that he was walking with bad friends, bad people who were smoking cigarette but they later caught him and put him in police station and when they released him he later gave his life to Christ.

> To GL4 the Bible is the "Word of God." When GL7 sees and reads the Bible, it is a reminder of the existence of a "real God."

Children's views on the presence of God

The respondents understood the concept of the ever-present God, who is near them. This view could be seen to cut across all ages. Omnipresence, as explained by a female respondent means, "He is always in your situation, with you whichever problem you are going through" (GL9). He was there in the dark with BY3 giving assurance and confidence to go into the dark and not to be scared. God was with GL6 at night in her dreams and keeping her safe. Most of the respondents were confident that God was with them in trouble, protecting and keeping them. GL8 gives an example, "When I was crossing the road so I was checking the car and I saw that there was no car coming so the car was running and it was a little bit before the car hit me, but I felt that God was with me and I was happy."

The children testified of feeling God's abiding presence when feeling the presence of danger around or when going through a traumatic situation. GL1 called God Emmanuel, which she defined as "God with us." The knowledge of God's presence brings about a reaction of happiness, confidence, assurance, love and trust in God from the children. BY10 gave an example of when "armed robbers" came to his house. He felt God's presence and had the feeling and knowledge that "everything was going to be alright."

Children who do devotions and quiet time have explained that while they pray they feel the presence of God near them. Children confess that they feel the presence of God near when they are doing examinations. In their view God gives the answers when they are writing tests and exams. BY5 says, "He was telling me some answers." Accommodating this concept of God, it is only natural that God too can be distant during examinations. GL11 gives a vital illustration of this,

> There was a time I was having my exam my first term exam there was a question, "what is graduation?" It was a question that no one would miss. A question I really really knew and everything, but when I got to the examination hall I just sat there and nothing came to my brain about that federation question. I was like what do I do? I don't like this, it is not good. I felt like, why I cannot remember this because normally I remember things like that. So because I felt like, that God is no longer near me and God is no longer the person He used to be. I began to doubt.

This illustration gives insight into the struggle this child had just because she could not answer an question she began to doubt the presence of God with her. The respondents believe that God's presence can move away from them by their actions or non-actions. BY3 explained, "Sometimes when my mummy said I should do something and I don't finish doing it then I feel that God is far." BY8 says "I have felt God far from me whenever I fail to obey His commands and I fail to obey my parents." GL5 was aware that when she "turns away from God" she "turns into sin"

and that makes God's presence leave her. This view is also affirmed by BY10 who explained, "I had just done something wrong and I felt that thing was separating me from God." It should be noted that when children feel they have done "something wrong" or committed "sin" it separates them from God and God goes far from them. BY5 explains, "When you are fighting your school mates or siblings, that is when He is driven far from you. God's Spirit is driven away from you." What He means is that fighting your peers or brothers and sisters is one thing that can make God's spirit or His presence leave a child. This could be because God in their view is holy. This sense of the holiness of God was also present during the interviews. It could be seen in their drawings, and heard in their explanations. BY9 says, "People don't see God really, so I did not decide to put the eyes, the nose, and the mouth. Due to the reason that God is very holy and pure, I decided to put the shining and glitter things on the drawing." Later on within the interview BY9 asked God to help him be able to walk in His "pure light."

African and biblical names for God

The names by which God is called is a theme which developed as the researcher got to understand children's views of God. Children had different views regarding the names by which they call God. These are of African and Biblical names. All of the twenty-four respondents called God with names attributed to Jesus. The most common ones were 'Everlasting Father, Prince of peace, Counselor, Emmanuel and Saviour. There were also some African names that were part of the children's views of God. Common among these names were *Eru-jeje, Oba awon oba, Olorun, Chineke and Oba-okun. Eru-jeje* and *Oba-okun* could not be defined or explained. The children interviewed viewed God as being the King of this world, the Lily of the Valley, the rose of Sharon, the Lion of Judah and the Ancient of Days. Children view

God as the Rose of Sharon which to them means that "God is beautiful and he makes all things beautiful" (BY10) or "He is a very beautiful God" (GL10). Children addressed God with names like Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Elohim, El Shaddai and Alpha and Omega. These names seemed to be used without meaning. To one child the meaning of Alpha and Omega is "God is my Lord" or "wonderful God." GL3 explained the meaning of Alpha and Omega as "God is my Lord," while GL8 defines it as "wonderful God." BY8 said the meaning of Jehovah Shalom was "God is the One that keeps us in life and provides for us." Seven respondents called God with at least one of these names: Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Elohim, and El Shaddai, but could not state or explain the meaning. However, it was noted that when the children could explain and describe the names, their meanings cut across the four major themes (existence and nature, functions, relationship with God and the presence of God).

Summary of Children's Views of God

Children's views of God fall into five major themes. Under the existence and nature of God it was revealed that: (1) God is an angel with wings (2) God is viewed as a spirit or ghost, or as an unseen God. (3) God is a human being (most cases a man), who can be seen or has a physical body. (4) God and Jesus are the same person. (4) God is father, son and Holy Spirit, three in one. 6). God is the king of all kings. (7) God has feelings and emotions, he gets happy and can become sad. (8) God punishes sinners. (9) He will judge everyone. (10) All God does is right. (11) Some people behave like God. (12) God is holy. (13) Certain symbols are associated with God.

Under the functions of God children's views of God are: (1) God is the protector, Saviour and deliverer. (2) God is the provider. (3) God wants children to live in peace and happiness. (4) God is the Master teacher, owner of all knowledge, wisdom and understanding (5) God rules and reigns. (6) God is all-Powerful.

Children's views concerning their relationship with Him are: (1) God is a father, friend, creator and the owner of the universe. (2) God wants children to sing praises to Him for all He has done so they respond to God with thanksgiving. (3) God is trustworthy and dependable. (4) God wants children to behave well, be honest, truthful, and obedient to Him and their parents. (5) God dislikes sin, disobedience, lies, stealing, fighting, backbiting and playing with dangerous things. (6) God speaks to children and they can hear Him.

Children's views of God in relation to His presence are: (1) God is everywhere. (2) God answers their prayers only when He is happy with them (3) God is present with them in times of danger and trouble. (4) God goes far from them when they sin, or when they are disobedient. (5) If they cannot remember what they have read during an examination then God's presence has left them.

Children's views of God concerning how He is addressed are (1) God is called by certain African names and (2) God is addressed by other Biblical names.

<div align="center">Quantitative Data Analysis</div>

Phase two of this research consisted of collecting quantitative data. A total of 420 of the 431 questionnaires administered were deemed usable for analysis. The sample consisted of children in two Christ Apostolic churches, three Baptist churches and one Pentecostal church, making up three denominations in Ibadan area of Oyo State of Nigeria. The analysis was conducted with the SPSS program and the results were used to answer RQ 2 and RQ 3.

Prevailing Views of African Children about God

Research Question 2

RQ2: How prevalent are the African children's views about God among the denominations?

The children had diverse views about God which were grouped into five themes (Appendix 3). These themes are the existence and nature of God; God is an angel with wings, a spirit or ghost, a human being, a king, God and Jesus are the same, God is Trinity, God has feelings and emotions, some people are like God and He is holy, certain symbols are associated with God. On the functions of God: God is the protector, provider, teacher, He rules and reigns, is all-knowing and all-powerful. On children's relationship with God: God is father, friend, creator and the owner of the universe, trustworthy and dependable, He interacts with them, answers their prayers, and wants them to worship Him and be thankful, and to behave well, not to commit sin. On the presence of God: He is everywhere, present in times of danger and trouble. His presence leaves when they sin and they have African and biblical names with which they use to address God.

To answer this research question, no hypothesis was devised. However, answers were found by tallying the frequencies of the respondents from each item in Part 2 and Part 3 of the questionnaire. Their answers were computed and the results show how prevalent children's views of God are. Results are shown with the use of charts.

The following tables consist of views of God as found from the theme of the Existence and nature of God.

View: I would draw God with facial features because he looks like humans

About half of the 24 respondents interviewed were of the opinion that they would draw God with all facial features because He made them in His own image and

likeness. Hence, item 35: I would draw God with a face, eyes, nose a mouth and hair on head because God made us in His own image, was used to reveal if this was a prevailing view among the children. Figure 2 gives the responses to this question. Two hundred and four (50.5%) of the respondents would draw God with facial features because He looks like us and because He made us in His own image and likeness. One hundred and thirteen (28%) decided that they would not to draw God with facial features and 87 (21.5%) do not know what view they hold in this respect (Table 49, Appendix 11).
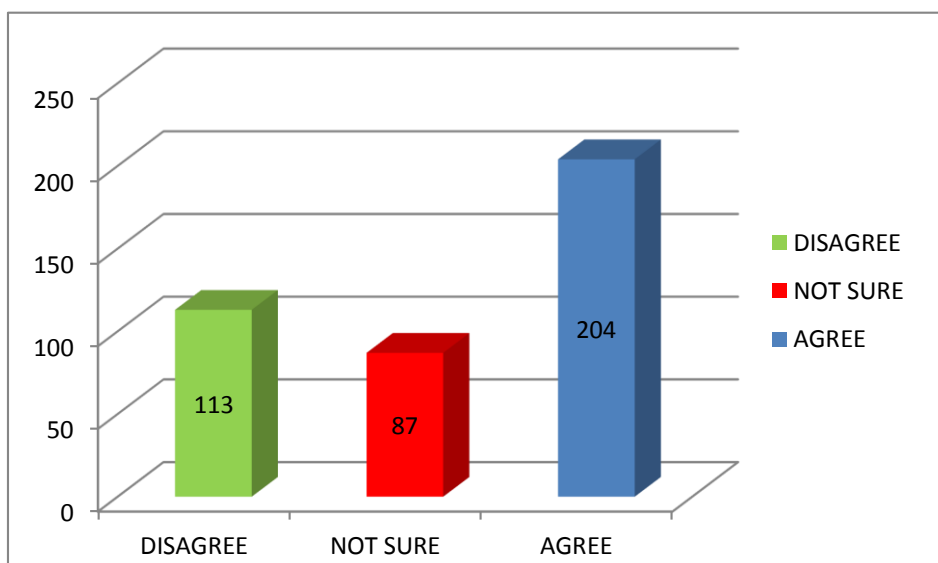
Figure 2: I would draw God with face features

View: I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God

When asked to draw God in the first phase at least 5 respondents stated that God could not be seen and hence drew God with no face. Item 36: I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God, was used to find out how prevalent the view was among the respondents in the second phase of this study. It can be seen in Figure 3 that 191 children coming to 47.8% agreed that they would draw Him with no face because no one has ever seen God. One hundred and twenty two (30.5%)

disagreed with this position, implying that they would not draw God in this way and

87 (21.8%) were not sure what to think of this idea (Table 50, Appendix 11).
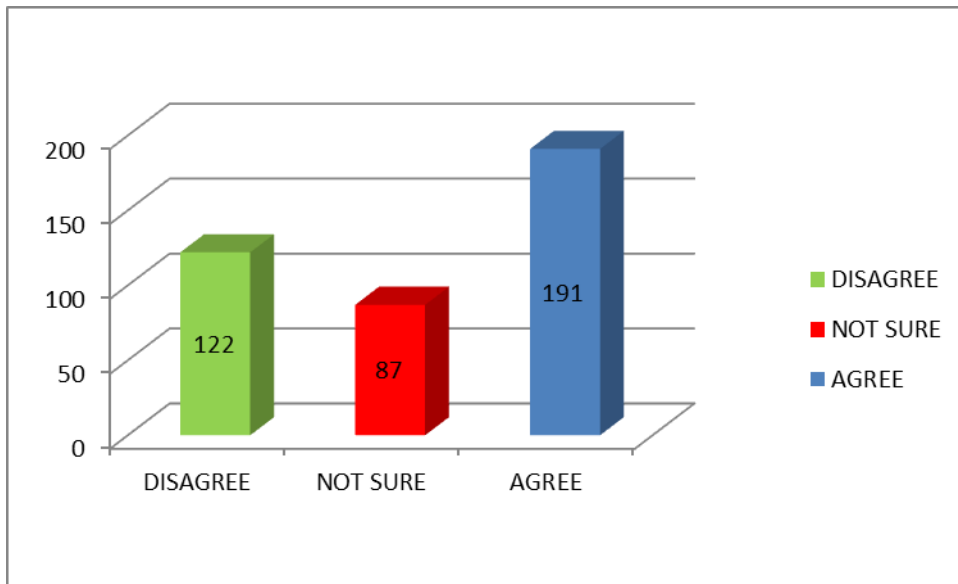
Figure 3: I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God.

View: God is a spirit

In the qualitative part of this study, children had an idea of God being a spirit
but that spirit is in terms of a ghost. Figure 4 presents the responses of item 1 Part 3: I
see God as a spirit or a ghost. About a half, 193 (49.7%) agreed that God was a spirit
in terms of a ghost, 105 (27.1%) disagreed and 90 children, representing 23.2% of the
respondents were not sure. It is therefore a prevailing view among children that God
is spirit.
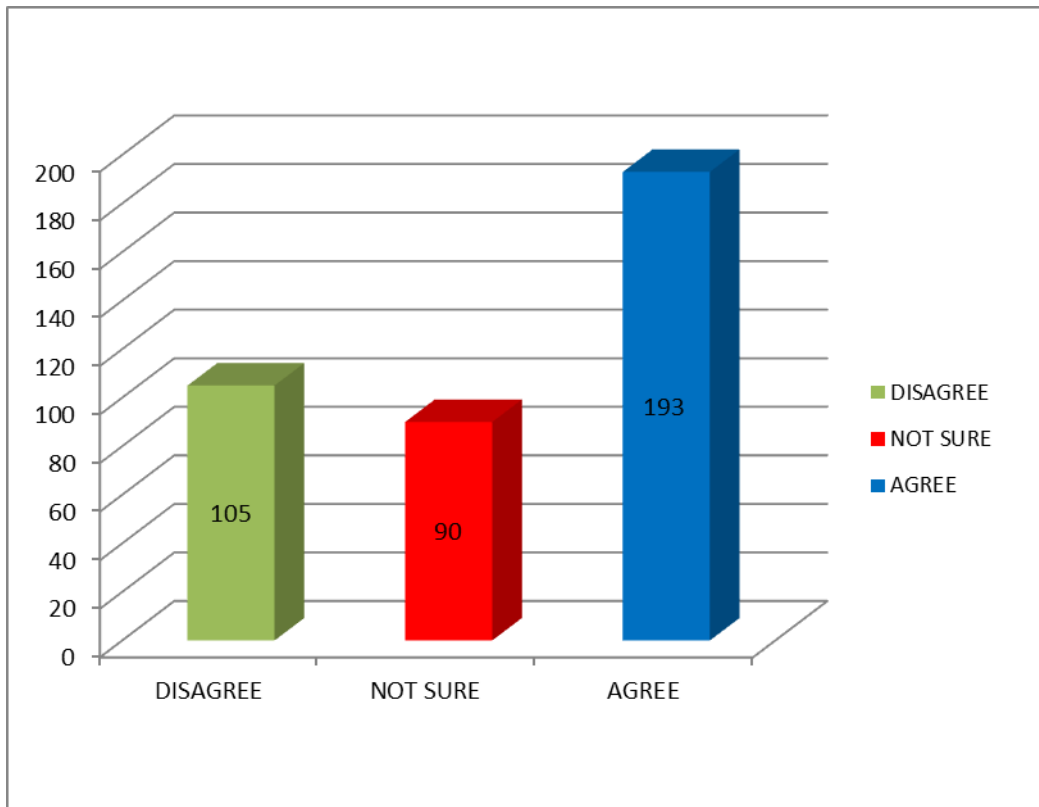
Figure 4: God is a spirit or ghost

View: God is an angel and has wings to fly everywhere

From the first phase of this study one view of God that emerged was that He had wings like an angel which He uses to fly everywhere. Item 27 Part 3: God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly everywhere, was the statement used to find out if this was a prevailing view among the denominations. As seen in Figure 5, 114 (28.4%) of the respondents rejected this view outright. One hundred and twenty nine (32.1%) were not sure and could not take a firm stand on the position of yes or no while 159 (39.6%) agreed with this position. Although, 159 (39.6%) is not majority however, this position that God has wings has the highest count (Table 22, Appendix 11). Therefore it is actually a prevailing view.
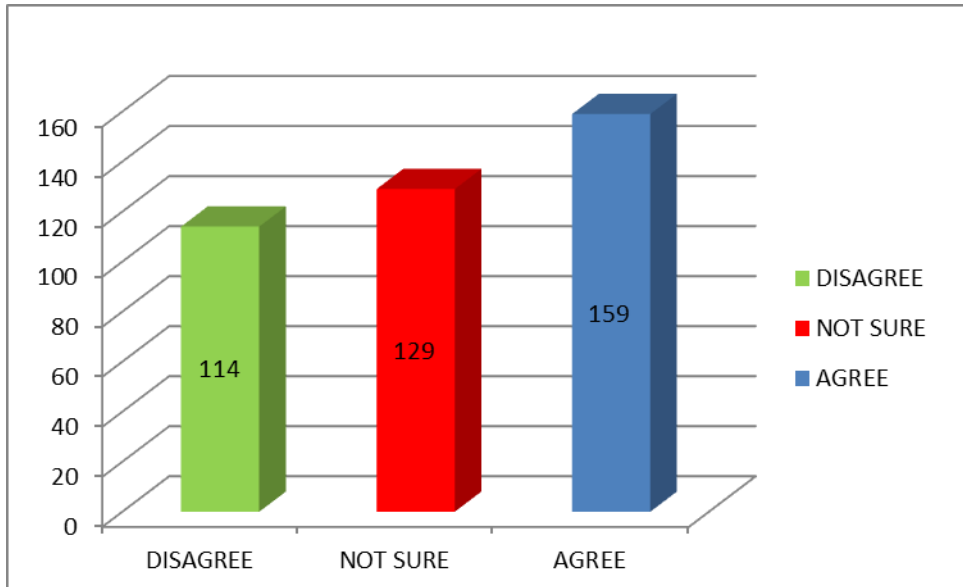
Figure 5. God has wings and feathers to fly everywhere

View: Seeing a king makes me think of God

During the first phase children associated royalty with God. They called God King of kings. In order to see how prevalent this view was among children within the 3 denominations item 26, part 3 was formulated. Two hundred and seventy nine (69.6%) agree that seeing a king, royal garments, and a throne reminds them of God, 53 (13.2%) were not sure of the association while 69 (17.2%) were not in agreement (Table 43, Appendix 11). It is therefore a prevalent view that seeing royal things remind the children of God.
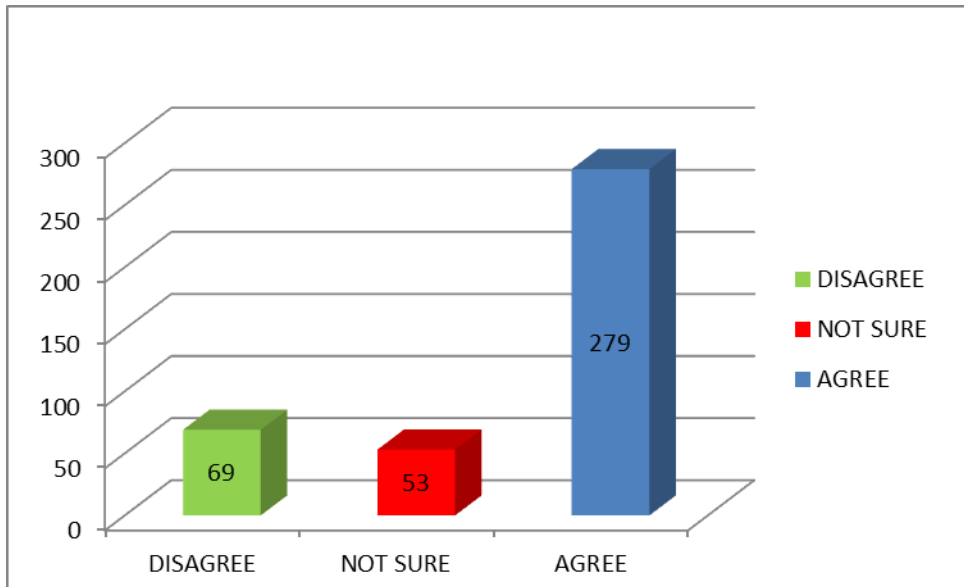
Figure 6. King, crown and throne remind me of God

View: God is Trinity

Item 3, Part 3: God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one, was designed
to see how prevalent the view of God as Trinity was which arose in the first part of
this study. In the second phase, a majority of the respondents had knowledge and
understanding of God as Trinity as indicated in Figure 7. Three hundred and fifty nine
(88.6%) agreed that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One, while 19
(4.5%) disagreed and 27 (6.4%) were not sure (Table 23, Appendix 11). The idea of
God as Trinity is therefore a prevalent view.
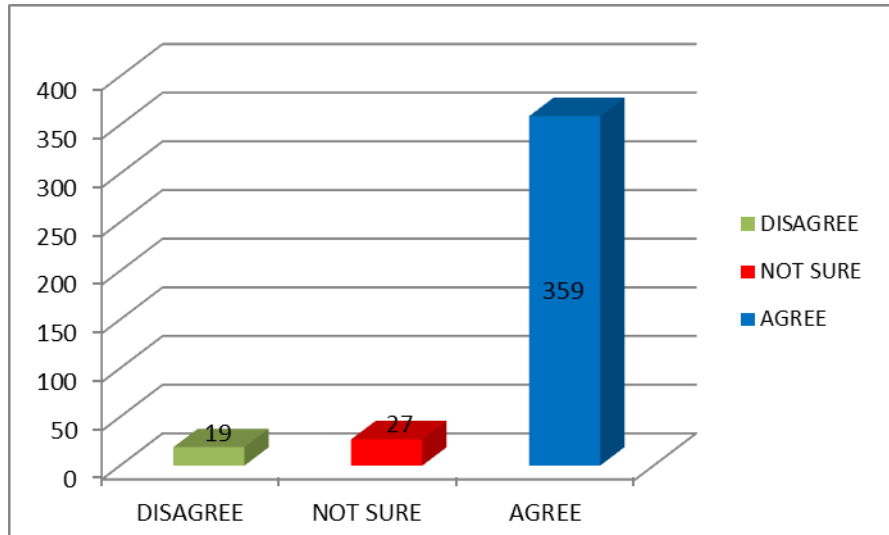
Figure 7. God is Trinity

View: Jesus and God are the same

One hundred and thirty-four (33.7%) of the respondents disagreed stating that God and Jesus are not the same. Seventy nine (19.8%) were not sure and 185 (46.5%) agreed. What this means is that 46.5% agreed that Jesus and God are the same and there is no difference between them. This is therefore a prevalent view.
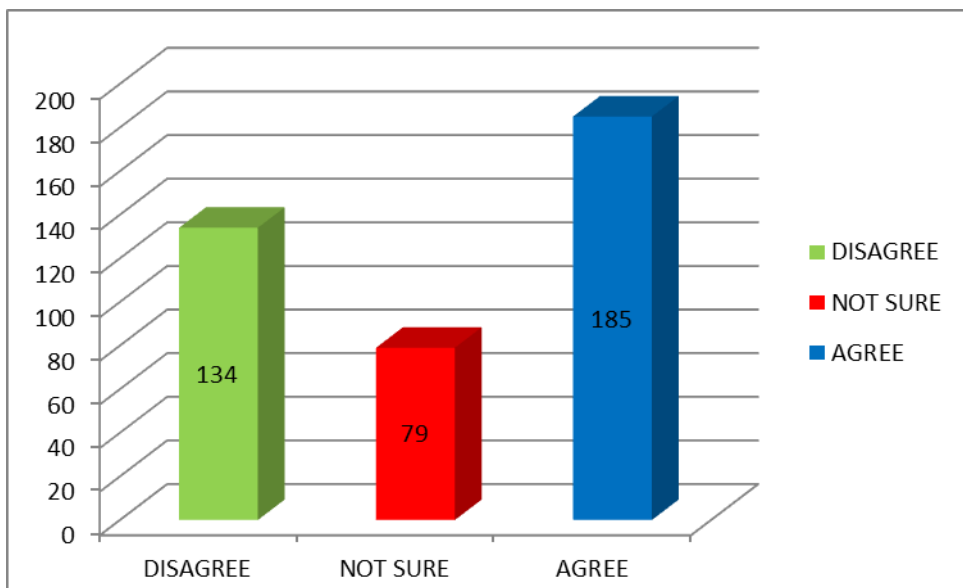
Figure 8. God and Jesus are the same

View: Christian pictures, books and songs remind children of God

From the interviews it was revealed that children believe that certain symbols are associated with God. One good example was religious media. So as to find out how prevalent this view is Item 32, Part 3: pictures of God, Christian books and music help me think about God. The responses of the children from the 3 denominations are seen in Figure 9. This response was similar to the responses in Figures 27, 28, and 37 for items 28, 29 and 30 respectively. Three hundred and twenty one (79.3%) agreed, thirty-seven (8.8%) disagreed and forty-seven (11.2%) were not sure. It is therefore a prevailing view that religious media of gospel songs, pictures and books are associated with God (Table 42, Appendix 11).
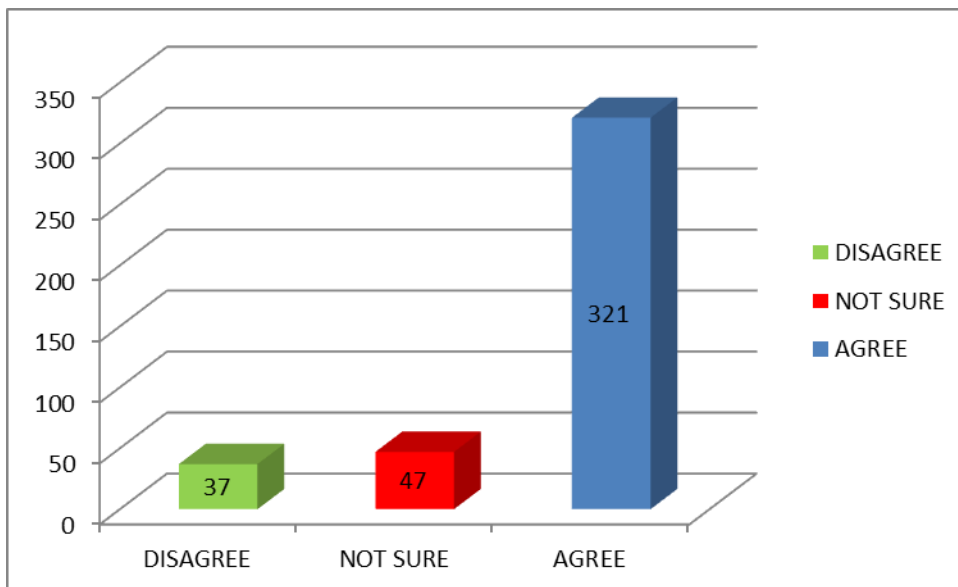
Figure 9. Christian pictures, books and songs remind me of God

View: Certain colours are associated with God

The interviews revealed that children associated colours red, white and purple with God. The responses of item 31, Part 3: colours red, white and purple remind me of God can be seen from Figure 10, where 204 (50.9%) agreed, 108 (26.9%) disagreed while 89 (22.2%) were not sure if God is associated with colours red, white

or purple (Table 41, Appendix 11). Colours red, white and purple and their association with God was therefore a prevalent view among children.
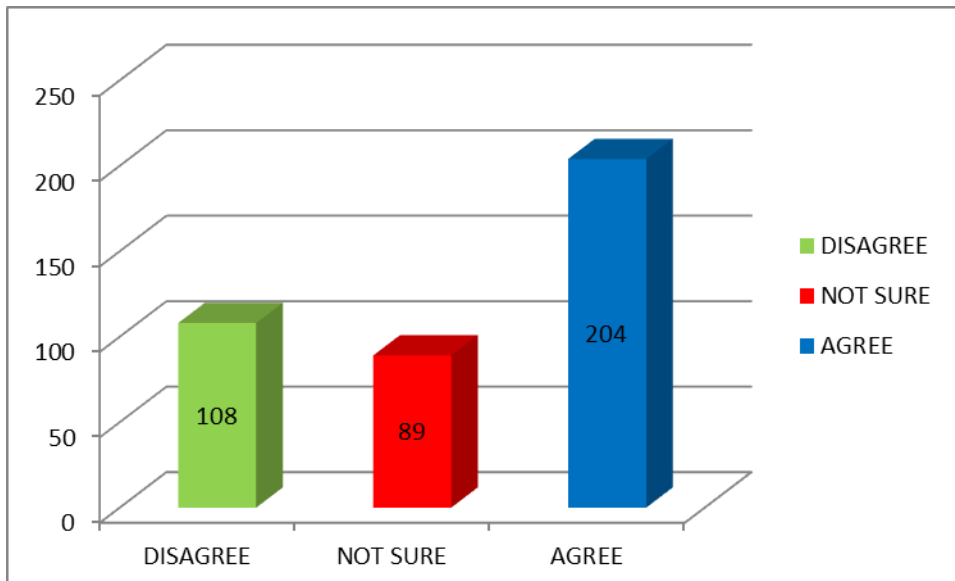
Figure 10. Red, white and purple remind me of God

View: Some people behave like God

As seen from the first phase of the study the children interviewed had the view that some people behaved like God. These people were their parents, pastor, Sunday school teacher, themselves and their elder sister while some were of the opinion that no one behaved like God. Figure 11 portrays their response. The respondents were asked who behaved like God in Item 6, Part 2 of the questionnaire. Two hundred and fifty- two (60%) representing a majority of the children believed that there was somebody that behaved like God while only 168 (40%) believed that no one did. It can be seen that the church pastor is the one who in the view of the respondents is God's representative on earth. It was affirmed by 224 (53.3%) that the pastor was more like God while only 196 (46.7%) did not think so. However, there was a big gap between all the other examples of people who in the view of the respondents behaved like God. Only 91 (21.7%) respondents agreed that their mother behaved like God

while a majority 329 (78.3%) respondents disagreed and stated that their mum was not God's representative on earth. This trend could also be seen with the theme of the father behaving like God. Only 24% or 101 respondents agreed while 319 (76%) respondents disagreed. Three hundred and sixty (85.7%) of respondents did not agree that their elder sister behaves like God (Table 15, Appendix 11). This was not a common view, neither was the view that their Sunday school teacher behaved like God, as only 117 (27.9 %) said yes and 303 (72.1%) did not. Nor was the view that they the child themselves behaves like God, as only 102 (24.3%) answered favorably and 318 (75.7%) disagreed. Therefore it can be concluded that even though the respondents saw God like a father it was not like their earthly father. This confirms the findings in the qualitative phase of this research where God is seen as a father but not like the earthly father of the children.
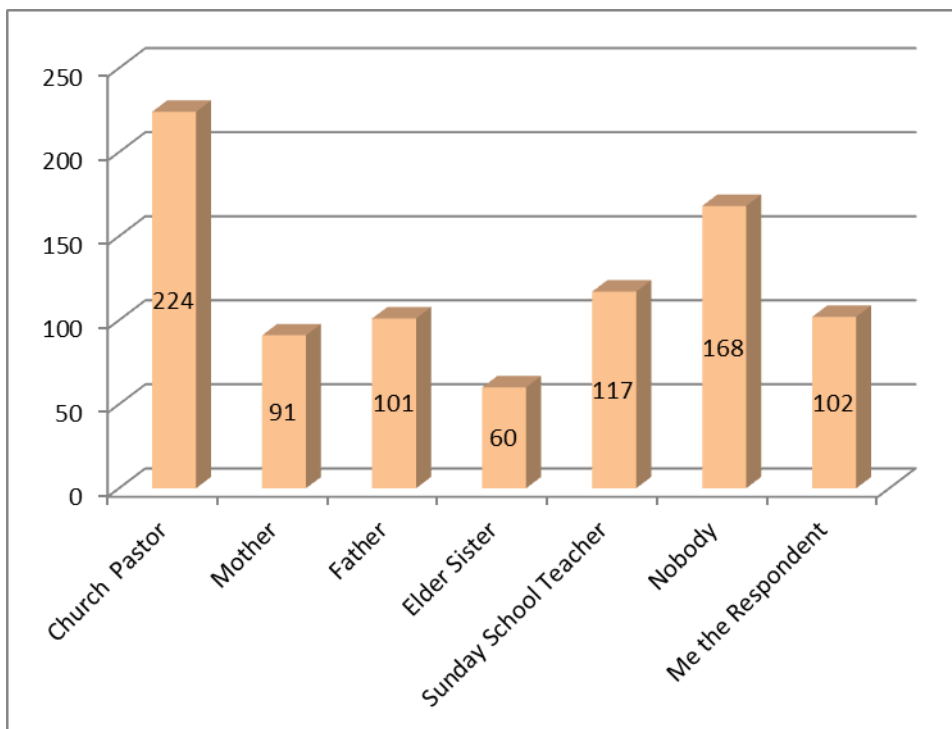
Figure 11. Children's views about God's representative on earth

Views: God is Holy, gets angry, will judge everyone and all He does is good
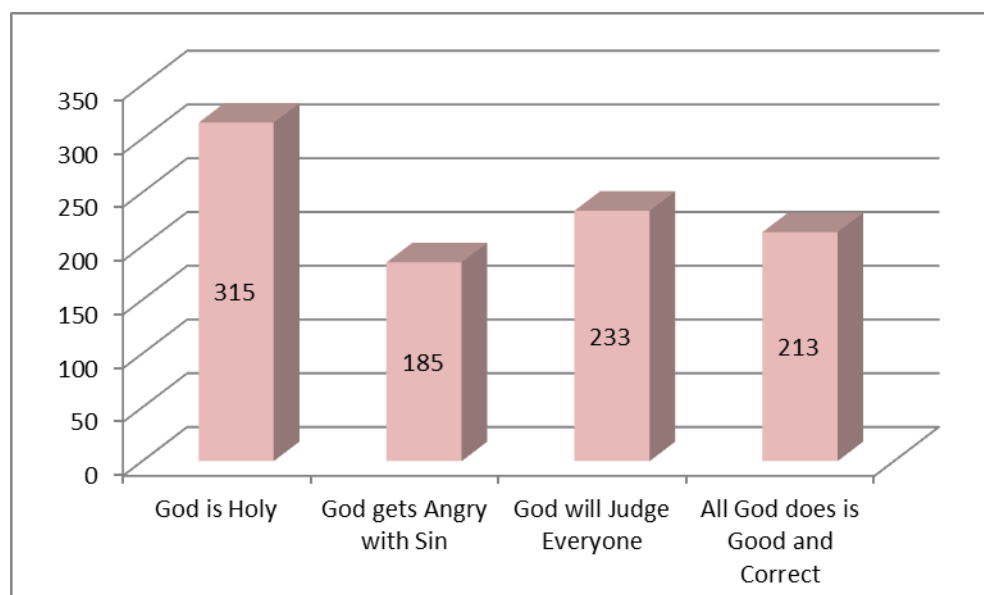
Figure 12. Children's views on holiness, judgment, anger and actions of God

Part 2 items 7 and 8 of the questionnaire provide answers to the views that

children have about God as shown in Figure 12. It explains that the respondents have

a great sense of the holiness of God. This is a prevailing view with 315 (75%) of

respondents consenting with this attribute. Only 185 (44%) were of the opinion that

God gets angry with sin while fifty six percent (235) are of the view that God does not

get angry with sin (see Table 17, Appendix 11). On the other hand a greater number

233 (55.5%) believe that God will judge everyone whereas, 187 (44.5%) are of the

opinion that not everyone will be judged. The respondents are almost evenly divided

on the view that all that God does is good and correct. Table 17 shows that 213

(50.7%) agreed that all God did was good and correct whereas 207 (49.3%) did not.

Thus, prevalent are the two views that God is holy and that he will judge everyone.

On the other hand, God getting angry with sin and all his actions being good and

correct were not prevalent views.

View: God has feelings and emotions, He can get sad

From Figure 13 it can be concluded that children believe that God does get sad when they fight, as 317 or 82.6% agreed to this. What they are saying is that their actions can make God happy or sad. God becomes sad when they fight. Thirty six (9.4%) respondents were not in agreement while 31 (8.1%) of the total respondents were not sure. It can therefore be concluded that a prevalent view of children is that God has feelings, one of which is He gets sad when they fight (Table 44, Appendix 11).
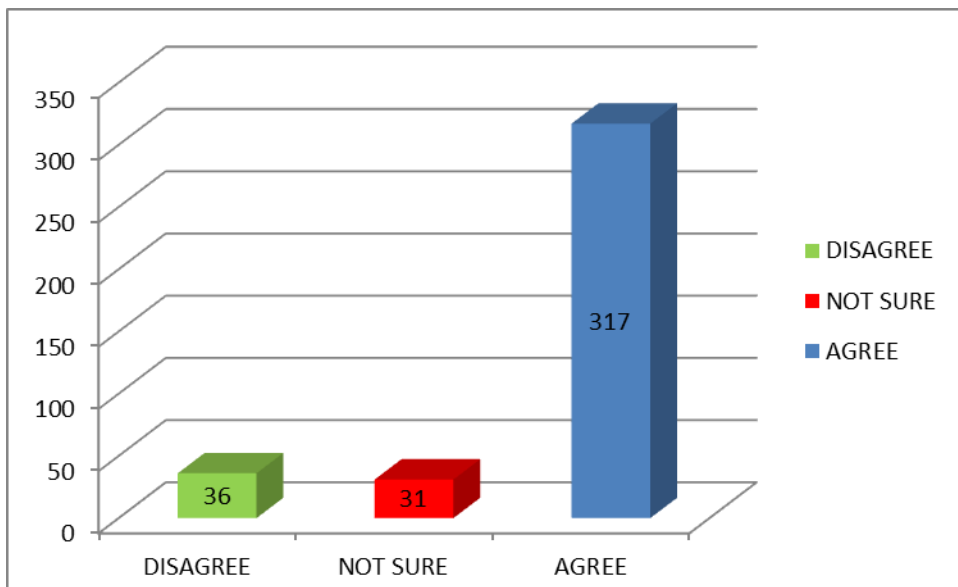
Figure 13. God is sad when I fight

View: God has feelings and emotions, God can be happy

God can also be happy with children. It is their perception that happiness is a condition for Him to answer their prayers. Figure 14 identifies 226 (55.5%) which is a simple majority who agreed that it's only when God is happy with them that He will/can answer their prayers. However, 112 (27.5%) were not in agreement. It was their view that God can answer their prayers, his feelings notwithstanding. To these respondents it does not matter what kind of feeling He has he can still answer their

prayers. However, this view is not common with children. The prevalent view was that God answers prayers when He is happy.
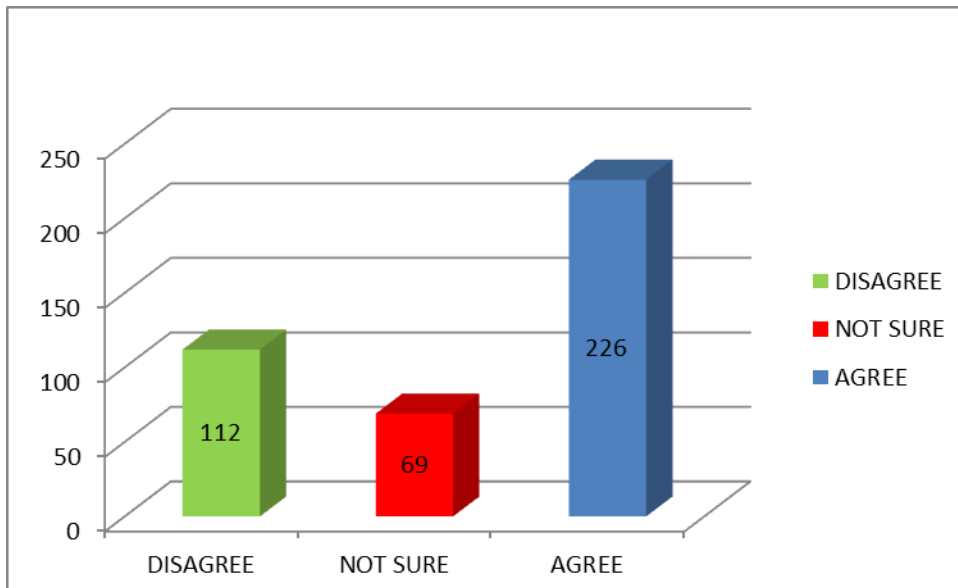
Figure 14. God answers prayers only when he is happy with me

View: God punishes sinners

God was viewed as a God who punishes sinners by all the 24 first phase respondents. Item 34, Part 3: God can cause sinners to have accidents, problems and sickness or bring about their death, was designed to see how prevalent this view is. In the second phase the concept of a punishing God was embraced by 181 (44.9%) of the respondents. Nighty-eight (24.3%) respondents could not make up their minds as they were not sure. On the other hand, 124 (30.8%) were of the opinion that God does not punish sinners (Figure 15). Although, this is not as high as the children who see God as a punishing God it is a high percentage all the same. It can therefore be concluded, that to an extent, a small majority of the respondents have a view of God punishing sinners. He brings about accidents, sickness and problems for people and in some case death.
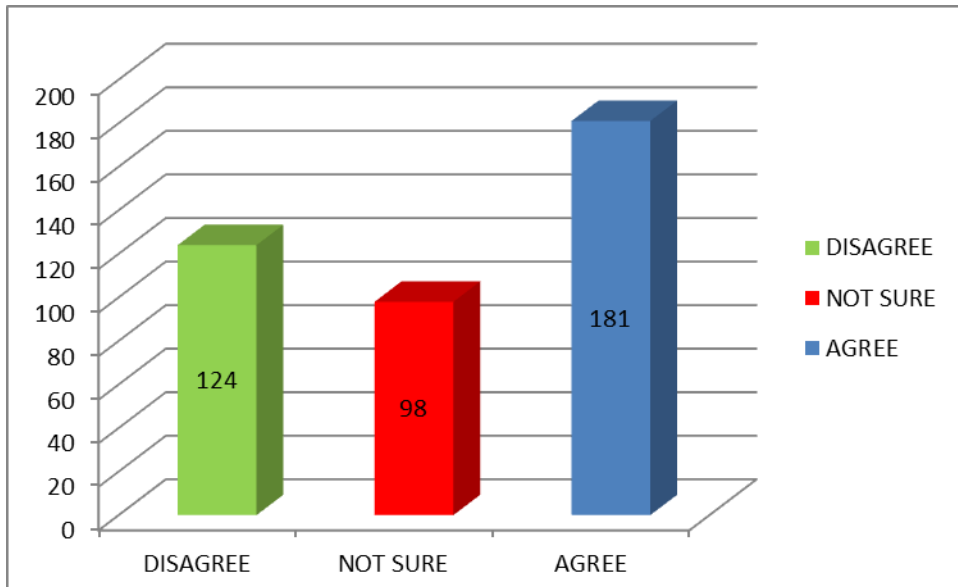
Figure 15. God makes bad things to happen to sinners (punishes)

View: God is the protector in all situations

All of the children interviewed in the first phase of this study were in agreement that one of the functions of God was His protection. Part 3, item 6: God gives me safety when I travel by keeping me from accidents and item 7: God protects me from armed robbers, were devised to see how prevalent the concept of the protective function of God was. It emerged that 401 (96.9%) agreed that He protects them from accidents as can be seen on Figure 16, while it can be seen on Figure 17 that 388 (94.2%) agreed that God protects them from armed robbers (Tables 26, 25). In general it can be implied that it is an almost universal view that God protects the respondents in all areas of life.
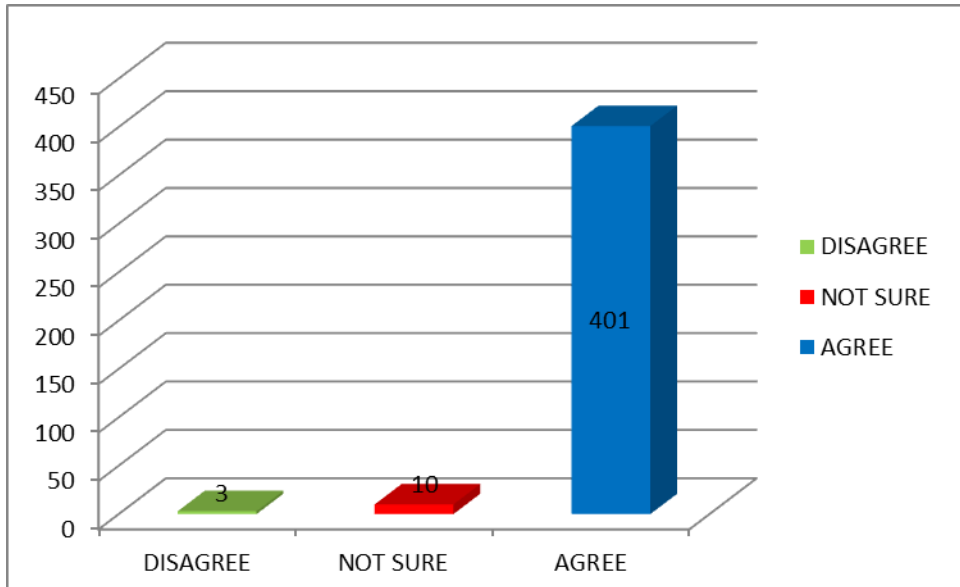
Figure 16. God gives protection from accidents
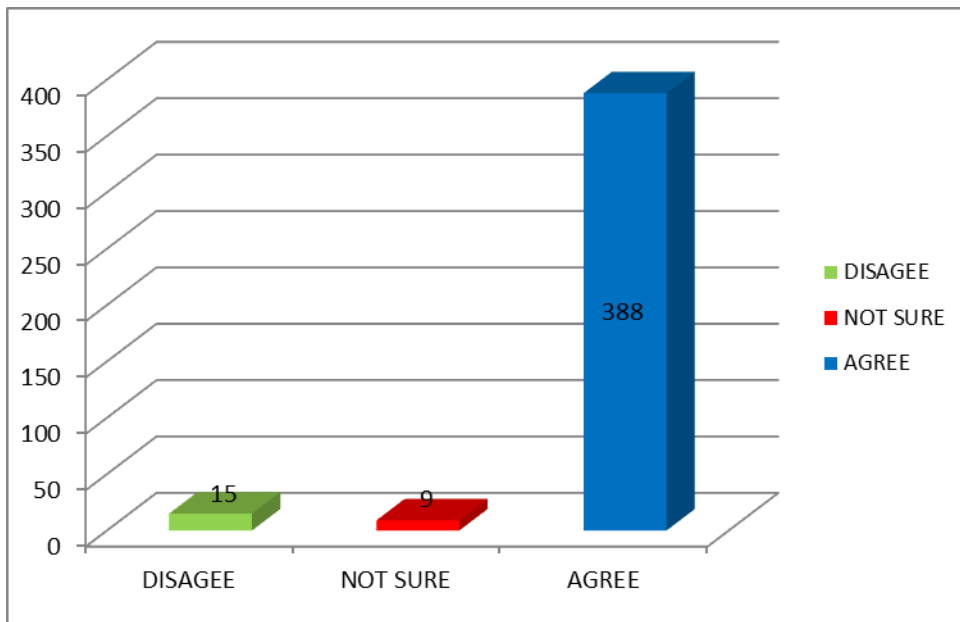
Figure 17. God gives protection from robbers

View: God provides for all needs

Children in the first phase viewed God as a provider. Item 8 Part 3: God provides for

my daily needs, was formulated to discover how prevalent this view of God was.

Three hundred and nighty-seven (96.6%) of all the respondents were of the opinion

that God is the provider and He provides for all their daily needs. This was only

refuted by 11(3.7%) respondents who were not sure and three (.7%) disagreed

outright (Figure 18 and Table 27). God as the provider, providing all needs of children

is a prevalent view.
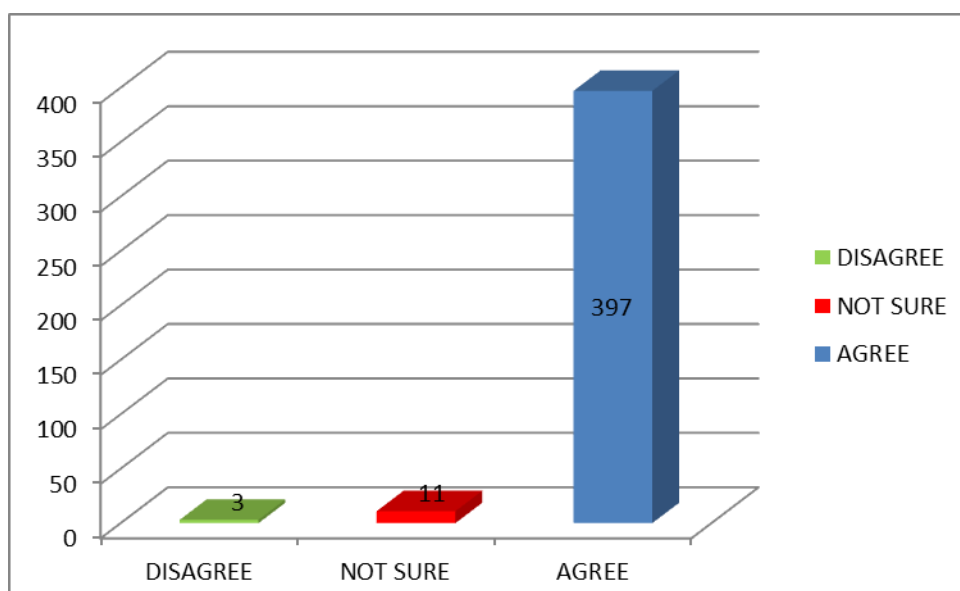
Figure 18. God provides for my daily needs

View: God wants children to be happy and live peacefully

It is children expectation that God wants them to be happy and live

peacefully. This view was reveled from the responses of the 24 children. The

responses to Item 16, Part 3: God wants me to be happy and live peacefully with

others, can be seen in Figure 19. It can be seen that 393 (97.5%) agree with this. God

has a good life for them. He does not take pleasure in their unhappiness. Only a small

number of 4 (1 %) and 6 (1.5%) disagreed and were not sure, respectively (Table 33,

Appendix 11).
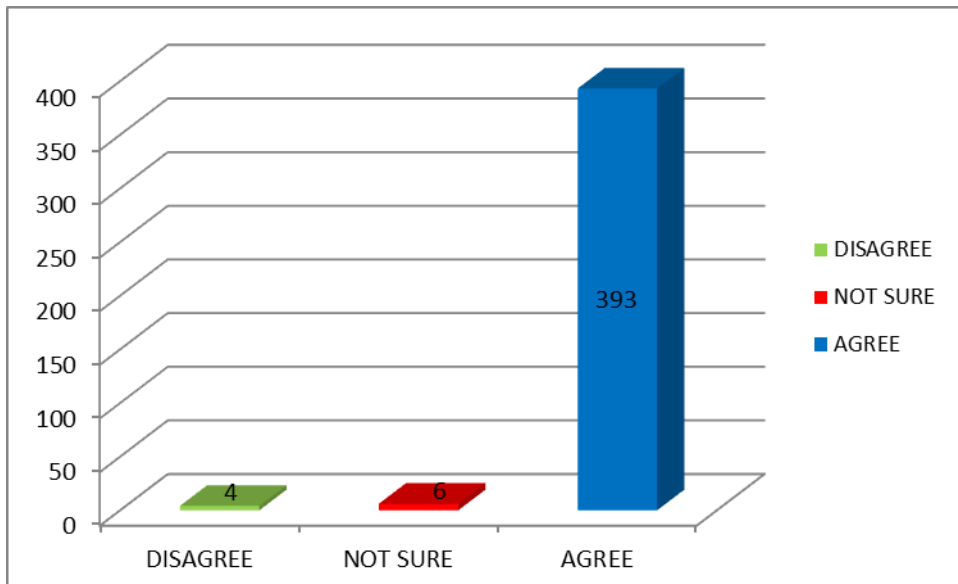
Figure 19. God wants children to be happy and live peacefully

View: God is the Master Teacher, full of all wisdom and knowledge

One view that arose during the interviews was that God is the Great Teacher who "guides," "advises" and "teaches" them. One teaching function as perceived by the children is to do with their examinations. The responses to Item 9 Part 3: God teaches me when I am doing the examination can be seen in Figure 20. It shows that 364 (88.1%), constituting a majority of the respondents indicated that God teaches them during the exam time (Table 28, Appendix 11). This makes it a prevailing view among the children.
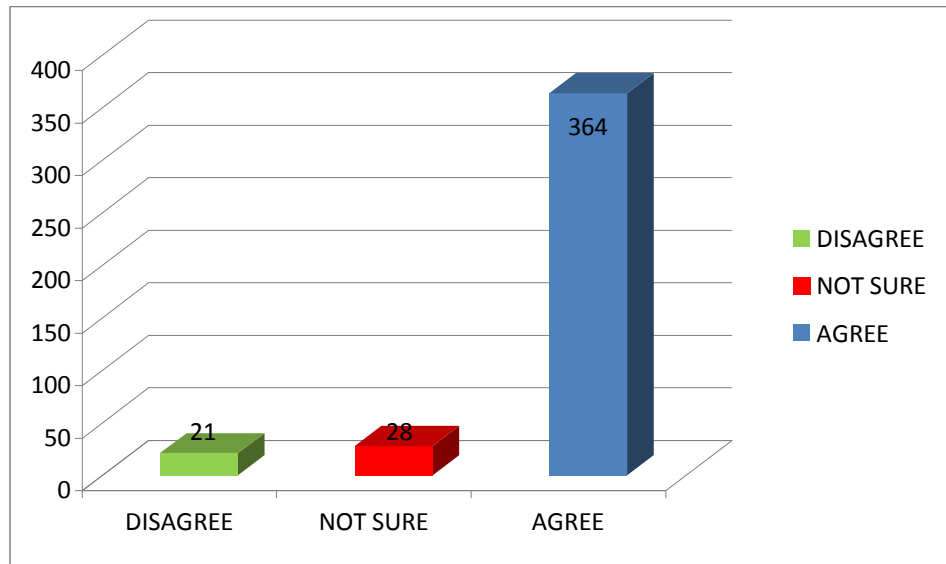
Figure 20. God teaches me when I am doing an examination

View: God works through people

The first phase respondents could see God at work within and around their state. In order to see how prevalent this view was Item 10, Part 2: God is working through the governor of my state, was devised. Figure 21 shows a small majority of 54.5% (222) who see God working through the governor of the state. Eighty-seven (21.4%) disagree and 98 (24.1%) were not sure (Table 29, Appendix 11). This is therefore a prevailing view.
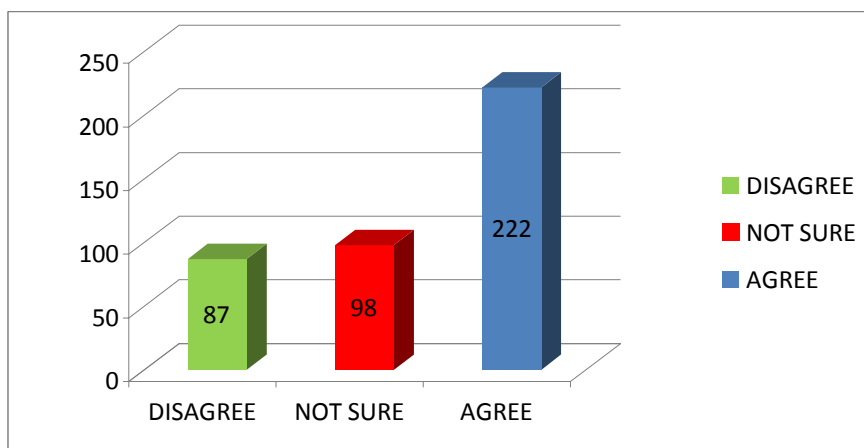
Figure 21. God works through the governor

View: God is creator, ruler and owner of all things

Item 7 and Item 8 of Part 2 of the questionnaire provided answers to the following two views about God as seen in Figure 22. The responses indicated that children were of the view that God made everything. They have a great sense of God as creator with 431 (81.2%) of the respondents affirming that God is creator. However, this was not the same with the response to God ruling the universe as those who affirmed this attribute were in a slight minority of 203 (48.3%). Likewise and even lower amount of the respondents, 154 (36.7%) agreed that God is the owner of the universe. It can be seen from Figure 22 that it is a prevalent view that God made everything. However, the views that God is the ruler of the universe or that he is owner of the universe were not prevalent.
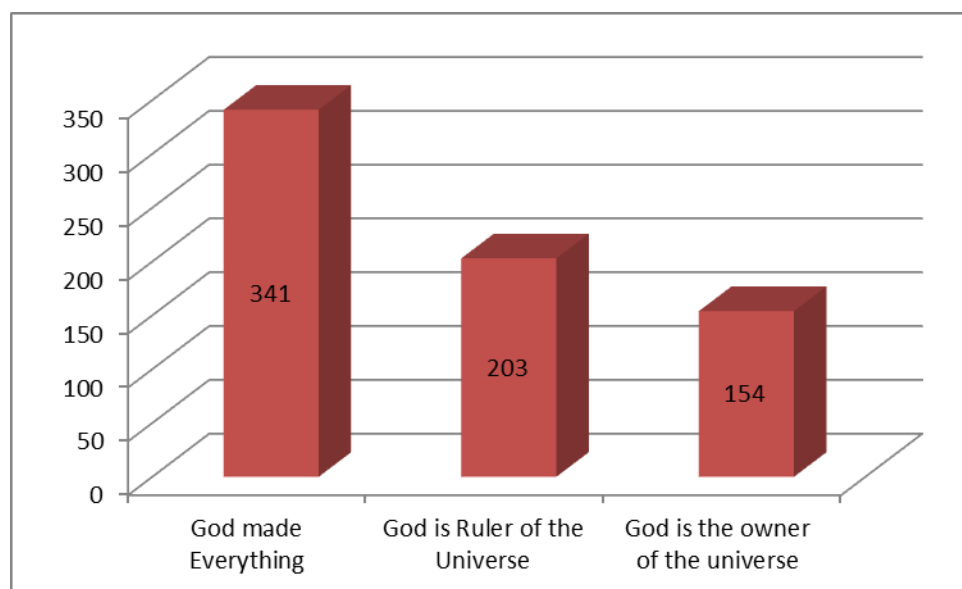
Figure 22. God is creator, ruler and owner of all things

Views: God is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent

The omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent attributes of God emerged as views of God. Items 7 and 8 of Part 2 of the questionnaire also provide answers to these views that children have about God. It was revealed that 253 respondents

representing 60.2% pointed out that they agree God is all powerful. As seen in Figure 23, 167 (39.8%) indicated that they would not say God is all-powerful. Fifty six percent which totals 235 respondents asserted that God knows all things while 44% (185) did not. The majority of 268 (63.8%) were of the view that God is everywhere while only 152 (36.2 %) were not of that opinion. Therefore, as indicated in Table 18, Appendix 11 and Figure 23 it can be said that in the views of children God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and omnipresent (present everywhere).
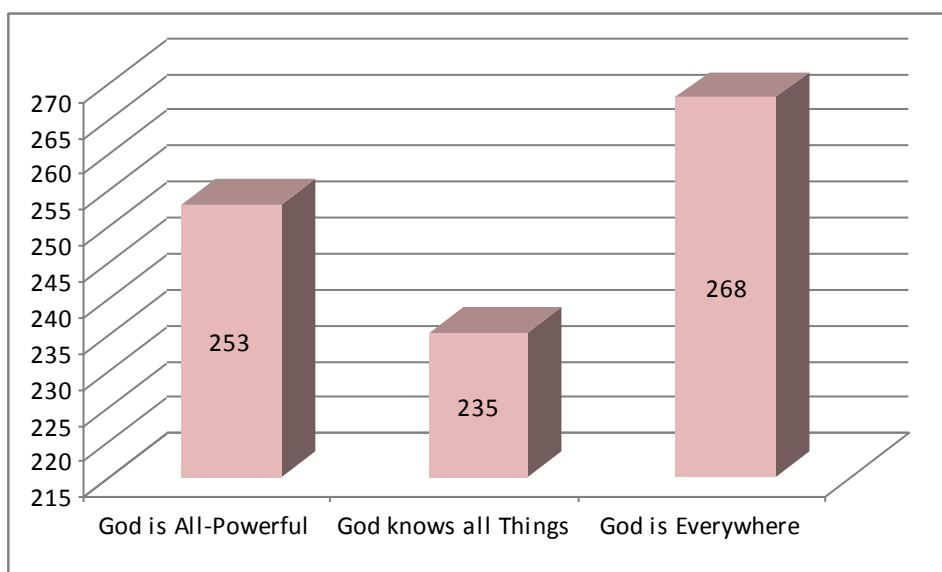
Figure 23. Omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent of God

View: God is their Heavenly Father

God as heavenly father was a view that was common to the 24 children in the first part of this study. In order to see how prevalent this view was Item 5, Part 3: God is called my heavenly father, was formulated. Figure 24 highlights that 395 (95.6%) respondents agreed that they call God Heavenly Father. The answer to this question

still portrays the fact that the prevailing view is that God is not just any kind of father but He is "heavenly father" (Table 19, Appendix 11).
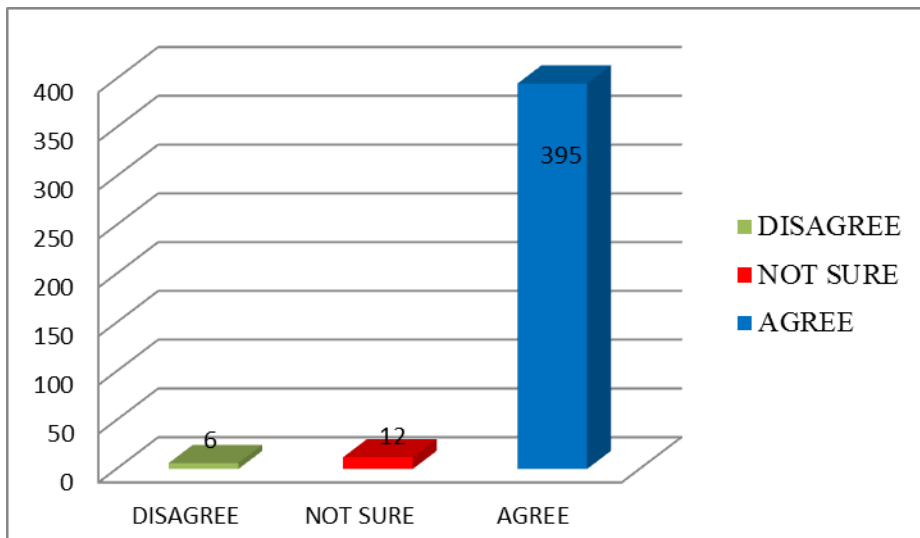
Figure 24. God is called Heavenly Father

View: God lives in Heaven

Part 3, Item 4: I think God lives in heaven, was formulated to see how prevent the abode of God was as reveled in the first phase of the study. Findings show that three hundred and eighty (94.8%) which represents a vast majority viewed God as living in Heaven. This can be seen in Figure 25 and Table 20, Appendix 11. Only 10 (2.5%) disagreed and 11 (2.7%) were not sure where God lived.
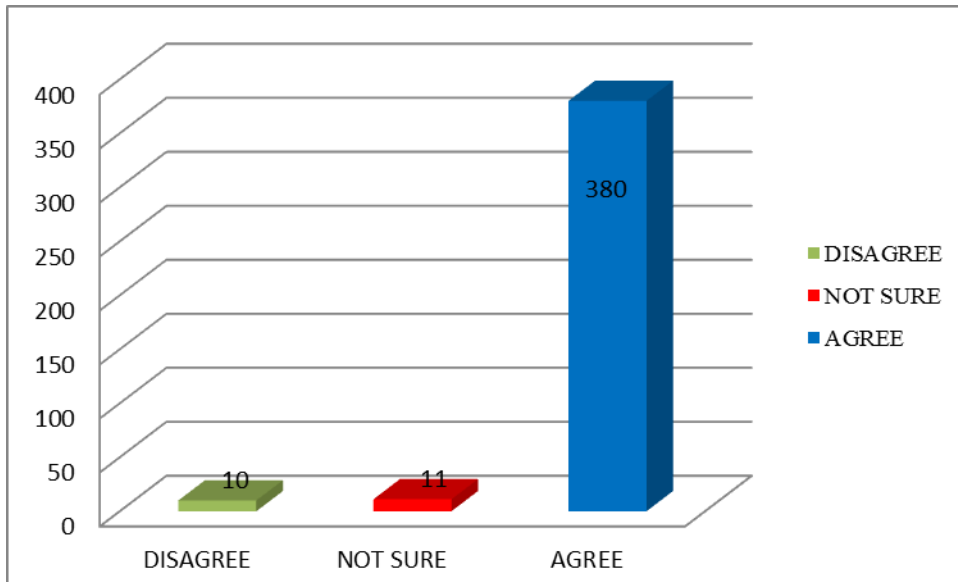
Figure 25. God lives in heaven

View: Children's personal relationship with God
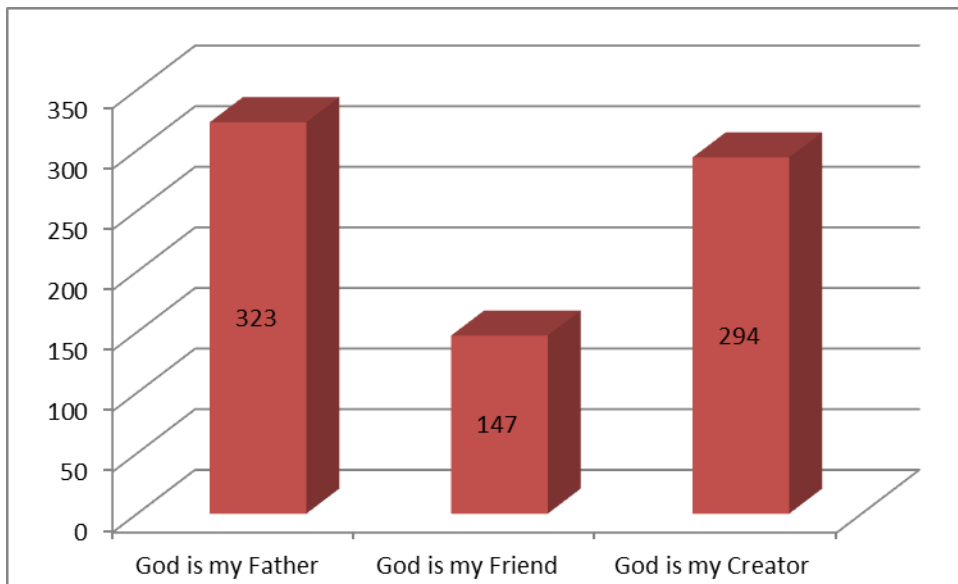
Figure 26. Relationship with God

The views the children have on their personal relationship with God can be seen in Figure 26 above and Table 14, Appendix 11. It shows how the respondents answered item 5 Part 3: I see God as (a) my father, (b) my friend, (c) my creator. It emerged that 76.9% (323) of the respondents saw God as their Father. Thirty five

percent (147) view God as their friend while 273 (65%) of the respondents do not

while God is affirmed as their creator by 294 (70%). This means it is prevalent among

the children to view God as father and creator but they largely do not see God as a

friend. The most frequent view here is God is father.

Views: Creation and nature (flowers, animals and insects) are associated with God

      Responses to item 28, Part 3: creation like flowers, animals and insect remind

me of God can be seen in Figure 27. The explanation of Figure 27 is that 279 (66.9%)

of the respondents see flowers, animals, and insects and they think of God. These are

triggers that help them to think of God. God is associated with them and it is a

prevalent view. Sixty-eight (17.1%) and 52 (13%) respondents respectively were not

sure or disagreed outright. It is therefore a prevailing view among children.
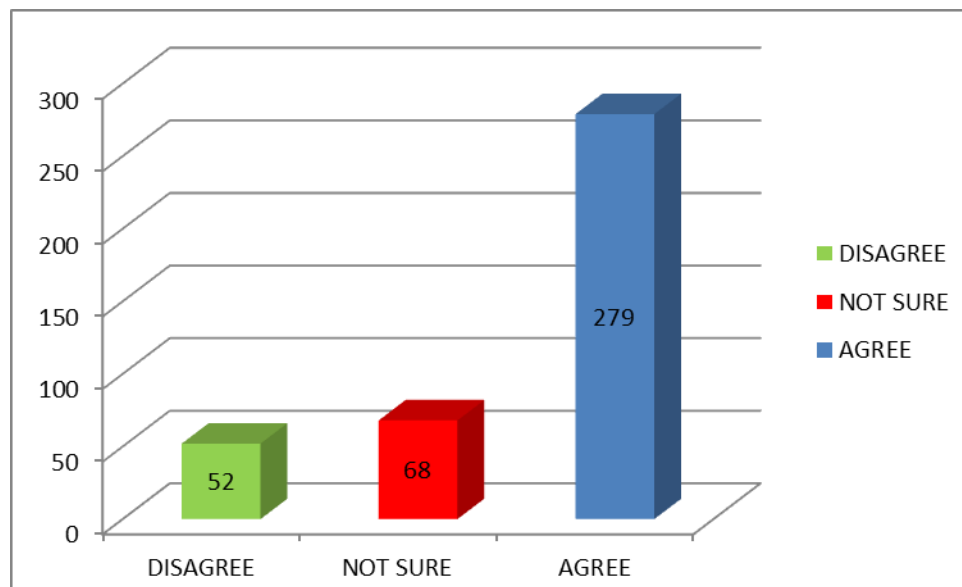
Figure 27. Flowers, animals and insects remind me of God

View: The Creation (moon, stars, sun, rain, wind and fire) are associated with God.

      Item 29, Part 3: The moon, stars, sun, rain, wind and fire remind me of God,

was formulated to reveal how prevalent the view of God's association with creation,

revealed in the first phase was. As highlighted in Figure 28 a majority which

consisted of 72.2%, which is 288 of the total respondents agreed, while 49 (12.3%)

disagreed and 62 (15.5%) were not sure (Table 39, Appendix 11). What this means is

that it is a prevalent view that the moon, stars, sun, rain, wind and fire are all elements

that remind children of God.
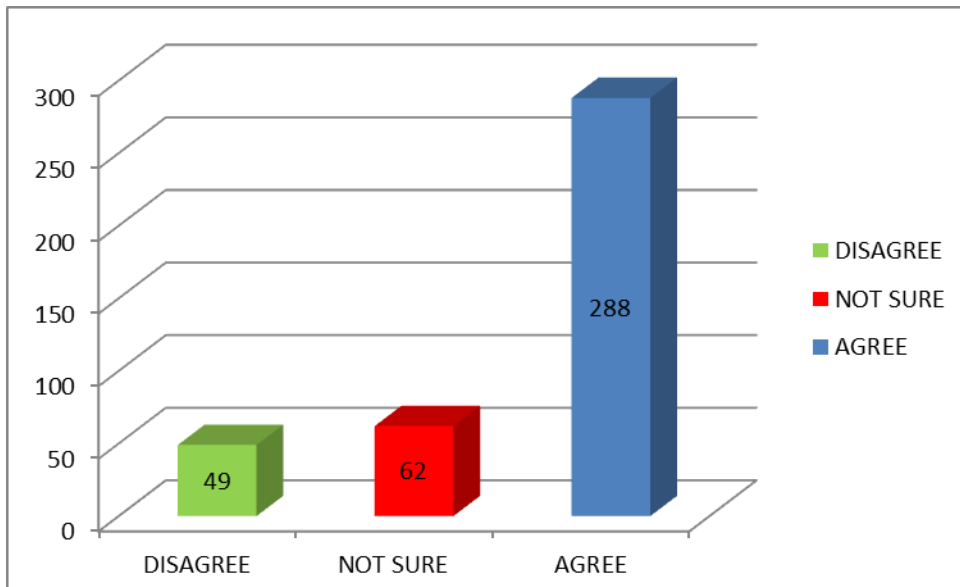
Figure 28. Moon, stars, sun, rain, wind, fire remind me of God

View: Children sing and worship God as a sign of appreciation

Appreciation to God in form of singing for all He has done was a view

common to children in the first phase. Item 13, Part 3: I sing and worship God as a

way of saying thank you to him, was formulated to see how prevalent this view was

among the respondents. The majority or 383 (93.6%) respondents agreed that they

would thank God for things He does for them by singing and by worshipping Him,

making it the prevailing view. This however, was not the view of 13 (3.2%) and 13

(3.2%) who said they disagreed or were not sure, respectively (Figure 29 and Table

30, Appendix 11).
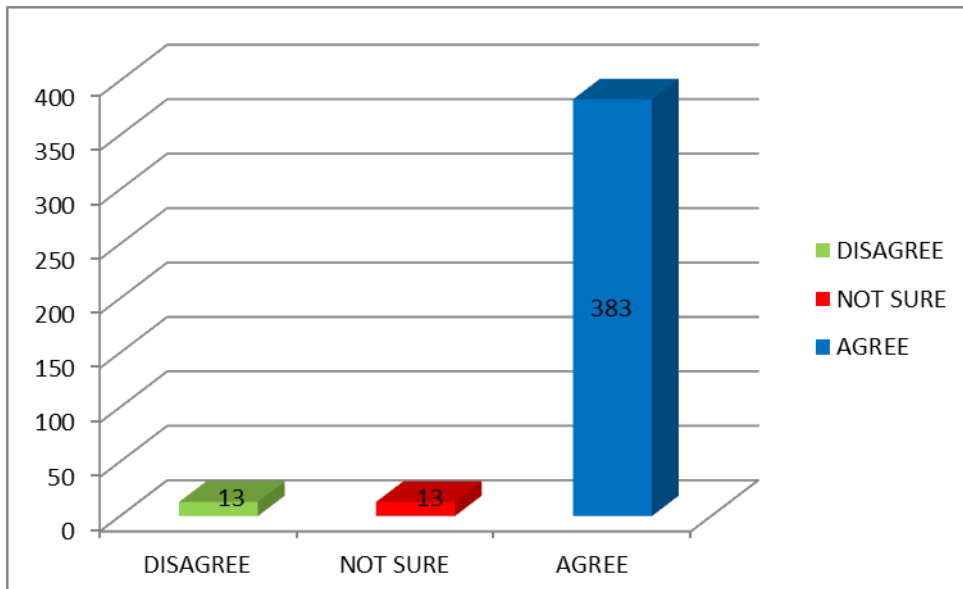
Figure 29. I sing and worship to say thanks to God

View: Thanking God in bad situations

It was the view of children in the qualitative phase of the study that they were to appreciate God no matter the situation. Item 14, Part 3: I thank God when bad things happen, was formulated to see how prevalent this view was. However, this response of gratefulness is not so easy for children when bad or unpleasant things happen. This can be seen by the results in Figure 30 and Table 31, Appendix 11 where only 52.9% (211) of the respondents indicated they thank God when they go through hard times, 33.1% (132) disagree and 14% (56) were not sure. The common view is that children praise God and worship Him as a way of saying thank you, but this gets harder when they go through hard times.
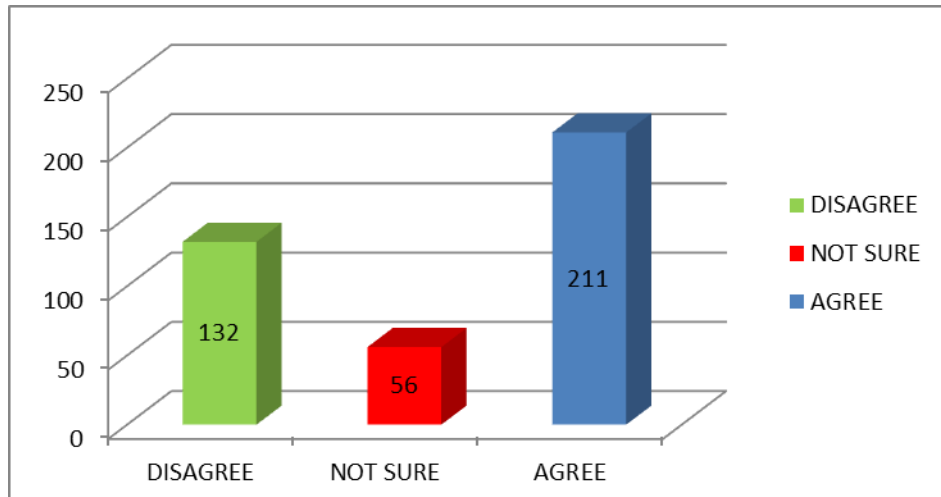
Figure 30. I thank God when bad things happen

View: God is dependable

Item 15, Part 3: I trust God knows the best for my life, was designed to see how prevalent the dependability of God was. The second phase of the research revealed that a majority, 375 (94%) of the respondents as seen in Figure 31 / Table 32, Appendix 11 believe that God knows the best for their lives. Nevertheless, 11 (2.8%) disagreed and 13 (3.3%) were not sure. God is dependable is therefore a prevailing view.
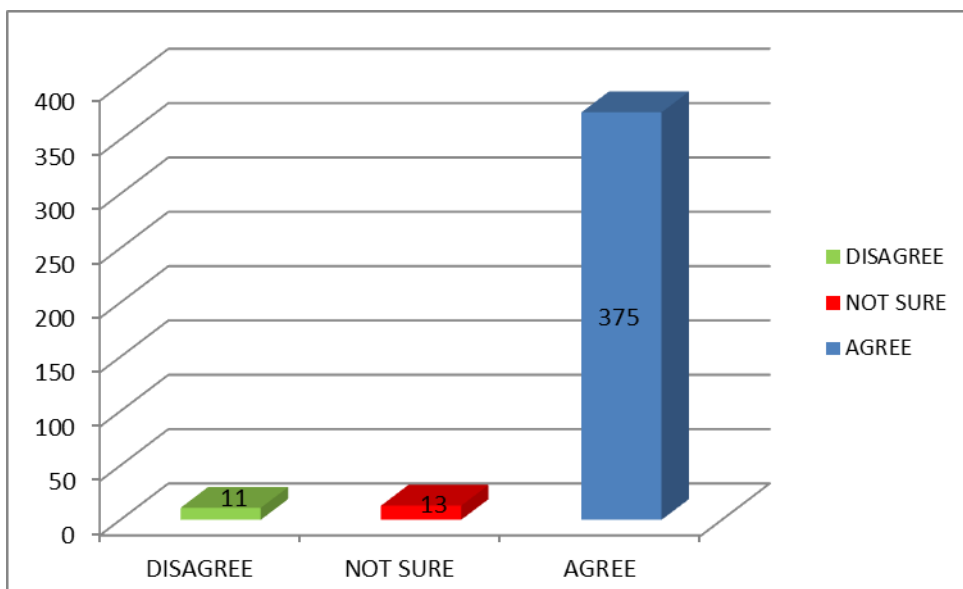
Figure 31.God knows the best for my life

View: God wants obedience from children

Item 17, Part 2: God wants me to obey His Word and my parents, was developed to see how prevalent the view of obedience discovered in the first phase was. As displayed in Figure 32 or Table 34, 392 (95.8%) respondents know and believe that God wants them to obey Him and their parents. While a very small minority of 9 (2.2%) were not sure and 8 (2%) disagreed. It was therefore a prevailing view of children that God demands obedience to Him, their God, and to their parents.
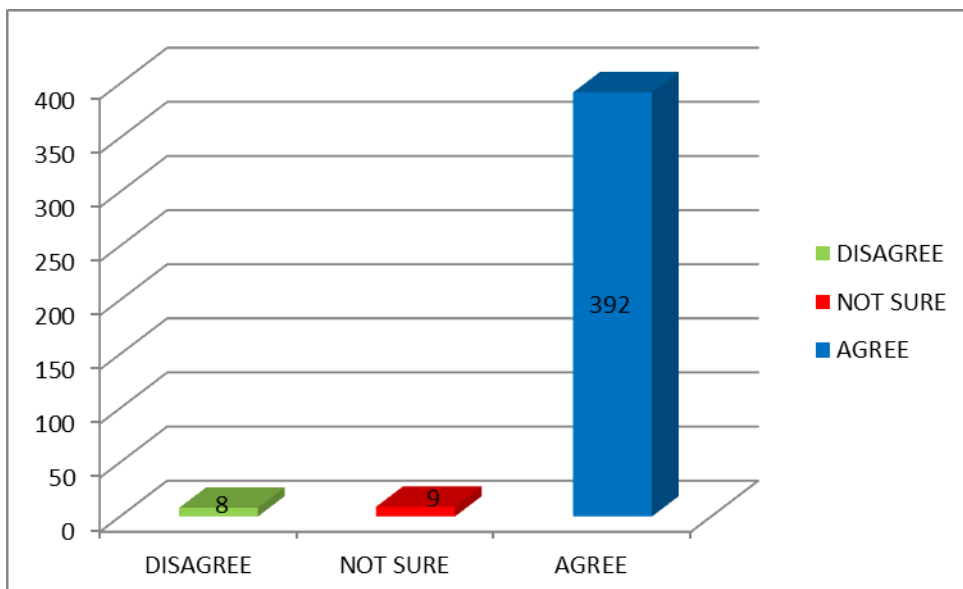
Figure 32. God wants children to obey Him and their parents

View: God wants honesty and truthfulness from children

Item 18, Part 3: God wants me to be honest and truthful, was formulated to find out if the expectation of God wanting children to be honest and truthful was a prevalent view. This is a prevailing view shown in Figure 33 with 384 (95%) of the respondents agreeing with this (Table 35, Appendix 11). Even if they are struggling with lies and stealing it is their common view that God wants them to be honest and truthful.
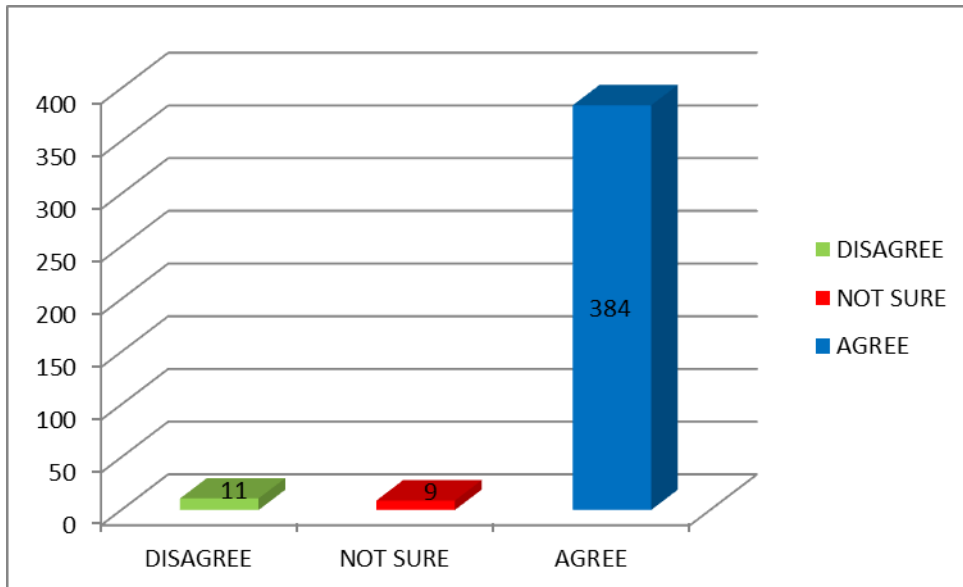
Figure 33. God wants children to be honest and truthful

View: God does not like children playing in a rough manner

From the interviews it was the concept of the respondents that God was interested in how they play. Item 19, Part 3: God dislikes children playing rough or with blades, was formulated. The responses of children as indicated in Figure 34 reveals that 116 (29.1%) viewed God as not interested in how they play so they disagreed with the statement that God dislikes rough play or blades. One hundred and seven (26.9%) were not sure if God liked or disliked them playing rough. It is therefore a prevalent view with 175 (44%) agreeing that God does not like them playing rough or with blades.
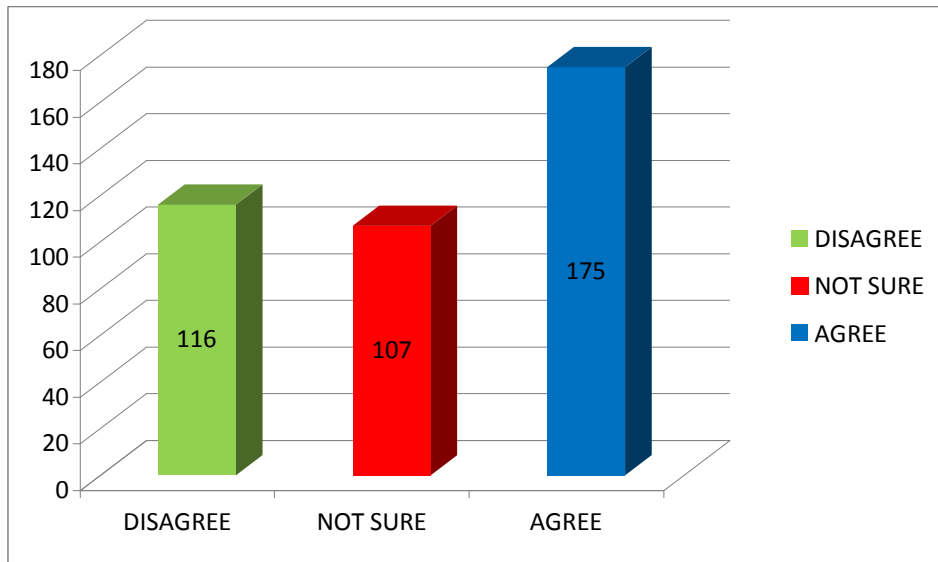
Figure 34. God dislikes rough play or playing with blades

View: God is interested in the words they speak

As seen in the first phase of this study, children also believe that God is interested in how they use their tongues and what kinds of words come out of their mouths. The responses of Item 37, Part 3: God dislikes children backbiting and abusing men of God can be seen in Figure 35 or Table 37. Three hundred and thirteen (77.5%) agreed that God does not like backbiting or abusing men of God while 46 (11.4%) disagree and 45 (11.1%) were not sure. It is thus a prevailing view that God takes interest in the words they speak.
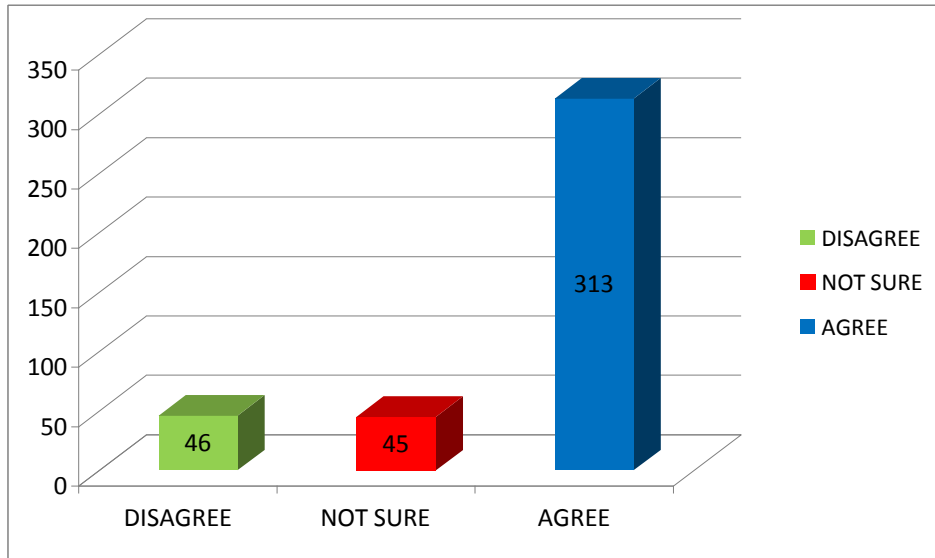
Figure 35. God dislikes backbiting and abusing men of God

View: God speaks to the children during devotion

A majority of the respondents in the first stage of this study believe that God speaks when they observe their quiet time or devotions. Responses from the second phase can be seen in Figure 36 where 369 (89.6%) of the respondents believe that God speaks to them during devotions and quiet time. However, only 30 (7.3%) were not sure and 13 % (3.2) disagreed (Table 46). It was therefore a prevailing view that God speaks during devotion.
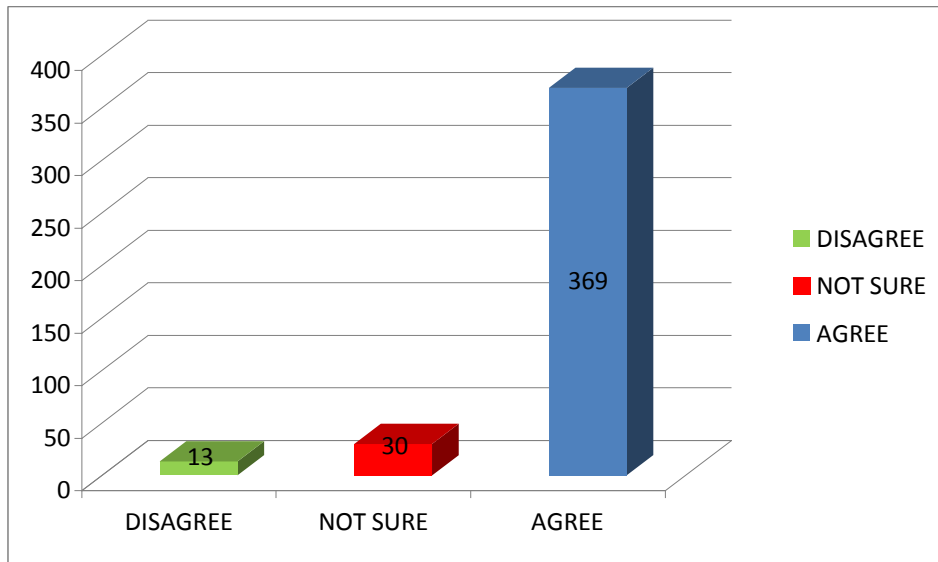
Figure 36. God speaks to children during devotion time

View: God speaks to the minds of children

Item 12, Part 3: God speaks to my mind by giving me instructions, was designed to find out if God speaking and giving instructions to children was a prevailing view. It can be seen (Figure 37) that a substantial majority of 408 (90.9%) of the respondents agree that God speaks to their mind and gives them instruction. Only a fraction, 11 (2.7%) disagrees and 26 (6.4%) are not sure (Table 47). Thus it is a prevailing view that God speaks to children.
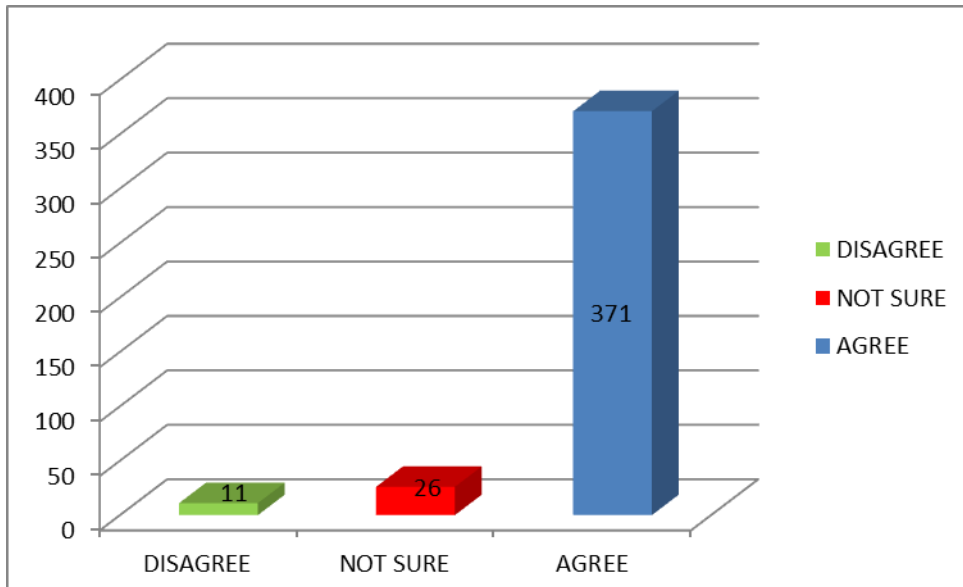
Figure 37. God speaks to the mind of children

View: the Bible and the church reminded children of God

The group of respondents interviewed associated the Bible and church with God. Item 30, Part 3: when I see the Bible and church I think of God, was designed to show if this was a prevalent view. As illustrated in Figure 38 or Table 40, 357 (89.3%) were of the opinion that the Bible and the church reminded them of God. This could be because they are taught that the Bible is the word of God and the church is the house of God. The respondents who disagreed were 19 (4.8%), while 24 (5.7%) were not sure.
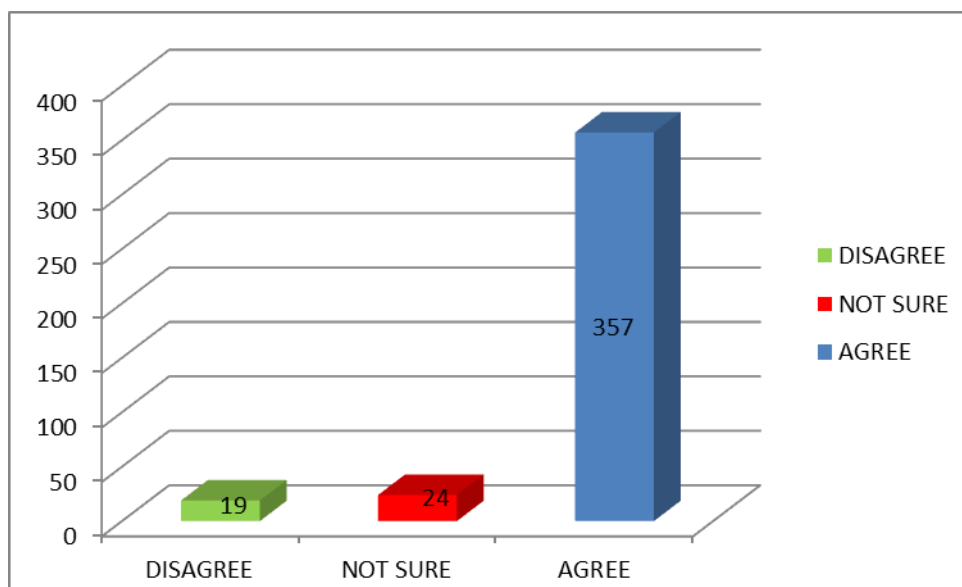
Figure 38. The Bible and church remind me of God

View: God's presence is far when they cannot answer examination questions

A view held by some of the respondents in the first phases was that inability to answer a question during exams meant that God's presence was no longer with them. Item 24, Part 3 was designed to find out if it was a prevailing view. It is revealed in Figure 20 that although God is deemed to be the Master Teacher, who teaches them in examinations (see Table 52) it is not a common view that when they cannot answer a question during an examination it means that God's presence has gone far from them. As highlighted in Figure 39, 176 (41.9%) which in this case make up the majority, disagree with the fact that just because they cannot answer a question, God's presence is no longer with them. In agreement were 131 (32.3%) while 99 (24.4%) could not make up their minds on what to believe.
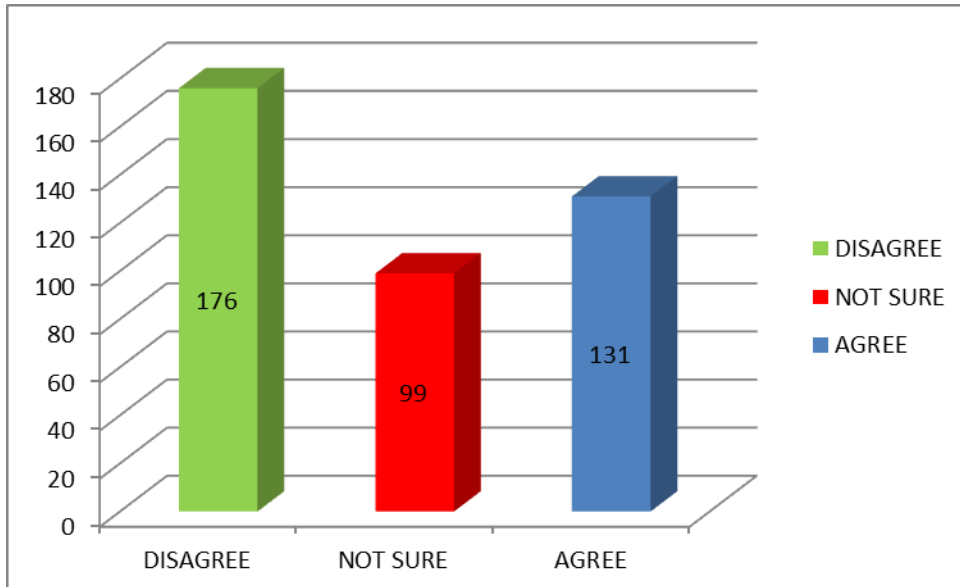
Figure 39. God's presence far when I cannot answer examination questions

View: Gods' presence is with children when they are in trouble

Item 22, Part 2: God is with me when I am in trouble or in danger, was designed as a result to the view of God's abiding presence highlighted in the first phase of the research. It has been found to be a prevailing view that God is near the children when they are in trouble or going through hard times. This view can be seen in Figure 40 below where 387 (94.6%) of the respondents believe that God is with them in trials and tribulations. Only 10 (2.4%) and 12 (2.9%) disagree and were not sure of God's abiding presence in times of trouble (Table 53, Appendix 11).
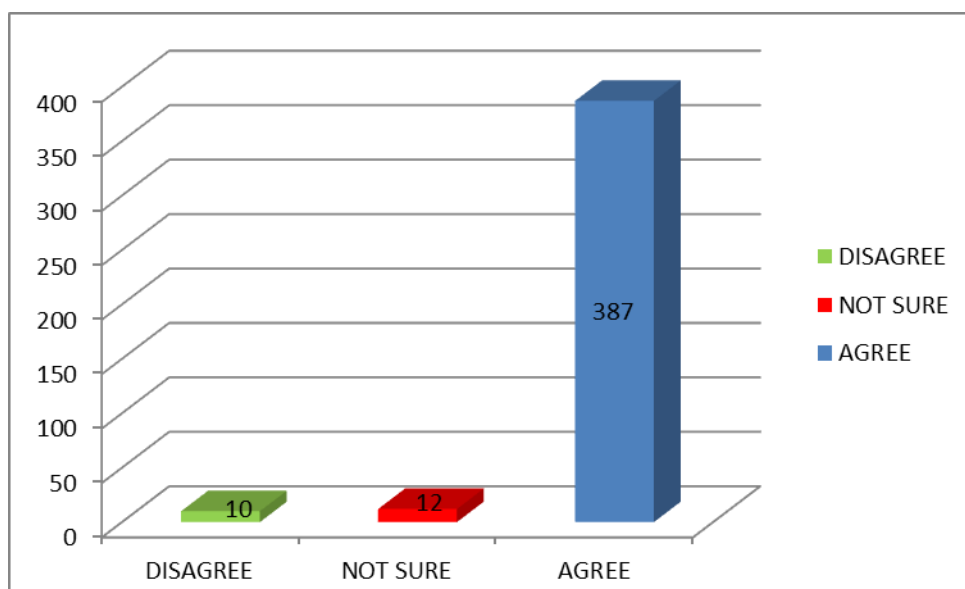
Figure 40. God's presence near when I am in trouble

View: Gods' presence goes far when they sin

It was found in the qualitative part of the study that sin removes the presence of God from the lives of children. Figure 41 shows the results of Item 23, Part 3 regarding children's views on sin and the presence of God. It reveals that 275 (68.1%) believe that when they sin their actions drives God far from them. Sixty-one (15.1%) disagree and say that sin in their lives does not remove the presence of God from them and 68 (16.8%) were not sure. It can be seen that in the second phase of this research it is a prevailing view among children, that when they sin God's presence goes far from them.
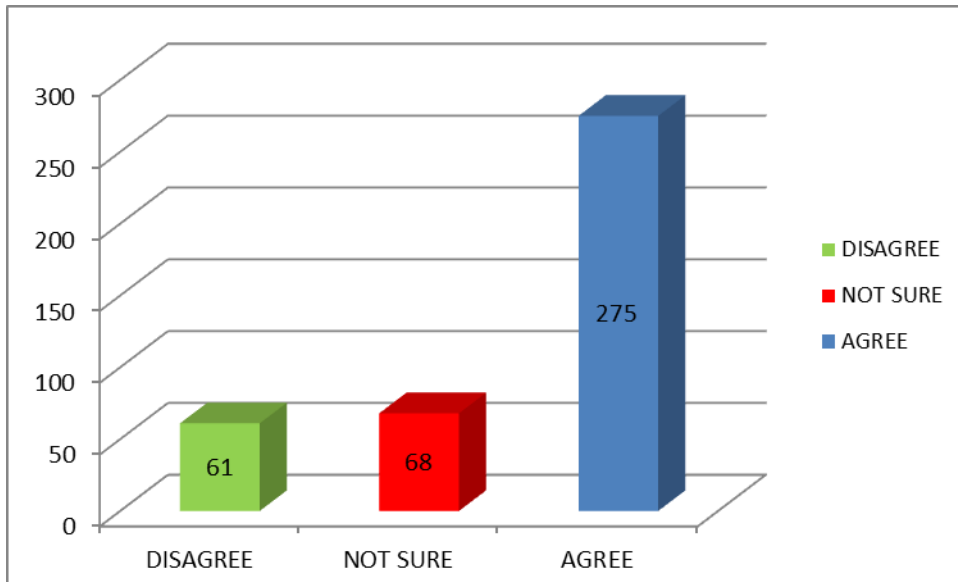
Figure 41. God's presence goes far from me when I sin

View: God is far when things are not going on well

Some of the children during the first phase of the research were of the opinion that God is far when things were not going on well with them. Item 25, Part 3 was formulated to find out if this was a prevailing view. God abandoning children when things are not going on well or as expected is not a prevalent view as only 149 (37.3%) agreed with this statement. One hundred and eighty-three (45.8%) disagreed, believing that God does not leave a person when things are not going well. He is near them in trials and tribulations (see Figure 42 and Table 55, Appendix 11). This goes to confirm the results of Figure 40 that God is with a person in trouble.

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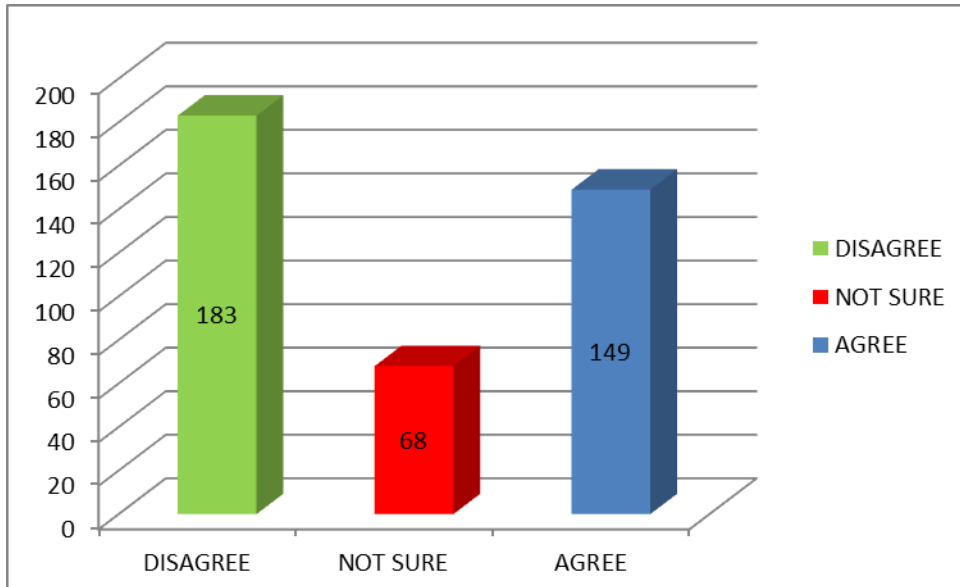
Figure 42. God's presence far when things are not going well

View: God's presence is there when children pray

Children in this studies first phase had the view that God was near when they prayed. Item 21, Part 3: I understand that when I pray God's presence is near me, was used to see if this is a prevalent view. It can be depicted from Figure 43 that 382 (92.3%) are of the view that when they talk to God in prayer He is near them (Table 51). Only 11 (2.6%) believe that God is not with them as they pray and 21 (5%) were not sure. God's abiding presence being near when the children pray is a prevailing view.
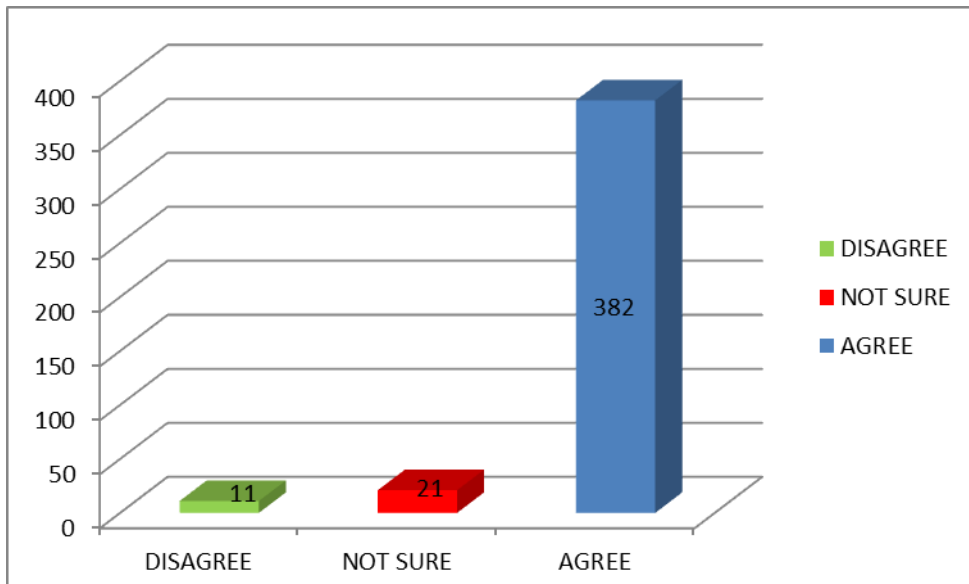
Figure 43. God is near me when I pray

View: God is addressed by certain African names

God is called by certain names which cut across the other four themes in the minds of the children during the interview in phase one of the study. The names show His function, attributes, and the relationship they have with Him and also depict His presence. African (Nigerian) names were mentioned to describe views of God. These names were mainly Yoruba names. This is probably due to the fact that the town in which the respondents were interviewed was a Yoruba town. Item 2, Part 2 of the questionnaire addressed this view that God can be called by certain African names. As presented in Figure 44 and Table 13 it could be noted that 189 (45%) stated that they would call God *Eru-jeje* (The Fearful One) while 231 (55%) respondents stated that this is not a name they would call God. A majority of 297 (70%) said that they would call God *Oba awon oba* (King of kings), this being the prevailing name by which God is called. However, it was closely followed by *Olorun* (The Owner of the Heavens) which had a total of 259 (61.7%), while only 38.3% stated they would not call God by the name *Olorun*. It could be seen that 169 (40.2%) stated that they would

call God *Chineke* (God the Creator/Designer) which is an Ibo name for God, but this group is in the minority as 251 (59.8%) would not use *Chineke* as a name in calling God. Using the name *Oba-okun* (King of the oceans) for God was not at all prevalent as only 70 respondents representing 16.7% said that they would use the name to address God. On the other hand, 83.3% which was 350 respondents said they would not use that name to describe or call God.
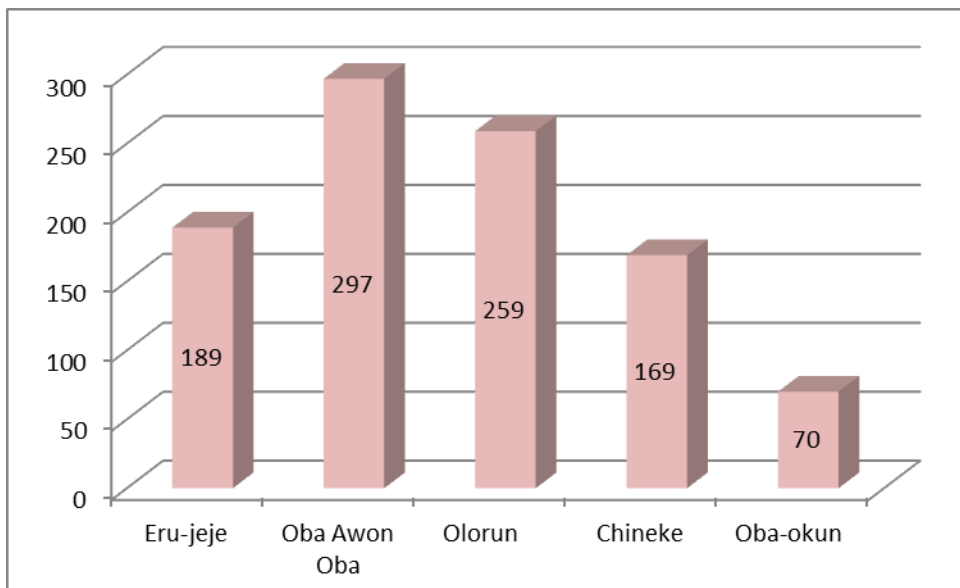
Figure 44. African names for God

View: God is addressed by certain biblical names

It emerged from the first phase that in the views of the children God was to be addressed by certain names. This view was attended to in Items 1, 2, 3 and 4, Part 2 of the questionnaire. Figure 45 and Table 11 show that of the 420 respondents, 340 (81%) signified that they would call God everlasting father. Fewer of the respondents saw God as prince of peace, as 238 (56.7%) would call God the prince of peace. Two hundred and twenty-nine (54.5%), representing just over one half of the respondents would address God as Emmanuel. Addressing God as counselor was not favorable as only 156 (37.1%) respondents stated they would call God such, while 264 (62.9%)

said they would not address God as counselor. More than half of the respondents 252 (60%) would address God as Saviour and just over half of the respondents 222 (52.9%) signified that they would call God Jehovah Shalom. This trend also applied to the name El Shaddai. Some 232 (52.2%) respondents indicated that they would call God El Shaddai, while 48% comprising of 188 respondents would not use this name to call God. However, the reverse was the case for the name Jehovah Nissi. Two hundred and one (47.9%) respondents, being the minority, stated that they would call God by this name while 219 (52.1%) being the majority signified this is not a name they would use for God. Only 141 (33.6%) of the respondents stated that they would call God Jehovah Elohim. However, a fairly large proportion 279 (66.4%) felt that Jehovah Elohim was not a name they would use for God. Two hundred and nighty (69%) were affirmative that they would call God Alpha and Omega while 130 (31%) indicated that they would not. There was almost an even split between respondents with 209 (49.8%) who said they would call God King of this World and 211 (50.2%) who said they would not. The names of God as Lily of the Valley and Rose of Sharon had the majority of the respondents with 287 (68.3%) and 278 (66.2%), indicating that they would not call God by these names. On the other hand 254 (60.5%) and 238 (56.7%) of the respondents affirmed that they would call God the Lion of Judah and the Ancient of Days. Figure 45 shows that the prevailing name by which children would call God is Everlasting Father (Table 11, Appendix 11).
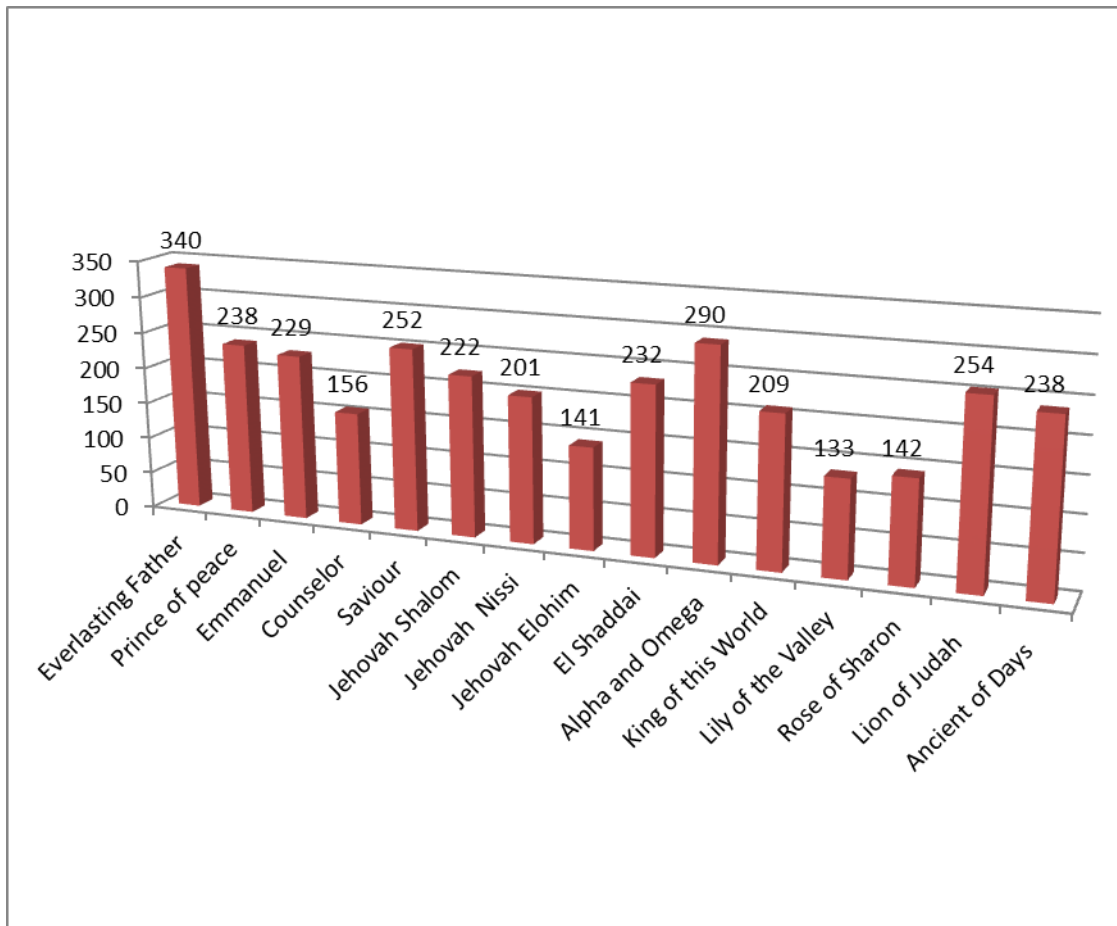
Figure 45. Biblical names for God

Summary

The quantitative phase of this study shows the prevalence of children's views revealed from the qualitative phase. They have the prevalent view of an angelic winged God, a spirit God and a human God. Prevalent were the views that God and Jesus are the same person and also that God is triune. God is the King of all kings is a prevalent view. God punishes sinners has been generally accepted and also is the belief that He will judge everyone. Out of the seven categories of people who God might have like qualities the prevailing view was the Pastor. God is holy was a prevalent view however, that all God does is good and correct is not a prevalent concept.

It was prevalently agreed upon by the children that colours, elements in creation, the Bible and church and even a king in his royal attire are all associated with God. It was also prevalently agreed upon that God is a deliverer, provider, and teacher and He wants peace and happiness for their lives. It is not a prevalent view that God rules and reigns and it is also not seen to be prevalent that God is the owner of all things. God is all-Powerful, all-knowing and created all things. Prevalent were the views that God is their father. God was not seen as a friend or as owner of the universe. Prevalent are the views that God wants children to sing praises to Him for all He has done, so they respond to God with thanksgiving. Majority children see God is trustworthy and dependable and understand that He wants honesty, truthfulness and obedience, dislikes all kinds of sin, especially rough play and playing with dangerous things. Prevailing are the views that God speaks and His presence is with them. They agree that He is everywhere, especially with them in times of trouble. Majority agree that God answers their prayers when He is happy. It is a prevalent view that sin drives God from them. However, it was not a prevalent view that God's presence leaves them when they cannot answer examinations questions.

<div align="center">

The Relationship between Age, Gender and Denomination and African
Children's views of God

</div>

Research Question 3

The next stage of the quantitative data analysis was to answer the third research question. RQ3. How do certain demographic variables relate to African children's views of God? To do this, three hypotheses were formulated. These hypotheses were written and tested in the null form. Age, gender and church denomination were factors that this researcher saw that could have a possible relationship on children's views of God.

H$_o$: 1   There is no significant relationship between the age of the children and their views of God.

H$_o$: 2   There is no significant relationship between the gender of the children and their views about God.

H$_o$: 3   There is no significant relationship between the church denomination of the children and their views of God.

Hypothesis 1

H$_o$: There is no significant relationship between the age of the children and their views of God. To test the hypothesis 37 items were used to represent the children's views of God. Cross tabulation was performed to establish whether a relationship exists between the children's age and their views of God as stated in the 37 items. The results of this cross tabulations are as shown in Table 8, Appendix 8. Pearson Chi-Square test was performed to test relationship between the categorical variables. If the calculated χ^2 value is lower than the critical Chi- Square value of 5.991 with 2df at a .05 level of significance then the hypothesis will not be rejected. Out of the 37 items it was discovered that in 14 items (2, 3, 8-11, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27 and 31, 34-36) there was significant difference between age and their views of God. These items were:

1.   There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God and Jesus are the same.

2.   There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3.   There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God teaches me during the exams

4. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God works through the governor.

5. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God dislikes children playing rough or with blades.

6. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that

7. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God answers my prayers only when He is happy with me.

8. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that when they cannot answer a question during the examination time it means God's presence is far from them.

9. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God's presence is far when things are not going on well with them.

10. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly everywhere.

11. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that colours red, white and purple remind them of God.

12. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that God can cause sinners to have accidents, problems and sickness or bring about their death.

13. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that I would draw God with a face, eyes, nose a month and hair on head because God made us in His own image.

14. There was significant relationship between age and the children's views that I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God.

Therefore, for the fourteen items above the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

For the remaining 23 items (1, 3-7, 11-18, 21-23, 26, 28-30, 32, 33, 32) there was no significant relationship between age and the children's views of God therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected

Hypothesis 2

H_0: 2 There is no significant relationship between the gender of the children and their views about God. To test the hypothesis 37 items were used to represent the children's views of God. Cross tabulation was performed to establish whether a relationship exists between the children's gender and their views of God as stated in the 37 items. The results of this cross tabulations are as shown in Table 9.2 Appendix 9. Pearson Chi-Square test was performed to test relationship between the categorical variables. When the calculated χ^2 value is lower than the critical Chi- Square value of 5.991 with 2df at a .05 level of significance then the hull hypothesis was not rejected. Out of the 37 items it was discovered that in 3 items (6, 7 and 23) there was significant difference between age and their views of God. For these three items the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. It was discovered that

1. There was significant relationship between gender and the children's views that God gives me safety when I travel by keeping me from accidents.

2. There was significant relationship between gender and the children's views that God protects them from armed robbers.

3. There was significant relationship between gender and the children's views that God's presence goes far when they sin.

For the remaining 34 items (1- 6, 8-22, 24-37) there was no significant relationship between their views of God and gender and hence the null hypothesis was accepted (see Table 9.2, Appendix 9).

Hypothesis 3

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the church denominations of the children and their views of God. To test the hypothesis 37 items were used to represent the children's views of God. Cross tabulation was performed to establish whether a relationship exists between the children's church denomination and their views of God. The results of this cross tabulations are as shown in Table 10.2 Appendix 10 Pearson Chi-Square test was performed to test relationship between the categorical variables. If the calculated χ^2 value is lower than the critical Chi- Square value of 9.448 with 4df at a .05 level of significance then the null hypothesis was not rejected. Out of the 37 items it was discovered that in 11 items (1, 5, 17, 20-23, 27, 28, 30, and 27) there was significant difference between church denomination and their views of God. Therefore for these views and items the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Table 10.2 shows that:

1.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views they see God as spirit or ghost.

2.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that God is called my heavenly Father.

3.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that God wants me to obey His Word and my parents.

4.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that when I do my devotion or read my Bible God speaks to me.

5.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that when I pray God's presence is near me.

6.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that God is with me when I am in trouble or in danger.

7.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that God's presence goes far from me when I sin.

8.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly everywhere.

9.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that creation like flowers, animals and insects remind me of God.

10.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that when I see the Bible or church I think of God.

11.   There was significant relationship between church denomination and the children's views that God dislikes children backbiting and abusing men of God.

The reminder 26 items (2-4, 6-16, 18,19, 24-26, 29 and 31-36) it was found that there was no significant relationship between the church denominations of the children and their views of God (see Table 10.2, Appendix 10). Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Summary

Analysis of the data revealed that for certain views there was a significant relationship between the views the children have of God and their age and also their views and church denomination. However, for other views there was no significant

relationship between their views of God and their age or their denomination. It was also found that the gender of children does not generally affect how they see God. This was because it was only in 3 items that there was significant difference between the gender of the children and their views of God.

Interpretations of Findings and Discussions

The purpose of this study was two-fold: to find out the views of God that exist among African children and the prevalence of such views; and to examine how gender, age and church denomination relate to their views of God. The following three research questions were derived.

RQ1. What are the different views African children have about God in a selected church in Ibadan?

RQ2. How prevalent are the African children's views about God among the denominations?

RQ3. How do certain demographic variables relate to African children's views of God?

In order to answer RQ 3 three hypotheses were formulated. They were all written in the null form.

H_o: 1   There is no significant relationship between the age of the children and their views of God.

H_o: 2   There is no significant relationship between the gender of the children and their views about God.

H_o: 3   There is no significant relationship between the church denomination of the children and their views of God.

Response to Research Question 1 and Research Question 2

The children's views of God were categorized into five major themes: the existence and nature of God, the functions of God, children's relationship with God, the presence of God and African and biblical names of God.

From the theme of the existence and nature of God, one group of children drew God as a human, their rational for this was that God is like a human being because He made them (humans) in His own image and likeness. This group of children had no problem in associating their picture of God with their picture of people. They drew God with a face, eyes nose, mouth and hair and a physical body. Their drawings showed concrete anthropomorphic descriptions. In most cases they represented God in their drawings as a male figure. Some 204 (50.5 %) of the respondents agreed that they would draw God in a human form, 113 (28 %) disagreed and 87 (21.5 %) were not sure (Figure 2 or Table 49).

It is not uncommon to view God as a man. Their descriptions of God as a man were that He was not like an ordinary person but was the most superior of all. He was called the 'king of kings,' "Father of my father,' 'controller of controllers,' 'seven times bigger' and the 'old learned man,' among many others. Hanisch (2002, 7) revealed that 75% of his respondents drew God as a man. This could be because in Christianity God is portrayed and addressed as a "man" and is called 'Father.'

To some of the children in this study God cannot be depicted by them because no one had seen Him. This group drew God with a human body however there were no facial features or they drew him like a ghost. These children showed signs of abstract thinking in their descriptions of God. One hundred and nighty-one (47.8%) respondents agreed that they would draw God with no facial features because no one

had seen God, 122 (30.5%) disagreed and 87 (21.8%) were not sure (Figure 3 or Table 50).

Looking at the Tables 49, Appendix 11 it could be seen that while 50.5% agreed that they would draw the face of God a cumulative total of 49.5% either disagreed or were not sure. As seen in Table 50 the figure of children willing to draw God with a face had dropped to 30.5%. It could be seen that about half of the children were averse to the thought of "drawing God with a face," It is possible that the request and idea of drawing God posed a cultural and theological dilemma for the children. If this is the case then this is a significant departure from what is found with children from the West when they are asked to "Draw the Deity" or asked to "draw God."

The children see God as spirit, however the results show a tendency among the children to see the "spirit" in terms of a ghost. The unseen God is viewed in terms of a masculine spirit. God as spirit or ghost has been found in this study to be a prevalent view among children as almost half agreed. Table 21 or Figure 4 shows that 193 (46%) have the concept of God as a spirit or ghost and 191 (47.8%) of the same respondents still agreed the concept of the unseen God (Figure 3 or Table 50). This means that when children learn that God is spirit about 50% of them think "ghost." This also sheds more light on the prevalent view of children that God is father, Son and Holy Spirit (Figure 7, Table 23). Three hundred and fifty-nine (88.6%) agreed that God is triune. On the surface this looks good, however it means that at least half of them think of the third Person of the God-head in terms of a ghost, this then becomes alarming. Children are familiar with ghosts. They see images of ghosts which are also called spirits on television, in cartoons and even in books, so they have concrete examples of how a spirit would look like. From the religious instruction they have received at home and in church it would seem that children have not learnt or

been taught the male volant spirit they have as pictures in their minds should not be confused with God the Spirit.

The respondents saw God as an angel with wings which He used to move everywhere. This conception of an angelic God was found to be a prevailing view as 159 (39.6%) were in agreement, 129 (30.7%) could not make up their mind whether to agree or disagree with this view, while 114 (27.1%) did not agree with this view (Figure 5 or Table 22). This means that only 27.1% had the correct view of God without wings, while a majority (72.9%) either had an erroneous view or were confused. The children gave two major functions for the wings, which were for 'motion' and 'protection.' It could also imply that for God to be everywhere He uses the wings and it helps Him come on time. He would fly like superman or batman. This implies misconception in this view of God.

As discussed in Chapter Two children are in Jean Piaget's concrete operational stage of cognitive development so it may be hard for them to understand abstract things (Piaget 1972, 41-91). They therefore have to apply concrete things to abstract issues in order to understand. How can God be everywhere at once? The way many of them may have solved this mystery is to give God wings which He uses to fly around. However, MacLean's (1930) research concluded that teaching and not age was responsible for the views children have of God. If this is the case, then one may suggest that the concept of an angelical God is a reflection of the quality of teaching children are getting from the home, school and church. MacLean's research showed that children who are well-taught had correct views of God over and above children who have not been taught well (Hyde 1990, 80). It then becomes important to see and find out what the children are being taught by the teachers: at home (parents,

television), at school (peers) and in church (Sunday school teachers) in terms of God and His nature.

The view of God as an angel could also be as a result of some descriptions the Bible uses for God, like that of Psalm 91:4 where the Bible says "He will cover you with His feathers and under his wings will you find refuge" (*NIV*) and other such verses. With the above in mind, then it can also suggest that teachings, readings and songs are taken literally by the children which could affect their view of God. It therefore implies that the teachers of the children at home, in church and in school have not found out to see if the children are taking their teachings on God literally. Wakefield and Clark (1986, 358-359) explain that teaching children more that they can understand or presenting too much material causes intellectual overstimulation and can cause misconceptions in the hearts of the children.

Children have a concept of God as a king. God as King is reflected in the Bible as The psalmist says, "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, your domination endures through all generations" (Psalm 145:13 *NIV*). It was seen that royal symbols reminded children of the kingship of God since 279 (66.4%) of all the respondents agreed to this. God as king is over and above all other kings. That is why He is called *Oba awon oba* which means King of kings. Of all the African names with which the children called God this was the most prevalent. As Table 13 and Figure 44 show, 70.7% (297) attested that God is the King of kings. Children also called God 'King of this world' and *Oba- okun* meaning king of the oceans. The inference here is that children believed in the total authority of God, whose kingdom included the world and the seas. To them God is higher and above all others.

When asked to describe God, the respondents had knowledge of two members of the Trinity. For some it was Jesus and the Father and for others it was the Holy

Spirit and the Father. However, only three had a concept of God as triune. The view

of God as Trinity was found to be a prevailing view as 359 (85.5%) of the

respondents believed in God as Trinity (Figure 7 and Table 23). However, this is a

distorted view. This finding was very different from the study of Hanisch (2002),

where his respondents made no mention of the Trinity during his interviews and in

their drawings. This suggests that God as Trinity is not new to these children. They

must have heard of Trinity from the church, school or at home. It seems that the

respondents did not really know the meaning or understand this concept, but were

familiar with it, so they could mark it as correct. Furthermore, it could be that they are

really beginning to understand God as Trinity, even if it is slowly and in an incorrect

manner.

To the respondents God and Jesus were viewed as being the same. When they

mentioned God it seemed that thoughts of Jesus came to their minds. This is not

wrong as Jesus is God (John 10:30; 14; 6-11). This concept is a prevailing one among

children as 185 (46.5%) as opposed to 134 (33.7%) were in agreement (Figure 8 or

Table 24). The results agreed with the research of Stonehouse and May (2010, 31),

where they found that "most children seem not to differentiate between God and

Jesus." African children can identify with Jesus as God because they have seen

depictions on films and movies. Jesus is also addressed as God and is called

Emmanuel meaning God with us. Children are also taught much about Jesus. This

view could also be seen by the prevalence of the names the children of this study used

for God which were associated with Jesus Christ in the Bible. This seems to suggest

that children have not been taught the distinctions between the Father and the Son

within the God-head. It was noted that God as Trinity is a more prevalent view than

God and Jesus being the same. It can be seen that more children agreed that God is

Trinity than they did Jesus and God as the same. It can therefore be implied that God

as Trinity is a more prevailing view than God and Jesus as the same (Figures 7 and 8

or Tables 23 and 24).

Nature and creation were in the view of the respondents evidence of God's

existence and nature. Findings indicate that prevalent were concepts of God's

association with flowers, animals and insects (Figure 27 or Table 38), along with the

moon, stars, sun, wind and fire (Figure 28 or Table 39). This should not be surprising,

as God is viewed by 341 (81.2%) respondents as the creator, who made everything

(Figure 22 and Table 16). The creation story is commonly learned by children. This

view agrees with the Bible which states that "since the creation of the world God's

invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being

understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20

NIV).

Results revealed 204 (50.9%) of the respondents linked colours red, white and

purple with God, whereas 108 (26.9%) disagreed and 89 (22.2%) were not sure

(Figure 10 and Table 41). Half of the respondents identified colours with God. This

could be because of use of the wordless book. The children stated red for the blood of

Jesus, white for holiness of God and purple was a color for royalty. However, the

other half of the respondents consisted of those who were either not sure or disagreed.

This could be because for them, they have not been taught from the wordless book or

their teachers do not associate colours with God during lessons.

As depicted in Figure 9 and Table 42, 327 (79.3%) of the total respondents

acknowledged that Christian media such as pictures, books (devotionals) and songs

reminded them of God. However, 47 (11.6%) were not sure and 37 (9.1%) disagreed

totally, thus showing that it was a prevalent view. It is not uncommon for there to be

pictures of representations of Jesus as an adult or a baby in the churches, in the activity or colouring books they use after they have been taught the lesson. These seem to be the pictures that respondents assume to be the pictures of God. Symbols, artifacts, visual aids and teaching materials employed in houses of worships, homes and schools can create knowledge distortions if they are not explained to the children of middle and late childhood age. Gospel music also reminds children of God. When children hear the music and listen to the words they think about God. Gospel media can be good teaching aids for children in their childhood years when used in the correct manner.

God is seen to have feelings and emotions just like humans. His feelings are responsible for what He will or will not do. Children are of the view that God can get happy and can also become sad. When they behave themselves and are obedient, God is happy and when He is happy God answers their prayers. However, He gets sad when they fight or sin. The findings indicate that it is a prevailing view as 317 (82.6%) believe that God gets unhappy or sad when they fight (Figure 13 and Table 44). Two hundred and twenty-six (55.5%) agreed that God only answers prayers when He is happy with them, 112 (26.7%) disagreed and 69 (16.4%) were not sure, thus making it a prevalent view (Figure 14 and Table 45). It is therefore implied that to a prevailing number of children when God is not happy he will not answer their prayers. The answer of their prayers therefore seems to depend on their behavior. This revelation is consistent with Kohlberg's moral development theory. Children are in the pre-conventional level in their moral development where when children do good they expect to get rewards and where they do bad they believe that they will be punished or the rewards will be withheld (Stonehouse 1998, 102). So they have applied this to their concept of God. One inference could be that children do not know

much about the grace, love and the will of God that acts despite our moral standing before Him. The respondents do not seem to know much about God and His way of answering prayers. They do not realize that the answer to prayers does not depend on one's behaviour but on the will of God. Paul asked God to remove a thorn in his flesh however; God did not answer that prayer (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

The respondents had almost evenly divided view on the actions of God being good and correct as 213 (50.7%) agreed with this and 207 (49.3%) did not. This shows that almost half of the respondents believe that there are some things God does that are not good (Figure 12 and Table 17). This could suggest that all events that take place in the world are attributed to God as His handiwork. This could be because they presume that God is responsible for the bad things. The results showed half of them attribute evil to God. Growing up with this opinion of God can lead to distrust in future. It has been cited that it is during the teenage years that the children have problems of faith and belief however, the seeds of crises seem to be sown from middle and late childhood years.

Three hundred and fifteen (75%) had the concept of a Holy God (Table 17, Appendix 11) while 275 (65.5%) believed that sin has disastrous effects on their relationship with God (Figure 41 and Table 54, Appendix 11). Fifty-six percent of the respondents were of the view that sin does not displease God while 55.5% were of the opinion that God will judge everyone while 44.5% disagreed (Figures 12, 13 and Tables 17, 44). Just under half (44.9%) of the respondents believe that God will punish sinners while a cumulative of (55.1%) disagreed and were not sure (Table 48). The children seem to see God as distant, He is not worried when people sin nor is He ready to punish people for their sin. This tells us that at least half of the children feel that there is no consequence for sin. God does not punish sin and does not get angry

with sin and 44.5% of the respondents believe that not all people will be judged on the actions they commit. To the respondents there seems to be some sinners that get away with sin, God will not be angry with their sin nor does he judge them. These views of God could have developed as a result of the environment and society they live in Nigeria religion is oversubscribed, many people claim to be Christians, however in 2010 Nigeria was ranked 134 out of 178, making it the 44th most corrupt country in the world by the global anti-corruption watchdog, Transparency International (Daily Trust, 2010). Children see and hear the country label people as corrupt however they are the ones who are "living well" drive the best cars live in the best houses and seem to be the so called "blessed" ones in the society and since the children attribute God as being the one who provides all their daily needs. It would seem to them that some people are the chosen few who are not judged, punished by God because he does not get angry with sin. This has implications for the future, it will mean that if children have these views they may begin to sin willfully like cheating, stealing, lieing with the belief that God will not get angry when they sin, He will not punish them and they will not be judged. They know God is holy but for half of the children this holiness does not translate into him hating personal sin.

While on the other hand, the judgment of God could be seen in the children's concepts of a punishing God which was explained in Figure 15 or Table 48. God the punisher was actually embraced by 181 (44.9%) of the respondents, which was more than those who did not agree 124 (29.5%). It therefore made it a pervasive view of God among children. This set of children believe that God is the one who can cause a rich man to become poor, accidents to happen, sickness and other bad things to happen to sinners as punishment for their sin. It was interesting to note that the example of punishment that was meted out by God was also for parents and big

people. It can be seen here again that one's actions determine God's response. It also suggests there is emphasis on works and behaviour of people, as opposed to the love and mercy, grace and forgiveness of God.

The functions of God is another theme in the children's views of God. It can be noted that children have the view that God is active in their daily life. God is viewed as the protector, Saviour and deliverer, the One who protects them from accidents, armed robbers, witches and attacks of evil, thugs, injuries, when playing etcetera. There are similarities with this and the results of Heller (1986, 52) who found that the children aged 8-11, "painted a portrait of a Saviour God." In this study it has been found to be a prevailing view with 401 (95.5%) and 388 (92.4) agreeing that God protects them from accidents and armed robbers, respectively (Tables 25, 26 and Figures 16, 17). This seems to give a picture of the environment where these children live. One can detect that nearly all the respondents seem sensitive to threats of road accidents and armed robbers which has in turn influenced how they see God. Pnevmatikos (2002, 95) states that it is the psychological needs of children that dictate their views of God.

God is also considered by the respondents as being the provider and it was also found to be a prevalent concept as 397 (96.6%) were in agreement (Figure 18 and Table 27). He provides for their entire need. Children also believe that God wants them to live in peace and happiness and therefore provides for their comfort by taking care of themselves and their families. This view was found to be prevailing with a majority of 393 (97.5%) of respondents agreeing to this (Table 33). These two views have the highest responses by the respondents. This seems to show a kind of anxiety within them. There is need for peace and happiness which only God can give, and for provision because there seems to be lacking. It can be noted that the respondents have

a utilitarian view of God. God is there to increase pleasure and reduce pain. God is there to give the outcome that is right and good in their opinion. However, God does not work like that.

Items regarding the functions of God in terms of saving them from accidents, armed robbers, providing for their needs and giving them peace and happiness received the highest responses from the children. Children have the view of a loving God who cares for them and acts directly in their affairs to provide and protect them. This illustrates that physical and material needs and how they relate to their environment and their views of God. In the case of the respondents these needs, seems to be safety (physical) and material (provision).

Looking at these two views of protection and provision it seems that children's concept of God is that they must be saved, their needs must be met and that nothing negative should happen to them. With the above mindset what will happen to their faith if they are involved in an accident, are sick, do not get what they need or do not live in peace and happiness? How would they then view God? It may be that God is no longer 'all-powerful' or that they were sinful and that they were undergoing God's judgment and punishment for their sins. This is especially so since children attribute all things to God and when bad things happen God is responsible. But also in this study a prevalent view is that children believe that God is with them in times of trouble, dangers and hard situations. Figure 40 and Table 53 show that 387 (94.6%) respondents are of this opinion, which makes it a prevailing one. This suggests that children believe in the divine protection and provision of God nonetheless, if something negative or unpalatable should happen to them they believe in God's abiding presence with them. He is there to save but even if He does not, He is still with them. The results of Figure 42 and Table 55 also support the fact that children

believe in God's presence as 183 (45.8%) disagree with the idea of God being far during hard times, 149 (37.3%) agreed and 68 (17%) could not make up their minds on what to believe.

Children saw God as being omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Findings from Figure 23 and Table 18 revealed that children understood the omnipresence of God and this was found to be a common view as 268 (63.8%) agreed with this view of God. God is with them in everyday life like when crossing the road, walking along the road, when in a dark room and when asleep. Children understand God as being omniscient and omnipotent as 235 (56%) and 253 (60.2%) endorsed these concepts of God, respectively.

It was also revealed that a prevalent view was that God is the owner of all knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Figure 23 and Table 18 reveals the findings that can be seen in Figure 20 and Table 28, where 364 (88.1%) confirmed that God is the one who helps them pass their examinations and do well in school. This finding shows the importance of God in the educational life of the children. In Nigeria, a lot of emphasis is placed on passing examinations, both in primary and junior secondary schools. It is considered a calamity to fail, as children must pass exams so as to move to a higher level. Maybe, that is why the respondents also believe that if they cannot remember what they have read during an examination then God's presence has left them. However, as seen in Figure 39 and Table 52, 176 (43.3%) disagreed with the idea that when they could not answer a question while doing a test it meant that God's presence was far from them. Not being able to answer a question is a kind of trouble and it is children's views that God is with them when they are in trouble or difficulty. This infers that during hard and difficult times children do not lose hope, they still see God with them. This is very important, comforting thought because in "the world,

including Nigeria, children have become endangered species, deprived of all manner of rights" (Sun News Publishing 2011).

Findings showed that children also believed that God works through the governor of the state to make the state a better place. This was found to be a prevalent view among children as 222 (54.5%) respondents believed this (Figure 21). The context and the environment affect how children see God. At the time for collecting this data the whole country was going through a period of national elections campaign. There was a lot of public attention on the governor of the state. This attention was both positive and negative. This could to a great extent have influenced how the respondents picked answers to this question. It would seem that majority of the respondents live in an environment where the governor got positive reviews.

God was described as at work, ruling the universe. God was also seen to be 'all-powerful' working to protect the city the respondents live in. There was an almost equal number of respondents with 203 (48.3%) who had the concept of God as ruler of the universe, while 217 (51.7%) did not, thus this was not a prevailing view Likewise, the God's ownership of all things was also not a prevalent view as only 154 (36.7%) believe it (Figure 22 and Table 16). God is seen as the creator of all things, the one who rules and reigns not directly and He is not the owner of the universe. This could infer that most of the respondents believe that after creating things God gives the ownership over to humans. They seem to have a deistic view of God. They see God is not directly in charge of the day to day ruling of the universe but does it indirectly through people in authority like the governor. The trend one sees is an increasing and sizable minority of children who doubt God's knowledge of all things 185 (44%), or see's God as being all powerful 167 (39.8%), present everywhere 152 (36.2%), or is not the ruler 271 (51.7%), nor is He the owner 266 (63.3%). Could this

be that we are seeing seeds of the view of a "limited God" among a noticeable number of children. This could be a sign of growing disbelief in God in the minds of the children.

The findings of Figure 32, Tables 34 and Figure 33, Table 35 highlighted that children knew what God liked and disliked. They understood He likes them to behave well by being obedient to Him as 392 (95.8%) agree with this making it a prevalent view. Likewise, 384 (95%) also agreed that God wants them to be honest and truthful. Their concept of God is one who dislikes sin, disobedience, lies, stealing, backbiting and playing with dangerous objects, among many others. It was a prevailing view that God disliked rough play or children playing with blades as 175 (44%) agreed, 107 (26.9%) were not sure and 116 (29.1%) disagreed out right (Figure 34 and Tables 36). In the same way was the view that God disliked backbiting and abusing men of God was also a prevalent view with 313 (77.5%) in agreement. This was a prevailing view as 313 (77.5%) agreed, 45 (11.1%) were not sure and 46 (11.4%) disagreed. The findings infer that children understand what is good and what is bad. They know God wants them to behave well and be good in how they speak, what they do and when they play. The implication is that by the middle and late childhood age children know what is right and what is wrong. Worthy of note is the cumulative total of 56% of respondents who were not sure or disagreed as to if God was interested in their personal play. This shows there is a disconnect between the life of children and their religion. This is because God is interested in all things they do.

The relationship children have with God is one of trust and dependence. They respond to God with trust, dependence and love because it is their belief that God wants and has good plans for their lives. This was a prevalent view as 375 (94%) subscribed to this (Figure 31, Table 32). The results suggest that children are of the

view that God wants them to sing praises to Him for all He has done so they respond to God with physical acts of worship and singing.. This could be why 93.6% (409) of the respondents are of the opinion that they should thank God for all He has done for them with songs of praise and worship (Table 30). However, as agreed by 211 (52.9%) this act of praise and worship gets harder when bad things happen to them (Table 31).This could be because they attribute the bad event to God.

The respondents talked about hearing God talk to them, telling them how to live and go about everyday life. Three hundred and seventy-one (90.9%) were of the opinion that God speaks to their minds, giving them instructions and warnings (Figure 37 and Table 47). He also speaks to children as they observe their daily devotions and quiet time. Quiet time is a time when children read the Bible and pray alone. A majority of 369 (89.6%) shared this prevalent view that children hear God speak to them during devotions (Figure 36 and Table 46). This result supports the findings of Stonehouse and May (2010, 43) who found that with children of similar ages in their study the presence of God is felt during their devotions.

The results also highlighted the fact that children believed that God was present with them as they prayed, with 382 (92.3%) agreeing to this thus making it a prevalent view (Figure 43 and Tables 51). This finding reinforces the results of the research of Stonehouse and May, where they found that "not only did children talk to God, they also heard Him talking to them . . ." They described the ways they heard as "I just felt it in my heart" or "sort of think it" as well as "in my mind or "a voice inside me" (2010, 46- 47). This is very important, especially for understanding children's spirituality.

The findings show that children believe that God is their father, friend and creator, with God as father being the prevalent view (Figure 26 and Tables 14).

African children have the view of God as their creator, who made them in His image and likeness. They believe in the creative abilities of who God created all things which includes people. The children see themselves as being a part of God's wonderful creation. They come from Him. This buttresses the findings of Deconchy (1964) where he found that the concept of children aged eight to eleven was that God was the creator (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff 1992, 60). God is also seen to be a friend to them, which is shown by his loving actions. However, it is not a prevalent view to see God as a friend as 147 (35%) alluded to this. During the middle and late childhood years, friends and friendships are very important. God is kind, provides for their daily needs, and protects them, nevertheless He is not in a friendly relationship with them. Children do not see God as a friend. This could be because when one thinks of a friend it is in terms of an age mate or a peer and people who are older than a child is not considered to his or her friend. God is seen as distant and not in a friendly manner by the children. A friend is close and they seem to see God as distant and far.

God as 'my father' was the most frequent as 323 (76.9%) were in favour with it. The relationship children have with God as father seems to be different from the one they have with their earthly father. Children saw God as Father, however that father was a heavenly father as 395 (95.6%) agree to this, making it prevalent view (Figure 24). Their earthly father was considered to be nothing like God as, 319 (76%) were of this opinion as seen in Table 15. God's faithfulness was one of the reasons they gave as a reason for this. This could suggest that biological fathers are losing their spiritual authority in the eyes of the children.

The findings show that children are of the opinion that some people have behaviours like God. This view is illustrated in Figure 11 and Table 15. Their church

pastor, mother, father, elder sister, Sunday school teacher, the child themselves, in short nobody could share the same qualities of God. The results showed that the prevailing view was that the church pastor was like God. He topped the list with 224 (53.3%) affirmation. It was not a prevalent view to see God-like qualities within their parents as 91 (21.7%) and 101 (24%) respondents agreed that their mother and father respectively, behaved like. This result indicates a difference in the view African children have of God as compared to their western counterparts, with whom God-father correlation was predominant at ages 8-11 (Vianello, Tamminen and Ratcliff 1992, 61-62). The African children in this study view God more as the church pastor than they do their biological father. This could be because the pastor is seen in Africa and especially Nigeria as more of an authority figure. He is seen as a hero and children at this age have heroes. The implication of this is that the father is losing the motif of being like-God and is being replaced by the church pastor. This could infer that socialization affects children's views of God because they live with their fathers, see their flaws and know they are not perfect in contrast to their church pastor who seems holy because he 'hears from' and "represents" a holy God. It is also important to note that even the mothers did not fare much better. The church pastor himself is far removed from the children. He oversees their ministry, makes sure they have money for biscuits and visuals and that teachers are teaching but his physical presence is hardly with them. He is always in the main church and hardly comes to the children's church or Sunday school classes. It appears that God can be seen to be viewed in the near-distant kind of manner by the children. He is close and near them but He is equally far just like the church pastor. The church pastor is a great influence on how African children view God. This is an interesting finding because although

God is viewed as a fatherly figure, He is more like their church pastor and not their earthly father.

It became apparent that children view God as having certain names. The names they called God were found in the Bible and in two common Nigerian languages. The results of the biblical names could be seen in Figure 45 and Table 11. The Biblical names of Everlasting Father, Prince of peace, Emmanuel, Counselor and Saviour were used in Isaiah 9:6 as names for Jesus Christ. This could be because of the functions they associate with the names. For example God is called Saviour because He saves the children from accidents, armed robbers and so on. He is called counselor because He guides, warns and speaks to them. God is called Everlasting Father because He is a father that cannot die and is the giver of everlasting life, and finally the prince of peace because He is the giver of peace. Secondly, children do not really know the true meanings of the names by which they call God. So they call God by a particular name but give that name another meaning. Finally children actually call God by these names from Isaiah. Children had no qualms about calling God with any of the five names even though some were more prevalent than others.

The concept children have of God also included other names such as King of this World, Lily of the valley, Rose of Sharon, Lion of Judah, Ancient of Days, Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Elohim, El Shaddai and Alpha and Omega. These names were also used without real understanding of what they meant. In actual fact Alpha and Omega, as seen in Isaiah 44: 6 and Revelation 22:13 depict the eternity of God but was defined by a child as "wonderful God." God was frequently called Jehovah Shalom, however none of the respondents could define or explain it as Lord is Peace (Judges 6:24 *NIV*). In Nigeria it is common to address God by the name, Lion of Judah. However, the Lion of the tribe of Judah as stated in Revelation 5:5

was the name used to address Jesus Christ, the only One who could open the book that was sealed. The meaning given to the name was "the Lord is strong." Could the child be thinking of the 'Lion' which is the strongest animal in the jungle? There is nowhere in the Bible where God is addressed as "king of this world," it is the devil who has been called the prince or god of this world (John 12:13, 14:30 and 1 Corinthians 4:4). Likewise, names like the Lily of the valley and the Rose of Sharon were names used by the Bridegroom in Song of Solomon 2:1-2, they were never directly used to address God, although these 2 names were not prevalent as only 31.7% and 33.8% respectively were in agreement that God should be called by such. God as the Ancient of Days was described in Daniel 7 where a story of the judgment was taking place. In this research, Everlasting Father was the most prevalent name 340 (81%) children would call God by, followed by Alpha and Omega by 290 (69%). Closely followed by the names Lion of Judah was 254 (60.5%) and Saviour having 252 (60%), which were also evenly divided. It would seem that God is called the above names not because of their biblical context but because of their literal meaning and understanding that the respondents have given them. One could infer that these names are not being used or taught in their correct context in order to bring out the correct view of God among the children. One could also suggest there was limited knowledge of Christian association of these names with the Godhead. This points to a limitation of exposure to teaching from the home church and school. This is an issue for curriculum developers, teachers, parents and pastors to look into.

There were also certain African names by which the children called God. These names were *Eru-jeje* (the fearful one), *Oba awon oba* (king of kings), *Olorun* (owner of the heavens), *Chineke* (creator or designer) *and Oba-okun* (King of the oceans). Children knew the meaning of *Oba awon oba, Olorun* and *Chineke.* It

became apparent that according to the children the most prevalent African name was *Oba awon oba* with 297 (70.7%) respondents picking it, followed by *Olorun* 259 (61.7%). *Chineke* as a name for God was chosen by 40.2% (169) of the respondents (Figure 44 and Table 13). The reason could be because *Chineke* is an Ibo name for God, meanwhile Ibadan is a Yoruba town and Yoruba is the common language. *Oba-okun* is not a prevailing name for God. This could be because this name could be associated with water and it means 'King of the oceans.' This could be because it would be a name associated with water spirits and is not an appropriate name to call God with. The Christ Apostolic churches had the highest respondents that would call God by the African names (Table 10:1, Appendix 10). This could be because the language of instruction for these churches is Yoruba as opposed to English in the other denominations. This shows that religious socialization affects the children's views of God.

The African names seem to be picked up by the children from repeated use at home, during prayer and devotion time, in church, from songs and from the society, without much meaning or explanation, so it would seem that children are being inadvertently misled by what they pick up from adults. Results seem to suggest that contextualization is not a common thing within the denominations. Children did not give any example of African symbols or cultural things within their environment that represents God. Out of the twenty names used for God, only five were African. This can suggest that even though the curriculums are being made by the respective churches that are Africans, African examples may not be prominent.

These findings show that children do have views about God and that they can describe these views. This research found different views of God which cut across different themes although the views identified are not exhaustive.

Response to Research Question 3

In response to RQ 3 results pointed out that gender do not affect their views of God as there was no significant relationship between gender and their views of God. There were only 3 items in which gender had significant difference. It can be seen from Table 9.2, Appendix 9 Items 6 and 7 that girls agreed on God's protection from accidents and robbers more than Boys. This showed that generally the female respondents are more afraid of accidents and robbers than their male counterparts. There was also a significant difference in Item 23 as shown in Table 9 more boys (75.4 %) agreed that sin can make God distant from them, than girls (62%).

The results also revealed that in 14 items there was significant difference between the children's views of God and their age. Table 8.2 Appendix 8 gives a summary of this. For Items 1 and 27, it could be noted that there was a steady decrease with age of the respondents who agreed with the views that God and Jesus are the same and God has wings and feathers which he uses to fly everywhere. The older the children got the more they disagreed and were unsure of these two views. This seemed to be the general trend with items 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 24, 25, 31, 34, 35 and 36 (Table 8.2, Appendix 8). This could be as a result of more matured reasoning among the late childhood children. However, this trend showed that the older the children got the more they tended to see God less at work in a personal manner in their lives. There was an increase in the children aged 10-11 who disagreed and were not sure that God did not like them playing rough or with dangerous items (Item 19, Table 8.2). It could also be noted that the children who believed that God speaks during devotion decreased as they increased with age. This could suggest that as they get older they stop taking part in devotion. Children who believed that God teaches them in exams during middle childhood years amounted to 92.7%, which decreased to

83.7% during late childhood years. It can also be noted that as the children get older they also believe less in the God's punishment to sinners, as 58% agreed, 19% were not sure and 23% disagreed that God punishes sinners at middle childhood ages. However, 43.3% agreed, 28.6% were not sure and 28.1% disagreed with the view of God punishing sinners by late childhood age. More respondents aged 8-9 agreed that colours reminded them of God while 10-11 year olds disagreed and were not sure. This could mean that as the children grew older emphases of colours in relation to God declined. This could be as a result of colours not being used by teachers of late childhood children, or non-use of the wordless book to evangelize children at this age By the time the respondents were in the age bracket of 10-11 there could be seen to be a major increase in those who believed that when one cannot write an exam it does not mean that God's presence is far (Item 24, Table 8.2, Appendix 8). There was also an rise in the numbers of children of late childhood age that were of the view that God was far when things were not going on well as compared with their younger counterparts. What this means is that the older they got the more sure they were of the abiding presence God in hard and difficult times. It would seem that the older the children got the more adverse they got to drawing God. Item 35, Table 8.2, Appendix 8 shows that 34.5% disagreed and 16.7% were not sure that they would draw God with a face at 10-11 years as opposed to 21.4% who disagreed and 26.4% who were not sure at the age of 8-9 years.. There was also a substantial increase in the late childhood children who also would not want to draw God with no face because no one had seen God (Item 36, Table 8.2 Appendix 8).

The other 23 items, which represented different views of God there was no significant difference between the views therein and the children's age. This is in line

with developmental studies because the children are all within the same cognitive developmental stage.

It was however revealed that the denomination of the children has a great influence on how they see God. There is a significant difference on how children see God within the denominations. The difference which most likely is as a response to teaching they receive in the different denominations. This was revealed from 11 items.

God is spirit or ghost was agreed by 70 (49.3%) Baptist respondents, 30 (21.1%) were not sure and 42 (29.6%) disagreed. Of the Christ Apostolic respondents 85 (59%) agreed, 33 (22.9%) were not sure and 26 (18.1%) disagreed. From the respondents from Glory Tabernacle 38 (37.3%) agreed, 27 (26.5%) were not sure and 37 (36.3%) disagreed.

The concept of an angelic God was agreed by 68 (44.7%) Baptist respondents, 48 (30.3%) were not sure and 38 (25%) disagreed. Of the Christ Apostolic respondents 64 (45.4%) agreed, 41 (29.1%) were not sure and 36 (25.5%) disagreed. From the respondents from Glory Tabernacle 27 (24.8%) agreed, 42 (38.5%) were not sure and 40 (36.7%) disagreed.

The concept God being far due to sin was agreed by 95 (63.8%) Baptist respondents, 22 (14.8%) were not sure and 32 (21.5%) disagreed. Of the Christ Apostolic respondents 95 (66%) agreed, 32 (22.2%) were not sure and 17 (11.8%) disagreed. From the respondents from Glory Tabernacle 85 (76.6%) agreed, 14 (12.6%) were not sure and 12 (10.8%) disagreed.

Looking at the respondents responses to the view that God gets angry with sin (Item 7, Table 10.1, Appendix 10). It was discovered that 46 (29.5%) Baptist respondents, 75 (50.3%) from Christ Apostolic and 64 (55.7%) of Glory Tabernacle

believe that God get angry with sin. A great majority of 110 (70.5%) of the Baptist respondents believe that God sin does not bother God, and the Baptist respondents are still in the minority when it comes to agreement that sin drives the presence of God away. This could suggest difference in curriculum and in teachings of the Baptist as compared to other two dominations. It would infer that emphasize is not being placed on the issues of sin, God's reaction to sin and the consequences of sin with in the Baptist as opposed to the other two denominations.

Significant differences could be seen in respondents' answers to the statement that elements of creation (flowers, animals and insects) reminded them of God. More Baptist respondents were in agreement, followed by the respondents of Glory Tabernacle Ministries and then those of Christ Apostolic churches. This also reflected in the issue of the Bible were more respondents associating the Bible and church with God came from the Baptist churches, followed by Christ Apostolic and then Glory Tabernacle Ministries. It can be implied that the Baptist stresses issues of creation, the Bible and the church and their association to God over and above the other denominations.

There was significant difference with the idea of God speaking to children during devotion as more respondents from Glory tabernacle 93.8% were of the opinion that God speaks to them as against Baptist 91.5% and CAC 84.4%. Also they believed in the presence of God when praying, 95.5% as opposed to Baptist's 90.8% and CAC's 90.5%. Glory ministries had the greatest number of respondents that believed in God's presence in the time of trouble and also they were the most sensitive on the disastrous effects sin had on their relationship with God.

It is also important to note here some of the different responses to Part 2 of the questionnaire as it concerns to the denominations where significant differences were noted by the researcher from the simple frequency counts.

1. God knows all things Baptist: Yes 70 (44.9%) No (55.1%), Christ Apostolic Yes 89 (59.7%), No 60 (40.3%), Glory Tabernacle: Yes 76 (66.1%), No 39 (33.9%). God is the ruler of the universe: Baptist: Yes 56 (35.9%) No 100 (64.1%), Christ Apostolic: Yes 74 (55.6%), No 76 (51%), Glory Tabernacle: Yes 74 (64.3%), No 41(35.7%). God is all powerful: Baptist: Yes 77 (49.4%) No 79 (50.6%), Christ Apostolic: Yes 97 (65.1 %), No 52 (34.9%), Glory Tabernacle: Yes 79 (68.7%), No 36 (31.3%). Significant differences could also be seen in the answers within the three denominations and their views of God (see Table 10:1, Appendix 10). It can clearly be noted that there are different views of God in different denominations. It also infers that certain denominations stress different teaching topics on God more than the others and some aspects of some aspects of the teaching of God are not stressed at all. It could also be that they are using different terminology like 'Holy Ghost' to describe God as spirit. It also seems like the idea of an angelic God is prevailing with the respondents of Christ Apostolic and the Baptist as opposed to Glory Tabernacle. This could be as a result of different teaching, the use of illustrations, prayers within the denominations.

The current findings also support previous research that has been conducted in relation with the findings of Noffke and McFadden who found that there were significant denominational differences in the God concepts of their research participants however age was not an issue as there was no difference in the age and their concept of God. They conclude that "denomination and personality may play more salient roles in determining God concepts than age related cognitive changes"

(2001, 754). Although in this research the participants were of the age range of sixteen to eighty-nine years. It shows that denomination plays a major part in how adults see God, which as seen from this current study starts even from ages 8-11. In a study done by Pitts (1976) cited in Hyde (1990 74) with children ages 6-10 of different denominations it was revealed that it was from the views children had of God that one could discover the "theological characteristics of their denominations." If this is so then it becomes imperative to look even within the denominations and go back to the foundations of belief.

Summary

This chapter analyzed the data of the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. Finding of first RQ 1 revealed that children have views and concepts about God. Their views have been categorized into four main themes namely: the nature and existence of God, His functions, His name, His presence and the relationship they have with God. The results of RQ 2 showed that children had many prevailing views about God; nevertheless there were some views that were not prevalent. These views consisted of correct and erroneous or distorted ones.

In response to RQ 3 it was found that significant relationship between age and 14 views the children had of God. It was also revealed that there was significant relationship between gender and 3 views the children had of God. The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between the church denomination of the children and 11 views they have of God. In all cases where there was found to be a significant relationship the null hypothesis was rejected. It was also revealed that for some views of God there was no significant difference between them and the age or gender or church denomination and in this case the null hypothesis was not rejected.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of this study. It also gives a detailed report on the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

Purpose of the Study

The middle and late childhood years are important years for faith and spiritual development. Many children who go to church have learnt about God from their infant years. They have therefore developed an image or concept of God. It is important to understand this image as it is important for the spiritual progress of children, both for the present and for their future. Is the view they have of God built on misconceptions or is it a biblically sound one that will bring about lasting faith and spiritual growth? Earlier studies found that children who have misconceptions about God in their middle and late childhood years may have a faith and belief crisis in their teenage years and even beyond.

It is therefore important to know and understand how the children view God. The purpose of this study was to find out the views of God that exist among African children and the prevalence of such views. It was also an attempt to examine how gender, age and Church denomination relate to their views of God. Children in this research comprised of children ages eight, nine, ten and eleven years.

Research Questions

In order to conduct this research and achieve its purpose three research questions were formulated.

RQ1. What are the different views African children have about God in a selected church in Ibadan?

RQ2. How prevalent are the African children's views about God among the denominations?

RQ3. How do certain demographic variables relate to African children's views of God?

Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated and statically tested in this study. They were designed and used to give answers to RQ 3. Hypothesis 1 related to the age of the children and their views of God. Hypothesis 2 related to the gender of the children and their views of God, while Hypothesis 3 dealt with the Church denomination of the children and their views of God.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to benefit academics, policy makers on children's issues, children's curriculum writers, Christian educators, people involved in children's ministries, members of the denominations where the study was conducted and parents of children. It will benefit all of these as it adds useful insights to the existing literature on how children see God. Specifically, it can help concerned parties evaluate their children's ministry curriculum in terms of content, teaching methods and materials used to teach children about God. It can also aid the identification of misconceptions in the children's views of God with an aim of correcting such. The

findings are intended to give a glimpse into children's views of God with the aim of then helping them grow in faith.

Research Assumptions

This research was conducted based on the following assumptions. Firstly, what children think will be seen in their drawings and in the explanations of their pictures. Secondly, some views which children have of God will be more prevalent than others. Thirdly, children are in the concrete operational stage of mental development, but it is possible that due to environmental and educational factors some older children may operate at the formal operational stage. Lastly, views of God are developed through the interaction of different mental, emotional, social, spiritual, moral, physical and environmental experiences that the children go through.

Research Design

The study adopted an Exploratory Sequential Design. This is a mixed method approach where research data is collected sequentially in two phases. Firstly qualitative data was gathered so as to find out what children's views of God were. The views elicited in this stage were then used to develop an instrument to collect quantitative data. The data was collected in two independent phases. The strengths of employing this design were that the researcher was able to cover many more children than it would have if only qualitative method to collect data was used. However, the weakness of this design could be seen in not including the children from the other two denominations as representatives during the first phase of this research. Also there is the challenge of having children fill out questionnaires in a correct manner.

The Sample

There were two different samples for this study. The first sample consisted of twenty-four children who were randomly selected from the population of children in the first research site for the first phase of the study. The sample comprised of two groups of twelve middle and twelve late childhood respondents divided equally along age and gender lines. The second sample consisted of all children aged 8-11 who attended worship service of the research sites of the three denominations used for this study. Convenient sampling was undertaken for the second phase of this research because the researcher was looking for a large sample since one of the purposes of the research was to find out prevailing views. However, children had to be members of the denominations used for this study.

The Instruments

Two instruments were designed for the two phases of the study. The first was an interview guide, which consisted of fifteen items. The respondents were required to draw a picture of God and themselves and then to explain and tell stories about their pictures in relation to questions in Appendix 1. The responses of these questions were then used to answer RQ1.The use of this method was not to by anyway to create idols and objects of worship in the hearts and minds of the respondents (Deut. 4: 15-19, Leviticus 26:1, Acts 17:29). The use of this method is to observe the thoughts of their mind. The second instrument was designed to answer RQ2. It consisted of forty-four items, divided in three different parts. Part 1 measured the demographic information of the respondents, while Part 2 and Part 3 measured their views of God. Both instruments were designed with the age of the participants in mind using insights from the researcher's experience and from existing literature. Both instruments were given to a set of four jurors for them to give their professional advice and input. They were

also pilot tested to see if the respondents could answer them. After the pilot tests some items in both the interview guide and the questionnaire had to be re-written. There were some validity issues that arose from items 2, 28 and 29 in Part 3 of the instrument during the analysis of data.

The Research Methodology

For the first phase of this research children were asked to draw their views of God and to explain their drawings and were then asked further questions. Their answers were taped and transcribed. Respondents and their drawings were given codes and pseudonyms to protect their identities. The transcribed answers were grouped according to questions using a Microsoft Word Excel Spreadsheet. There were fifteen in total. The spreadsheets helped to highlight common themes relating to children's views of God, thus providing an answer to RQ1. The answers to RQ1 were then used to design a questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered to children across three denominations. The questionnaire had three parts. Part 1 consisted of demographic information, while Part 2 and 3 consisted of statements on different views of God. To answer RQ2, simple frequency counts of the respondents were taken and added up. However, to answer RQ3, Pearson Chi-Square test was performed to test relationship between the categorical variables.

Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of this research was to find out how African children view God and how prevalent these views are and if there is any relation between age, gender and church denomination and their views of God. This was completed in two parts. The first part of the study revealed views children had of God and in the second part the researcher tested these views.

In relation to RQ1 and RQ2 from the first and second phases of this research, which looked at African children's views of God and how prevalent they were, it was found that to the children: God is either viewed as a human being (in most cases a man) who can be seen or has a physical body or as the unseen God who is spirit in terms of a ghost. Children see God as an angel with wings used for motion. Children believe that God is present everywhere. God and Jesus are viewed as being the same person. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one. The children were almost equally divided in the view that God was unseen God and was like a human because He made us in His image.

Children saw God as a father, friend, their creator and the owner of the universe. God as father was different from their earthly father, as He was their heavenly father or a close father. It was however, found to be the prevailing view that God is their father and their creator. It is also a prevalent view that God made everything. God as a friend or as the owner of the universe were not common concepts of God among the children.

Children saw their father, mother, church pastor, Sunday school teacher or themselves as having the characteristics of God. Some also were of the view that nobody could be like God. The most prevalent concept was that the church pastor behaved like God. Although God was seen as a Father, this was not like their earthly father but like their pastor.

God is viewed as the protector, saviour and deliverer, the One who protects them from accidents, armed robbers, witches and attacks of evil, thugs, injuries, when playing. God is also the provider. He is viewed by children as providing for their daily needs such as food, water, shelter; He also provides good health for the sick, and peace in their homes. In general, common views are that God protects the respondents

in all areas of life and also provides for their daily needs. This shows that they have an utilitarian view of God.

Children's views are that God is present with them in times of danger and accidents to save them when they are in trouble. They also believe God is with them in everyday life (crossing the road, walking along the road, when in a dark room and when asleep). He only goes far from them when they sin, or when they are disobedient. These have been found to be prevalent views in this research. It was also found a prevalent view that although God's presence is with them He lives in heaven and is called Heavenly Father.

In the first phase of the study children see God as the master teacher. He is the owner of all knowledge, wisdom and understanding. He knows all things. God is the one who should and does help children pass their examinations and do well in school. They also believe that if they cannot remember what they have read during an examination then God's presence has left them. They are of the belief that God's presence is near them when they do exams. The second phase revealed that it is a prevalent view that God is all- knowing (Omniscient) and is the teacher who teaches them daily and even in the examination hall. However, as seen in the second phase it is not a prevailing view that when children cannot answer a question in the examination hall then God's presence has left them. Prevalent was the view that God is with them even when they cannot remember what they have read. This is another pointer to the utilitarian view of God that the children have.

Children are of the view that God can get happy and can also become sad and even angry. When God is happy, He answers their prayers. He gets sad when they fight. Prevalent views were that God is holy. That God punishes sinners by causing them to have misfortune, accidents, sickness and even death. It was also a prevalent

concept that God will judge everyone. However, the idea of God getting angry with sin was not a prevailing view. The view that all God does is good and correct was shared by half of the respondents as was the view of God being the ruler of the universe, thus they were not prevalent views.

God is also regarded as omnipotent (all-powerful). He was seen to be working to protect the city the respondents live in. He does that as He works through the governor of the state, where the respondents live to make the state a better place.

Children believe that God is called by certain names, many of which can be found in the Bible and others are African names. The biblical names are Everlasting Father, Prince of peace, Emmanuel, Counselor and Saviour, Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Elohim, El Shaddai and Alpha and Omega, King of this world, Lily of the Valley, Rose of Sharon, Lion of Judah and Ancient of Days. The African names are *Eru-jeje, Oba awon oba, Olorun, Chineke and Oba-okun.*

The most common names were Everlasting Father, Alpha and Omega, Lion of Judah and Saviour. The name Lily of the Valley was the least prevalent. The most common African (Nigerian) name was *Oba awon oba*. However, it was closely followed by *Olorun*. *Chineke* and *Oba-okun* were not prevailing names.

God wants children to sing praises to Him for all He has done, so they respond to God with thanksgiving. In their view they are to respond to God with appreciation, thanksgiving, singing praises and worship for all He has done for them. They respond to God with trust, dependence and love because they believe God wants the best for their lives. God wants children to behave well, be honest, be truthful, and obedient to Him and to their parents. Prevalent is the concept of thanking God with singing and worship for all God has done but this gets harder to do when things are not going well or when unpleasant or unhappy things happen. It is a prevailing opinion that children

trust God because they believe He has their best interests at heart. The majority of the respondents believe that God wants them to be happy and to live peacefully, to obey Him and their parents, to be honest and truthful, not to play rough or with blades and not to backbite or abuse pastors. These are prevalent views. God is believed to speak to children and they can hear Him. God speaks to their minds giving them instructions and warnings. He also speaks to them as they observe their devotional times. Both of these views were found to be prevalent among children.

Certain symbols have been associated with the children's views of God. It can be seen that children see the Bible as the word of God and that He speaks to them through it. Prevalent views are that there is an association between God and royalty, religious media, creation, religious objects and some colours. God is seen as a king, anything that has royal connotations reminds the children of God. This was also seen to be a prevalent view. Elements of creation and nature such as the sun, moon, stars, wind, fire and rain with animals, plants, flowers and insects, all in the views of children were connected to God. These were found to be prevalent views among children. Christian pictures, books and songs also had a connection to God in the views of many of the children. They associated colours of red, white and purple with God in terms of His nature and existence and His attributes. This view was also a common one.

In response to RQ3 which was to determine the relation of certain demographic variable of age, gender and denomination to children's views of God, three hypotheses were generated. In response to RQ 3 it was found that there was a significant relationship between age and 14 views the children had of God. It was revealed that as children moved into late childhood age they seemed to ask more questions and therefore rejected some of the views they had believed when in middle

childhood age. There seems to be a trend of more issues of disagreement and uncertainty in issues of the nature of God (Jesus and God are the same and the angelic God), some of His functions (God working through people), the presence of God in their lives, His punishment for sinners. There seemed to be an increase with age in the abiding presence of God. Late childhood children believed in a greater portion that God is with them in trouble and that God answers their prayer and He answers their prayers not particularly when He is happy with them than their younger counterparts.

It was also discovered that there was significant relationship between gender and 3 views the children had of God. Two of these were based on the protection functions of God. It seemed that girls were more anxious about the insecurity of the environment and this affected their views of God. They saw God more as a protector than the boys, while the boys were more conscious that sin has negative effects on their relationship with God than the girls.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between the church denomination of the children and 11 views they have of God. In all cases where there was found to be a significant relationship the null hypothesis was rejected. One could see the differences in the teachings and theological standpoint of the children as concerns sin and punishment of sinners. The idea of an angelic God was more prevalent in the Christ Apostolic Churches, closely followed by the Baptist and least prevalent in Glory Tabernacle. The view of God as spirit which is equated with a ghost was also more prevalent in the Christ Apostolic Churches, followed by the Baptist then by Glory Tabernacle Ministries.

In the four questions (Items 21-24, Table 10.2 Appendix 10) concerning the presence of God there were significant differences between the denominations. From

Items 21-23, Tables 10.2, it can be seen that the respondents of Glory Tabernacle have the greatest sense of God's presence than the other two denominations.

It was also revealed that for some views of God there was no significant difference between them and the age or gender or church denomination and in this case the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Conclusions

This research set out to identify children's views of God and to see the prevalence of such views. It also set out to see how age, gender and denomination related to the views children had of God. In respect of the findings the researcher concludes that:

Theological Implications

The theological implications from this research are that children are aware of deep theological truths in their child-like manner and understanding. They can communicate their understanding of God through pictures, explanations and verbal answers. In their childish manner they explained things under the existence and nature of God, such as the fatherhood of God, immanence and transcendence of God, kingship of God, Trinity, the different attributes of God, justice of God, holiness of God, His provision and protection and sovereignty of God. The African children in this study seemed to have inhibitions about drawing God, especially late childhood children.

The Children's views about God and the misconceptions they have can be seen to have been acquired from their interaction with the environment, from their homes, school and as a result of teachings they received in the church. Listening carefully to the explanations of the children is very important. It was found that

children say something and then explain it in a way that is different from the biblical or theological meaning. Nevertheless, not all views that the children have of God are misconceptions. Some of the views they have of God will grow, develop and change as they mature and are given sound biblical teaching. It would there be suggested that programs that will enhance the growth of the good and correct views of God be used in the denominations.

Children have a picture of angels in their minds which they transpose for God. This could suggest a mix-up between God and angels in the minds of children. This could lead to angel worship by children. This view of God was more prevalent among the Christ Apostolic and Baptist children than it is among the respondents of Glory Tabernacle. It therefore means that all three denominations must teach about angels and about God. It was also more prevailing among children aged 8-9 than 10-11. It would suggest that as the children get older they start asking questions, and their views of God change.

Children have some understanding that God is triune. However, there seems to be an incomplete understanding of God in the light of the Trinity. They seem not to understand that God is three in one, or the role of Jesus, and the second person of the Trinity. There also seems to be erroneous views when it comes to the Holy Spirit. The consequence of this is that it shows that in church the curriculum seems not to be teaching God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Policy makers in the respective churches have to decide what and how to teach the children on the Trinity and at what age so that it will not amount to overstimulation. The findings show that at late childhood age it seems that children seem to question what they believed at middle childhood age. This could be seen by the time they are age 10-11, the children who

are 'not sure' and 'disagree' with views such as God and Jesus being the same or that God has wings has increased considerably.

God appears real to children and they experience Him. Devotion, prayer and Bible study and quiet time are opportunities for children to meet with God. Children are also aware of the presence of God. The findings suggest that children are grounded in knowledge of the presence of God. However, things start to change as they get older they begin to have doubts and uncertainties. The implication is that the late childhood age seems to be the point at which they start to have a decline in how they see and experience God. God is with them while in trouble however their concept of him interested in their daily affairs, and speaking to them is declining as they grow older. It should be noted that the study results seem to infer that there is more teaching emphases on the abiding presence of God in times of trouble and danger within Glory Tabernacle than the Baptist and the Christ Apostolic churches God appears more real in the personal life than in the bigger world of the respondents of Glory Tabernacle than the Christ Apostolic and Baptist respondents.

This study shows that children can experience God and are ready to have a good relationship with Him. They know right from wrong, they know His likes and dislikes. This implies that they are ready to hear the salvation story and if the church is the one who believes in the 'age of accountability' or the 'age of responsibility' then children have reach it and should be evangelized. This is because that age to some is not age as in time but the time of understanding.

The findings in relation to children's views on the holiness of God and His reactions to sin show they seem to understand the nature of God as holy and sinners must be judged and punished. This finding suggests that the holiness and judgment of God are emphasized more to children than the mercies and grace of God.

This notwithstanding, a sizable minority seem not to relate God's holiness to their personal life. The findings also seem to suggest a discord between God, His reaction to sin in connection to His holiness in a practical sense. It suggests a lack of practical and personal teaching as it relates to God, sin, the children and the presence of sin in the society on the part of the church, especially in the Baptist and Christ Apostolic churches in this regards.

A majority of the children do not consider God to be the ruler of the universe nor do they attribute ownership to Him. He is not the direct ruler of the world. This is prevailing in the order of Baptist, Christ Apostolic and Glory Tabernacle respectively (see Table 10.1). Theologically, there are people who believe that once God created the universe, He left it to run its own course without him controlling it. It seems to suggest inadequate teaching on part of the church and even parents on sovereignty and stewardship as it concerns to God.

Children have shown elements of concrete thinking in their views of God. Some examples are their belief that God is spirit which they equate with a ghost. Their idea of God as a person who has made mankind in His own image and likeness, one can see that it seem that children have taken Genesis 1:26-27 literally, which should not be strange for this age group because as Harms (1944) showed that children of this age are realistic in their thinking. However, this suggest that the church need to teach that God as a person does not depict him as a human being, but in the teaching of theology the personhood of God or the personality of God must be diligently explained that it connotes "He is an individual being, with self-consciousness and will, capable of feeling, choosing, and having a reciprocal relationship with other personal and social beings" (Erickson 2001, 93). From the

findings of God as an angel with wings, seems that care should be taken when giving illustrations to explain a concept of God because children may understand it literally.

Pedagogical Implications

The results from this research have educational implications which are for the church and parents to take note of. The findings from this research show that children have knowledge about God in terms of His nature and existence, functions and presence, what He wants from them and in terms of how He should be addressed. One can deduce that the children in this study have been taught about God in their respective denominations and homes and learning has taken place, however this learning is largely distorted. This learning from the findings is in the three domains, cognitive (knowledge) and affective (feelings and emotions of the children and psychomotor (actions of children).

The findings of this study infer that the use of nature, field trips, colours, music and picture, books and other concrete activities can be used to help enhance children's views of God. Colours have been used to teach children about God and certain colours have been associated to Him. Colours are good teaching tools have been applied by God in the Bible in Exodus 36:8; 39:1. Using colours can make descriptions easier. A clean white can be used to describe pureness or holiness. It is easy to describe blood with the colour red. The findings suggest that caution should be applied when using teaching aids (things in nature, colours, pictures books and music) with children. They can either lead to misconceptions or enhance children views of God. This is because they take things in a concrete manner.

Children have a strong sense of God as the deliverer 401 (96.9%), the provider 397 (96.6%), God who wants them to live in peace and happiness 393 (97.5%), and his abiding presence was with them in trouble (94.6%). This suggests strong faith

even when they are in the midst of the hardships of life. Therefore, to have the concept that God is with them and His presence is near them when things are not going well is comforting to them and helps to build and keep faith. However, this care should be taken within the three denominations so this does not backfire because this suggests a potential fertile ground for the prosperity gospel.

Children believe in pleasing God through good works. They have to make God happy for Him to answer their prayers. They are of the opinion that the answer of their prayers depends on their actions. This is consistent with the stage of their moral development. One can deduce emphases on moral behaviour as opposed to the grace and mercies of God. One implication of this belief in God is that when children are doing good but they suffer or have problems this may affect their faith. This view tended not to be too prevalent as the children grew older. This seems to suggest that as they grow older their concepts of God change. One way the church and parents can respond to this view that God answers my prayers only when He is happy with me is to make sure they discipline in love and they should not portray love as conditional to the moral standing of a child. Children should be taught that God's love is unconditional and one way to do this is if parents and the church to give practical examples of unconditional love in their dealings with children.

Children expressed a father-child relationship with God. God as their Father is central to their belief. However, not like the relationship with their earthly father. Even mothers fall short of the belief that they behave like God. This could suggest that children are not seeing godly qualities in their parents. The relationship they have with God is one where they trust Him totally for their lives. It is the common view that the church pastor is the one who has the same characteristics of God. This seems to suggest the view that it is the church pastor and not the biological father of the

children who has the spiritual authority. It also highlights the relationship they have with God. God is far just like the pastor who does not come to children's church but oversees it from a distance.

We may need to have come to the time where God should be presented as a friend or a friendly God who loves them. This will help sustain their relationship with God now and in future. This is important because in Erik Erikson's Theory of Personal Development, he stated that, at this age friends and friendships are very important to children. They guard their friends and have loyalist tendencies towards them (Anthony 2001, 212). This then becomes an issue for pastors and curriculum developers of the children's materials.

The meaning children gave to some of the names of God was functional. God was called counselor because he advises people, He is called Saviour because he delivers people from accidents, and God is called Lion of Judah because He is strong. Although both the names Lion of Judah and Saviour were not the predominate names for God the Father they were however generally accepted by a good number of the respondents. This suggests that it is possible for children to state their view of God and on the surface it looks correct however, with further investigation the meaning is different from the biblical meaning. This therefore suggests that it is possible that the children have not been taught the names of God in the right Biblical context. They have heard these names used to address God in their homes, churches or schools and when the need arises they address God with such names without understanding the meaning them..

Prayer time, quiet time and devotion time are meeting places between the children and God. This is a prevalent view. This could be because 357 (89.3%) believe that the Bible and Church are associated with God (Figure 38). This is a

pointer to note that teachers and parents can be intentional in helping their children meet God. This will aid their spiritual development and growth and thereby making sure that the "voice in their head" is actually that of God because all of them showed that they believed that it was God talking to them and they were obedient to the voice.

Children state that God speaks to their mind and speaks during their quiet time. These two views are prevalent. It is also a prevalent view that children believe that God wants them to obey Him and their parents. It also becomes important that curriculum should assist children talk to and hear God talking in and during their devotion. This is because if one is not careful it becomes easy to brainwash or indoctrinate children during their middle and late childhood years. It is becoming a common thing to see children as suicide bombers who believe that God is the one telling them to kill people and kill themselves in the process.

The research findings reveal that there is significant difference in children views of God and their church denomination. This suggests that church socialization affect children's views of God. The three denominations used for this study all write their own material and curriculum for use in their children's ministries. The implication of this is that each denomination seems to have a different focus concerning the teachings of God.

Recommendations

Churches should or can re-think their curriculum. For instance, they could include topical studies about God throughout the 52 weeks in the year. They could add a section in all lessons titled "what can we learn about God?" where regardless of the lesson or topic, one aspect of God is taught for that lesson. It is therefore the recommendation of the researcher that children should be taught on topics such as; the providence of their friendly God, why God did not answer when I prayed, the triune

God, the existence and nature of God, the essential elements of the trinity (the unity of God, the deity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity is eternal, the functions of each Person in the Trinity), functions of God, the justice and mercies of God, stewardship and God, sovereignty of God. Children need to be taught a balanced theology of God.

Misconceptions within children's views on God should be exposed and corrected. This could be done by the church, however in partnership with parents. This could be done on a quarterly or annual basis. Children's views of God and other doctrinal issues could be taken in the form of an evaluation. The evaluation should be qualitative in nature. It is important to understand what children think about God. Making it qualitative will give children's pastors and the Christian educators and parents the opportunity to listen to children's views of God. This is informed by this research that shows children's concepts of God that are different from the biblical and theological concepts. Children may say something and in their minds have a completely different meaning. Rote and repetitive answers should not be satisfactory for the evaluation. They should always explain what they mean or any answer they give to a question about God.

The use of devotionals should be encouraged among children. Where possible the denominations should start to develop their own devotional materials or purchase from relevant Christian Publishing Houses. These materials could be in a weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual format which will intentionally help children in their walk with God. Children should also be taught to use the devotionals. They should also be taught how to hear and follow the voice of the Lord.

The role of the senior pastor of the church within the children's ministries should be evaluated. He should be encouraged to visit the children's church, teach,

counsel and pray for the children. Parents especially fathers should also become more interested and active in the spiritual development of their children.

The church should have special courses for teachers involved in children's ministry concerning the Doctrine of God for children. This course could be added to their general training. It is also recommended that all children teachers go through teachings on the doctrine of God and how to teach it to children. This is because it is the teachers who will pass on to the children what they know and believe about God. Without the correct knowledge teachers would not be able to correct any misconception children have about God.

The results of this study have shown that, there were some cases where age made a difference in their views of God. Some topics should be age graded and taught in such a way as to answer the uncertainties and disagreements that late childhood children seem to be developing as they grow older. Topics like God at work, sin and justice of God, how God speaking during devotion and God's interest in their everyday life. Late childhood is also a good time to continue to correct misconceptions they many have. Teachings on the nature and existence of God should be continued in a deeper interactive manner, also teachings on faith and works and the presence of God in their lives. Late childhood age is also a very important time when the spiritual nurture should be maintained and even increased. Teaching about God should be practical and applicable to the children's daily life and circumstances.

There should be more opportunities within the church service or Bible study where children can meet with and experience God. Such services should include prayer, reading of the Bible in a quiet environment, reflections from the children on what God is saying to them and directed questions from the teachers.

Symbols play a very important role in the perception of God. It is a recommendation of this study that symbols should be used when teaching children about God. They should be used as correct teaching illustrations. It is important to make sure the symbols give a correct view of God. Africans have a rich cultural heritage therefore the educators should look for symbols to explain God. . There should be the issue of contextualization and creativity within teaching and even curriculum writing. Symbols can be in the form of artifacts like spears, three legged stool, crown, colours, cross etc.

The findings suggest that as children get older they need more teaching both from the home and the church. Therefore, Christian parents should partner together with the church to give sound teaching and answer any questions the children should have. Children should be shown unconditional love by both parents and the church. Special emphases should be given to children of late childhood age to nurture them in areas where there was significant difference between them and the middle childhood children.

Christian parents should also intentionally make sure they help their children experience God, thereby helping them shape a correct view of God. They should do this both in word and in actions. Families should have family prayer time which fathers should lead. Parents should encourage children to observe their quiet time. They should also be interested in what is being taught in the church because it has a lasting effect on what children learn and believe about who God is. What they learn in their middle and late childhood years has a great effect on them even when they are older (Proverbs 22:6).

Areas of Further Research

Areas which would benefit from further research include:

1. A qualitative study on the concept of God among children ages 8-11 in five selected denominations.

2. The causes and effects of children's views of God.

3. The contribution of the environment on children's views of God.

4. An Understanding the concepts of God of children aged 5-7.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Guide Questions for Children

Below are interview questions which will be used to gather qualitative data from respondents through an in-depth interview.

1. What is your name, age and sex (girl or a boy)?
2. Think about God for a minute and then on the paper in front of you draw what comes to your mind. You are to draw a picture of God that shows what God looks like to you.
3. On the same paper draw a picture of yourself with God. Think carefully before you draw because you will have to explain what you have done.
4. Tell me about your picture.
5. Tell me what you think God looks like.
6. Tell me some things God does in everyday life, like things in your home, school, in Ibadan, in Nigeria and in the world.
7. Tell me some names of God that you know that are used in your home, church and in your environment. What are their meanings?
8. Now pretend or imagine that God is talking to you. What is God saying to you? Why is he saying it to you? What have you done to make God say that to you? What does God do for you?
9. What are you saying to God? Why are you saying . . . to God?
10. Explain the relationship between you and God. Who is God to you? Tell me about a time you felt God's presence near and far from you. What happened?
11. If you are to line up every one in the children's church or adult church or in your house and say this one looks like God who would the person be? Why do you give such an answer?
12. What are some things (symbols or objects) in your environment (where you live) that are African and that are general or common that remind you of God? Give reasons for your answers.
13. Tell me some things God likes. Why does He like them?
14. Tell me some things God does not like. Give reasons for your answers.
15. Does God get angry or punish people? Why do you give such an answer?

Code Book A for Qualitative Research

Personal information of the children who were interviewed with their code numbers

Information and codes of children drawing for the qualitative interviews

Table 5: Picture code table

Drawing Code	Gender	Age Group	Drawing Code	Gender	Age Group
A	Boy	8-9	M	Girl	8-9
B	Girl	8-9	N	Boy	8-9
C	Girl	8-9	O	Girl	8-9
D	Boy	8-9	P	Boy	8-9
E	Girl	10-11	R	Boy	10-11
F	Boy	10-11	S	Boy	10-11
G	Girl	10-11	T	Boy	10-11
H	Girl	10-11	U	Boy	10-11
I	Girl	10-11	V	Boy	8-9
J	Boy	8-9	W	Girl	10-11
K	Girl	8-9	X	Boy	10-11
L	Girl	10-11	Y	Girl	10-11

Code Book B for Qualitative Research Themes

CODES	**THEMES**
NAM	Names of God
ATT	Attributes of God
FUC	Functions of God
PRS	Children's response to God
EXI	Existence and nature of God
SMY	Symbols associated with God
HUM	Human actions of God
FEE	Feelings and emotions of God
EXP	God's expectations from children
REP	Representatives of God
PRE	Presence of God
PHY	Physique of God

APPENDIX 3

Summary of Themes and Sub-Themes for Quantitative Research

RQ1. What are the different views African children have about God in a selected

church in Ibadan?

Table 6: Summary of themes and sub-themes on children's views of God

Themes on the views of God	Sub-themes of the views of God	Items numbers in Appendix 5 that reflects themes on the views of God found in qualitative research
Names of God	Biblical African	Part 2: Items 1-4
Existence and Nature of God	Trinity, Jesus, Heaven God's Representative creation, royalty, media, colours, Feelings and emotions Physique, Actions	Part 2: Item: 6, Part 3: Items 1-5, 11, 24, 27, 26, 28-32, 33, 35 and 36
Functions of God		Part 2: Items 7 and 8 Part 3: Items: 6-10
Children Relationship with God		Part 2 Item: 5, Part 3: Items: 12, 13-15, 16-19, 20 and 37
Presence of God	Near and far	Part 3: Items: 21, 22-25

APPENDIX 4

Letter of Introduction

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

P.O Box 24686 - 00502 Karen, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 254 (020) / 882104/5, 882038
020 2603664
Fax: 254 (020) 882906
Mobile: 0722-882104/ 0734-123123
Email: info@negst.edu
Website: www.negst.edu

24 November 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: FOLUKE BOSEDE OLA   -ADMISSION /NO 08022

The above named person is a registered student in Master of Philosophy in Christian Education programme at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. She has completed her course work and is now beginning thesis work. The thesis topic is: **"Prevailing views about God among African pre-tweens in selected churches in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria"**

Please accord her any help she may require to complete her research.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Allan Mbugua
Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs-Assistant

APPENDIX 5

Questionnaire for Children in Selected Churches

My dear friend, the purpose of this research is (1). To find out what you think about God. (2). To see if other children of your age think about God in the same way you do. (3). To find out what factors have made you think of God in the way you do. You have been chosen to help me. Your views of God are very important to me and my work. There is no right or wrong answers. To help me you are to answer the questions truthfully. All you write will be kept secret and I will not use your name when I am writing my report. What you write will be used for this research alone.

Your friend

Foluke Bosede OLA

PART 1

Please put a tick (   ) in the box of the correct answer.

1.   I am a girl [   ]   I am a boy [   ]

2.   I am: 8 years [   ]   9 years [   ]   10 years [   ]   11 years [   ]

3.   The name of my church is   _____

4.   I am a Christian [   ]   I am a Muslim, [   ]
        I am a traditional Worshiper [   ]   Other religion _____

PART 2

Which of the following sentences do you agree with? Put a tick (   ) in the bracket besides the sentence.

1.   Which of the following names would you call God?

		YES	NO
(a)	Everlasting Father	☐	☐
(b)	Prince of peace	☐	☐
(c)	Emmanuel	☐	☐
(d)	Counselor	☐	☐
(e)	Saviour	☐	☐

2.   Which of the following African names would you call God?

		YES	NO
(a)	Eru-jeje	☐	☐
(b)	Oba awon oba	☐	☐
(c)	Olorun	☐	☐
(d)	Chineke	☐	☐
(e)	Oba-okun	☐	☐

3.   Which of the following names would you call God?

		YES	NO
(a)	Jehovah Shalom	☐	☐
(b)	Jehovah Nissi	☐	☐
(c)	Jehovah Elohim	☐	☐
(d)	El Shaddai	☐	☐
(e)	Alpha and Omega	☐	☐

4.   God is called?

		YES	NO
(a)	The king of this World	☐	☐
(b)	Rose of Sharon	☐	☐
(c)	Lily of the Valley	☐	☐
(d)	Lion of Judah	☐	☐

(e)   Ancient of Days   ☐   ☐

5.   I see God as

                                          YES   NO

(a)   My Father   ☐   ☐

(b)   My Friend   ☐   ☐

(c)   My Creator   ☐   ☐

6.   Who behaves like God?

                                          YES   NO

(a)   My church pastor   ☐   ☐

(b)   My mother   ☐   ☐

(c)   My father   ☐   ☐

(d)   My elder sister   ☐   ☐

(e)   My Sunday school teacher   ☐   ☐

(f)   Nobody I know   ☐   ☐

(g)   Me   ☐   ☐

7.   Tick the sentences which you agree with

                                          YES   NO

(a)   God made everything   (creator)   ☐   ☐

(b)   God knows all things   (omniscient)   ☐   ☐

(c)   God is the ruler of the whole universe.   ☐   ☐

(d)   God gets angry with sin   ☐   ☐

(e)   God is all powerful   (omnipotent)   ☐   ☐

8.   Tick the sentences you agree with

		YES	NO
(a)	God will Judge everyone	☐	☐
(b)	God is holy	☐	☐
(c)	All God does is correct and good	☐	☐
(d)	God is everywhere (omnipresent)	☐	☐
(e)	God is the Owner of the Universe	☐	☐

PART 3

Please show how you agree or disagree with the following statements or not sure. Use a tick.

No.		Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	I see God as a spirit or a ghost			
2	God and Jesus are the same			
3.	God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One.			
4	I think God lives in heaven.			
5.	He is called my Heavenly Father			
6.	God gives me safety when I travel by keeping me from accidents			
7	God protects me from armed robbers			
8.	God provides for my daily needs			
9	God teaches me when I am doing the examination			
10	God is working through the governor of my state			
11	God answers my prayers only when He is happy			

	with me.			
12	God speaks to my mind by giving me instructions.			
13	I sing and worship God as a way of saying thank you to Him.			
14	I thank God when bad things happen to me			
15	I trust God knows the best for my life			
16	God wants me to be happy and live peacefully with others.			
17	God wants me to obey His Word and my parents.			
18	God wants me to be honest and truthful			
19	God dislikes children playing rough or with blades.			
20	When I do my devotions or read my Bible God speaks to me			
21	I understand that when I pray God's presence is near me			
22	God is with me when I am in trouble or in danger			
23	God's presence goes far from me when I sin			
24	When I cannot answer a question during examination time it means God's presence is far from me.			

25	God's presence is far when things are not going on well with me.			
26	When I see a king, with a crown, sitting on a throne with a royal garment I think of God.			
27	God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly everywhere			
28	Creation like flowers, animals and insects remind me of God			
29	The moon, stars, sun, rain and wind and fire remind me of God.			
30	When I see the Bible or church I think of God.			
31	Colours red, white and purple remind me of God			
32	Christian pictures, books and music help me think about God.			
33	God is sad when I fight			
34	God can cause sinners to have accidents, problems and sickness or bring about their death.			
35	I would draw God with a face, eyes, nose, a mouth and hair on head because God made us in His own image			
36	I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God.			
37	God dislikes children backbiting and abusing men of God			

Summary of Sample of Children in the Selected Churches

Table 7 Summary of Sample of children in the selected churches

No. Name of Churches	Total No. of children	No. of girls	No. of boys	Children by Age and Gender							
				8		9		10		11	
				G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B
Oritamefa Baptist	24			3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Iwo Road Baptist	92			20	15	7	9	9	5	18	9
Oke- Ado Baptist	46			3	7	7	8	3	3	11	4
Glory Tabernacle Ministers	115			21	12	9	14	12	15	15	17
Bodija- Ashi Baptist	28			5	1	1	5	7	3	5	1
Christ Apostolic Church Oke Agbara	144			21	15	21	16	20	21	18	12
Christ Apostolic Church Holiness	7			-	1	1	1	2	-	1	1

APPENDIX 7

Drawings of the Children

GOD IS MY REDEEM

SWEET JESUS

mic-010Bf

God

my shining star

TiT—

Coat of Majestic Wonders

God Is Love

Lots of Love

Mu-self

God Is Love

God

Myself

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

LOVE
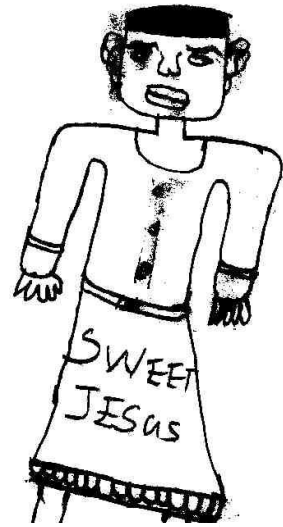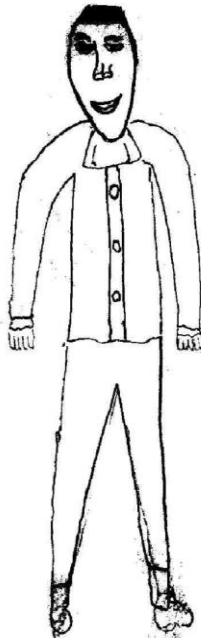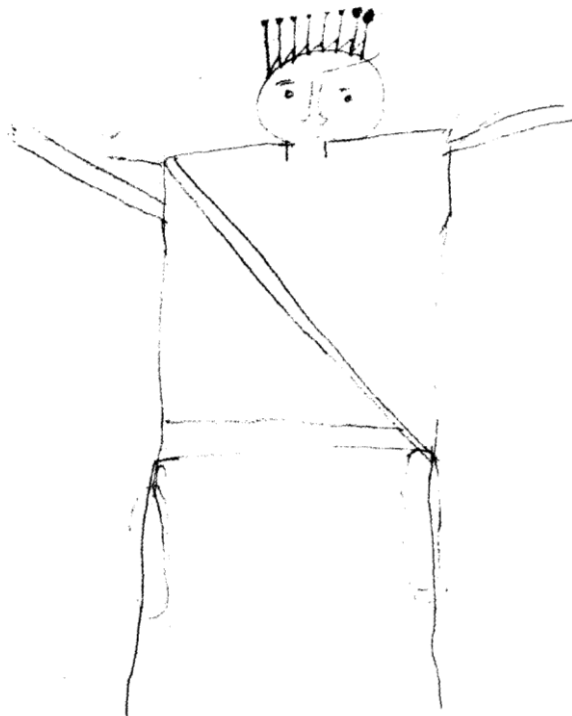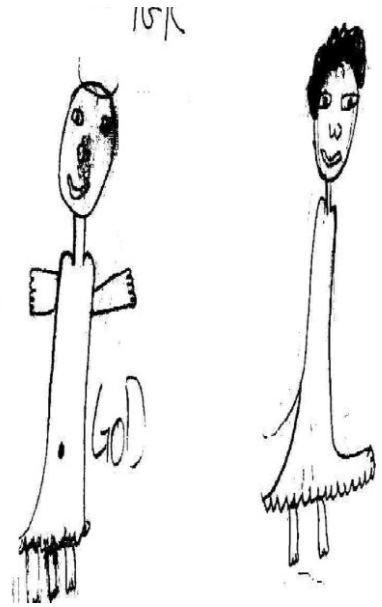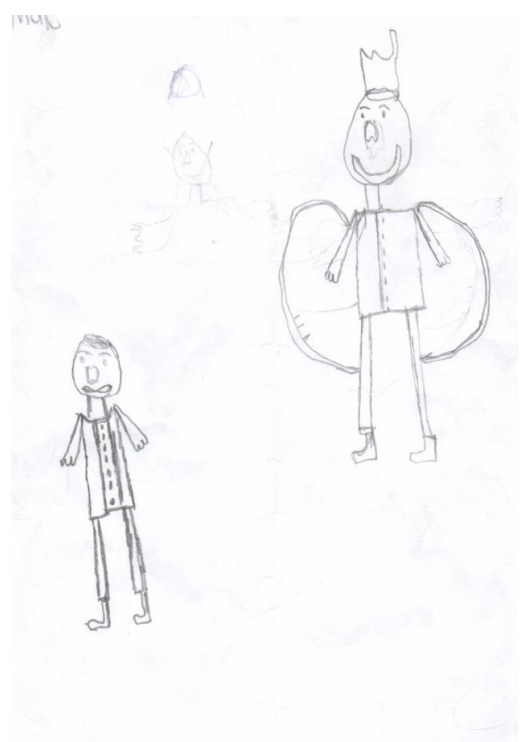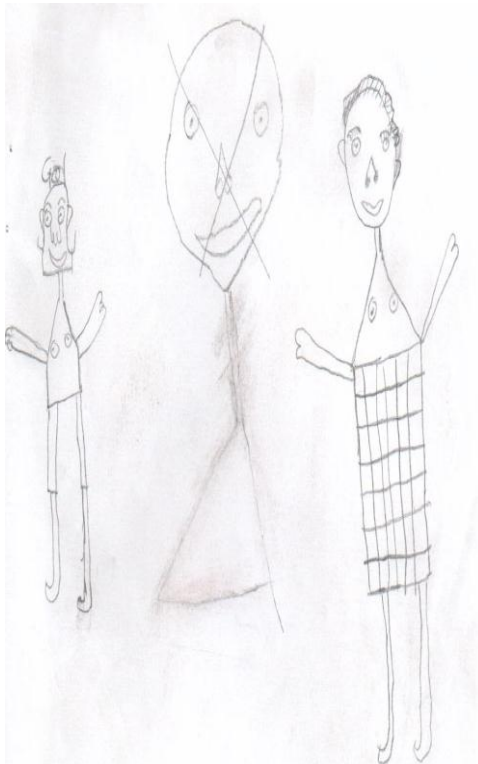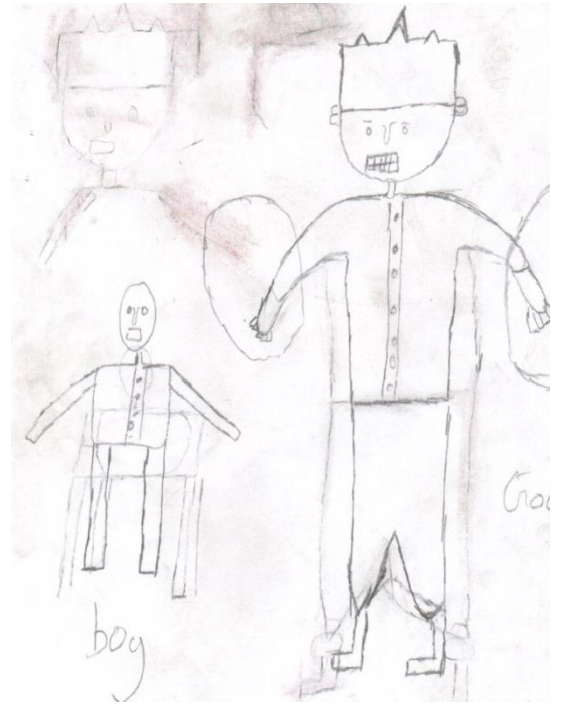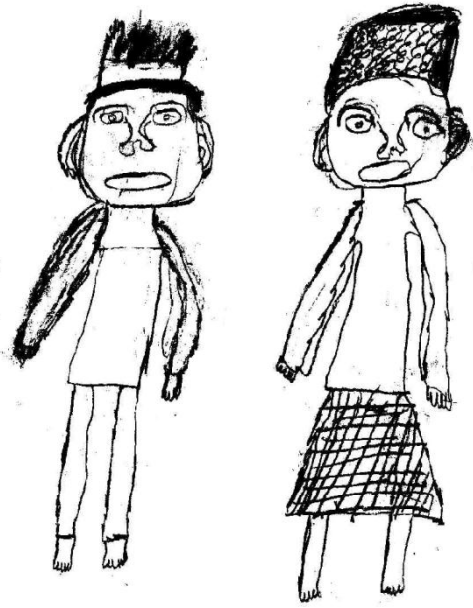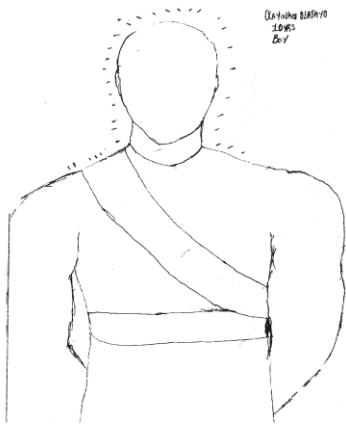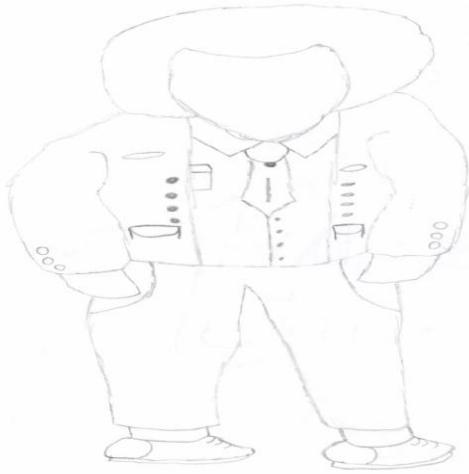
MYSELF

Summary of Age and the Responses of Children's Views of God

Table 8.1: Summary of age and responses of children's views of God, Part 2

.	Item	Responses	8-9 years		10-11 years	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Which of the names would you call God?					
	Everlasting Father	Yes	170	81.7	170	80.2
		No	38	18.3	42	19.8
	Prince of peace	Yes	119	57.2	119	56.1
		No	89	42.8	93	43.9
	Emmanuel	Yes	115	55.3	115	53.8
		No	93	44.7	98	46.2
	Counselor	Yes	76	36.5	80	37.7
		No	132	63.5	132	62.3
	Saviour	Yes	131	63.0	121	51.1
		No	77	37.0	91	42.9
2	Eru-jeje	Yes	88	42.3	101	47.6
		No	120	57.7	111	52.4
	Oba awon oba	Yes	144	69.2	153	72.2
		No	64	30.8	59	27.8
	Olorun	Yes	127	61.1	132	62.3
		No	81	38.9	80	37.7
	Chineke	Yes	88	42.3	81	38.2
		No	120	57.7	131	61.8
	Oba-okun	Yes	31	34.7	39	18.4
		No	177	85.1	173	81.6
3	Jehovah Shalom	Yes	119	57.2	103	48.6
		No	89	42.8	109	51.4
	Jehovah Nissi	Yes	100	48.1	101	47.6
		No	108	51.9	111	52.4
	Jehovah Elohim	Yes	64	30.8	77	36.3
		No	144	69.2	135	63.7
	El Shaddai	Yes	114	54.8	118	55.7
		No	94	45.2	94	44.3

			8-9 years		10-11 years	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Alpha and Omega	Yes	140	67.3	150	70.8
		No	68	32.7%	62	29.2%
4	The king of this World	Yes	109	52.4%	100	47.2%
		No	99	47.6%	112	52.8%
	Rose of Sharon	Yes	67	32.2%	75	35.4%
		No	141	67.8%	137	64.6%
	Lily of the Valley	Yes	69	33.2%	64	30.2%
		No	139	66.8%	148	69.8%
	Lion of Judah	Yes	122	58.7%	132	62.3%
		No	86	41.3%	80	37.7%
	Ancient of Days	Yes	112	53.8%	126	59.4%
		No	96	46.2%	86	40.6%
5	I see God as					
	My Father	Yes	172	82.7%	150	70.8%
		No	36	17.3%	62	29.2%
	My Friend	Yes	72	34.6%	75	35.4%
		No	136	65.4%	137	64.6%
	My Creator	Yes	152	73.1%	142	67.0%
		No	56	26.9%	70	33.0%
6	Who behaves like God?					
	My church pastor	Yes	128	61.5%	96	45.3%
		No	80	38.5%	116	54.7%
	My mother	Yes	53	25.5%	38	17.9%
		No	155	74.5%	174	82.1%
	My father	Yes	57	27.4%	44	20.8%
		No	151	72.6%	168	79.2%
	My elder sister	Yes	35	16.8%	25	11.8%
		No	173	83.2%	187	88.2%
	My Sunday school teacher	Yes	74	35.6	43	20.3
		No	134	64.4	169	79.7
	Nobody I know	Yes	69	33.2%	99	46.7%
		No	139	66.8%	113	53.3%

	Item		8-9 years		10-11 years	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Me	Yes	55	26.4	47	22.2
		No	153	73.6	165	77.8
7	Tick the sentences you agree with					
	God made everything (creator)	Yes	168	80.8	173	81.6
		No	40	19.2	39	18.4
	God knows all things (omniscient)	Yes	119	57.2	116	54.7
		No	89	42.8	96	45.3
	God is the ruler of the whole universe.	Yes	90	43.3	113	53.3
		No	118	56.7	99	46.7
	God gets angry with sin	Yes	92	44.2	93	43.9
		No	116	55.8	119	56.1
	God is all powerful (omnipotent)	Yes	126	60.6	127	59.9
		No	82	39.4	85	40.1
8	God will Judge everyone	Yes	110	52.9	123	58.0
		No	98	47.1	89	42.0
	God is holy	Yes	161	77.4	154	72.6
		No	47	22.6	58	27.4
	All God does is correct and good	Yes	103	49.5	110	51.9
		No	105	50.5	102	48.1
	God is everywhere (omnipresent)	Yes	134	64.4	134	63.2
		No	74	35.6	78	36.8
	God is the Owner of the Universe	Yes	63	30.3	91	42.9
		No	145	69.7	121	57.1

Freq. = Frequency of choices by the respondents, % = Percentage

Table 8.2: Summary of age and children's views of God, Part 3

Item	Response Scale	Age of the children							
		8-9 years		10- 11					
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 1. I see God as spirit or Ghost	Agree	92	48.2	101	51.3	2	.381	.827	NS
	Not Sure	46	24.1	44	22.3				
	Disagree	53	27.7	52	26.4				
Item 2. God and Jesus are the same	Agree	114	38.9	71	35.1	2	22.875	.000	SD
	Not Sure	35	17.9	44	21.8				
	Disagree	47	24.0	87	43.1				
Item 3. God is Father, son and Holy Spirit	Agree	183	91.0	176	86.3	2	6.848	.033	SD
	Not Sure	7	3.5	20	9.8				
	Disagree	11	5.5	8	3.9				
Item 4. I think God lives in heaven	Agree	190	96.4	190	93.1	2	2.297	.317	NS
	Not Sure	4	2.0	7	3.4				
	Disagree	3	1.5	7	3.4				
Item 5. God is called my heavenly Father	Agree	200	98.0	195	93.3	2	5.670	.059	NS
	Not Sure	3	1.5	9	4.3				
	Disagree	1	.5	5	2.4				
Item 6. God gives me safety when I travel	Agree	198	96.1	203	97.6	2	3.053	.122	NS
	Not Sure	5	2.4	5	2.4				
	Disagree	3	1.5	0	0				
Item 7. God protects me from armed robbers	Agree	192	94.1	196	195.2	2	4.447	.108	NS
	Not Sure	7	3.4	2	4.5				
	Disagree	5	2.5	10	7.6				
Item 8. God provides for my daily needs	Agree	197	97	200	96.6	2	.386	.824	NS
	Not Sure	5	2.5	6	2.9				
	Disagree	1	.5	2	1				
Item 9. God teaches me during exams	Agree	190	92.7	174	83.7	2	8.730	.013	SD
	Not Sure	10	4.9	18	8.7				
	Disagree	5	2.4	16	7.7				

Item		8-9 years		10-11 years		df	x^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 10. God works through the governor	Agree	118	59	104	50.2	2	8.112	.017	SD
	Not Sure	51	25.5	47	22.7				
	Disagree	31	15.5	56	27.1				
Item 11. God answers prayers only when happy with me	Agree	134	67	92	44.4	2	22.338	.000	SD
	Not Sure	29	14.5	40	19.3				
	Disagree	37	18.4	75	36.3				
Item 12. God speaks to my mind by giving me instructions	Agree	187	93	184	88.9	2	2.825	.244	NS
	Not Sure	11	5.5	15	7.3				
	Disagree	3	1.5	8	3.9				
Item 13. I sing and worship God as a way of saying thank you to Him	Agree	193	94.6	190	92.7	2	.790	.674	NS
	Not Sure	6	2.9	7	3.4				
	Disagree	5	2.5	8	3.9				
Item 14. I thank God when bad things happen to me	Agree	106	53.5	105	52.2	2	1.383	.501	NS
	Not Sure	31	25.7	25	12.4				
	Disagree	61	30.8	71	35.2				
Item 15. I trust God knows best for my life	Agree	183	94.3	192	93.7	2	.696	.706	NS
	Not Sure	5	2.6	8	3.9				
	Disagree	6	3.1	5	2.4				
Item 16. God want me to be happy and live peacefully with others	Agree	198	98	195	97	2	1.020	.600	NS
	Not Sure	3	1.5	3	1.5				
	Disagree	1	.5	3	1.5				
Item 17. God wants me to obey His word and my parents	Agree	196	96.6	196	95.1	2	.589	.745	NS
	Not Sure	4	2	5	2.4				
	Disagree	3	1.5	5	2.4				
Item 18. God wants me to be honest and truthful	Agree	193	94.6	191	191	2	1.062	.588	NS
	Not Sure	6	2.9	3	1.5				
	Disagree	5	2.5	6	3				

Item		8-9 years		10-11 years		df	x^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 19. God dislikes children playing rough or with blades.	Agree	105	54.7	70	34	2	17.300	.000	SD
	Not Sure	42	21.9	65	31.6				
	Disagree	45	23.4	71	34.5				
Item 20. When I do my devotions or read my Bible God speaks to me	Agree	191	94.1	178	85.2	2	9.598	.008	SD
	Not Sure	7	3.4	23	11				
	Disagree	5	2.5	8	3.8				
Item 21. I understand that when I pray God's presence is near me	Agree	194	94.6	188	90	2	4.004	.135	NS
	Not Sure	6	2.9	15	7.2				
	Disagree	5	2.4	6	2.9				
Item 22. God is with me when I am in trouble or in danger	Agree	195	97	192	92.3	2	4.838	.089	NS
	Not Sure	4	2	8	3.8				
	Disagree	2	1	8	3.8				
Item 23 God's presence goes far from me when I sin	Agree	142	70.6	133	65.5	2	1.671	.434	NS
	Not Sure	33	16.4	35	17.2				
	Disagree	26	12.9	25	17.2				
Item 24. I cannot answer a question during exam means God is far from me.	Agree	81	40.5	50	24.3	2	13.909	.001	SD
	Not Sure	48	24	51	24.7				
	Disagree	71	34.5	105	51				
Item 25. God's presence is far when things are not going on well	Agree	91	46.2	58	28.6	2	16.467	.000	SD
	Not Sure	35	17.8	33	16.3				
	Disagree	71	36	112	55.2				
Item 26. King symbols	Agree	146	73.4	133	65.8	2	3.203	.202	NS
	Not Sure	25	12.6	28	13.9				
	Disagree	28	14.1	41	20.3				

Item		8-9 years		10-11 years		df	x^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 27. God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly everywhere	Agree	100	49.8	59	29.4	2	18.246	.000	SD
	Not Sure	57	28.4	72	35.8				
	Disagree	44	21.9	70	34.8				
Item 28 .Creation like flowers, animals and insects remind me of God	Agree	139	71.6	140	68.3	2	1.625	.444	NS
	Not Sure	34	17.5	34	16.6				
	Disagree	21	10.8	31	15.1				
Item 29. The moon, stars, sun, rain and wind and fire remind me of God.	Agree	147	75.4	141	69.1	2	4.074	.130	NS
	Not Sure	23	11.8	39	19.1				
	Disagree	25	12.8	24	11.8				
Item 30 .When I see the Bible or church I think of God.	Agree	183	92	174	86.6	2	3.033	.022	NS
	Not Sure	9	4.5	15	7.5				
	Disagree	7	3.5	12	6				
Item 31. Colours red, white and purple remind me of God	Agree	116	58.6	88	43.3	2	12.307	.002	SD
	Not Sure	31	15.7	58	28.6				
	Disagree	51	25.8	57	28.1				
Item 32. Christian pictures, books and music help me think about God.	Agree	162	81	159	77.6	2	2.177	.337	NS
	Not Sure	24	12	23	11.2				
	Disagree	14	7	23	11.2				
Item 33. God is sad when I fight	Agree	158	84	159	81.1	2	1.418	.492	NS
	Not Sure	12	6.4	19	9.7				
	Disagree	18	9.6	18	9.2				
Item 34. God cause sinners to have accidents, problems, sickness or death.	Agree	116	58	65	32	2	27.546	.000	SD
	Not Sure	38	19	60	29.6				
	Disagree	46	23	78	38.4				

Item		8-9 years		10-11 years		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 35. I would draw God with a face, eyes, nose, a mouth and hair on head because God made us in His own image	Agree	105	52.2	99	48.8	2	10.768	.005	SD
	Not Sure	53	26.4	34	16.7				
	Disagree	43	21.4	70	24.5				
Item 36. I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God.	Agree	108	54.3	83	41.3	2	11.943	.002	SD
	Not Sure	46	23.1	41	20.4				
	Disagree	45	22.6	77	38.3				
Item 37. God dislikes children backbiting and abusing men of God	Agree	155	11.6	158	77.1	2	.140	.933	NS
	Not Sure	21	10.6	24	11.7				
	Disagree	23	77.9	23	11.2				

Freq. = Frequency, % = Percentage, NS= No Significant Difference, SD = Significant

Difference, df = Degree of Freedom, χ^2 = Chi- Square.

APPENDIX 9

Summary of Gender and the Responses of Children's Views of God

Table 9.1: Summary of gender and responses of children's views of God, Part 2

	Item	Response	Girls		Boys	
1	Which of the following names would you call God?					
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Everlasting Father	Yes	190	82.6	150	78.9
		No	40	17.4	40	21.1
	Prince of peace	Yes	135	58.7	103	54.2
		No	95	41.3	87	45.8
	Emmanuel	Yes	127	55.2	102	53.7
		No	103	44.8	88	46.3
	Counselor	Yes	92	40.0	64	33.7
		No	138	60	126	66.3
	Saviour	Yes	143	62.2	109	57.4
		No	87	37.8	81	42.6
2	Eru-jeje	Yes	114	49.6	75	39.5
		No	116	50.4	115	60.5
	Oba awon oba	Yes	167	72.6	130	68.4
		No	63	27.4	60	31.6
	Olorun	Yes	148	64.3	111	58.4
		No	82	35.7	79	41.6
	Chineke	Yes	86	37.3	83	43.7
		No	144	62.6	107	56.3
	Oba-okun	Yes	39	17	31	16.3
		No	191	83	159	83.7
3	Jehovah Shalom	Yes	121	52.6	101	53.2
		No	109	47.4	89	46.8
	Jehovah Nissi	Yes	107	46.5	94	49.5
		No	123	53.5	96	50.5
	Jehovah Elohim	Yes	75	32.6	66	34.7

	Item	Response	Girls		Boys	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
		No	155	67.4	124	65.3
	El Shaddai	Yes	130	56.5	102	53.7
		No	100	43.5	88	46.3
	Item	Response	Girls		Boys	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Alpha and Omega	Yes	159	69.1	131	68.9
		No	71	30.9	59	31.1
4	The king of this World	Yes	107	46.5	102	53.7
		No	123	53.5	88	46.3
	Rose of Sharon	Yes	77	33.5	65	34.2
		No	153	66.5	125	65.8
	Lily of the Valley	Yes	76	33.0	57	30.0
		No	154	67.0	133	70.0
	Lion of Judah	Yes	136	59.1	118	62.1
		No	94	40.9	72	37.9
	Ancient of Days	Yes	135	58.7	103	54.2
		No	95	41.3	87	45.8
5	I see God as					
	My Father	Yes	187	81.3	135	71.1
		No	43	18.7	55	28.9
	My Friend	Yes	80	34.8	67	35.3
		No	150	65.2	123	64.7
	My Creator	Yes	157	68.3	137	72.1
		No	73	31.7	53	27.9
6	Who behaves like God?					
	My church pastor	Yes	123	53.5	101	53.2
		No	107	46.5	89	46.8
	My mother	Yes	46	20.0	45	23.7
		No	184	80.0	145	76.3
	My father	Yes	54	23.5	47	24.7
		No	176	76.5	143	75.3
	My elder sister	Yes	30	13.0	30	15.8
		No	200	87.	160	84.2
	My Sunday school teacher	Yes	64	27.8	53	27.9
		No	166	72.2	137	72.1
	Nobody I know	Yes	88	38.3	80	42.1
		No	142	61.7	110	57.9

	Item	Response	Girls		Boys	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Me	Yes	51	22.2	51	26.8
		No	179	77.8	139	73.2
7	Tick the sentences which you agree with					
	God made everything (creator)	Yes	186	80.9	155	81.6
		No	44	19.1	35	18.4
	God knows all things (omniscient)	Yes	131	57.0	104	54.7
		No	99	43.0	86	45.3
	God is the ruler of the whole universe.	Yes	111	48.3	92	48.4
		No	119	51.7	98	51.6
	God gets angry with sin	Yes	94	40.9	91	47.9
		No	136	59.1	99	52.1
	God is all powerful (omnipotent)	Yes	141	61.3	112	58.9
		No	89	38.7	78	41.1
8	God will Judge everyone	Yes	129	56.1	104	54.7
		No	101	43.9	86	45.3
	God is holy	Yes	172	74.8	143	75.3
		No	58	25.2	47	24.7
	All God does is correct and good	Yes	121	52.6	92	48.4
		No	109	47.4	98	51.6
	God is everywhere (omnipresent)	Yes	151	65.7	117	61.6
		No	79	34.3	73	38.4
	God is the Owner of the Universe	Yes	77	33.5	77	40.5
		No	153	66.5	113	59.6

Freq. = Frequency of choices by the respondents, % = Percentage

Table 9.2: Summary of gender and responses of children's views of God, Part 3

Item	Response Scale	Gender of the children				df	χ²	P<	
		Girls		Boys					
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 1. I see God as spirit or Ghost	Agree	110	51.4	83	47.7	2	2.611	.271	NS
	Not Sure	53	24.8	37	21.3				
	Disagree	51	23.8	54	31.0				
Item 2. God and Jesus are the same	Agree	103	47.0	82	45.8	2	.059	.971	NS
	Not Sure	43	19.6	36	20.1				
	Disagree	73	33.3	61	34.1				
Item 3. God is Father, son and Holy Spirit	Agree	201	88.5	158	88.8	2	.204	.903	NS
	Not Sure	16	7.0	11	6.2				
	Disagree	10	4.4	9	5.1				
Item 4. I think God lives in heaven	Agree	213	95.9	167	93.3	2	3.672	.159	NS
	Not Sure	3	1.4	8	4.5				
	Disagree	6	2.7	4	2.2				
Item 5. God is called my heavenly Father	Agree	221	97.4	174	93.5	2	3.557	.169	NS
	Not Sure	4	1.8	8	4.3				
	Disagree	2	.9	4	2.2				
Item 6. God gives me safety when I travel	Agree	224	99.1	177	94.1	2	12.459	.002	SD
	Not Sure	0	.0	10	5.3				
	Disagree	2	.9	1	.5				
Item 7. God protects me from armed robbers	Agree	219	96.9	169	90.9	2	7.071	.029	SD
	Not Sure	2	.9	7	3.8				
	Disagree	5	2.2	10	5.4				
Item 8. God provides for my daily needs	Agree	222	97.	175	95.1	2	2.241	.326	NS
	Not Sure	4	1.8	7	3.8				
	Disagree	1	.4	2	1.1				
Item 9. God teaches me during exams	Agree	203	90.2	161	85.6	2	2.744	.254	NS
	Not Sure	14	6.2	14	7.4				
	Disagree	8	3.6	13	6.9				
Item 10. God works through the governor	Agree	125	55.6	97	53.3	2	3.338	.188	NS
	Not Sure	47	20.9	51	28.0				
	Disagree	53	23.6	34	18.7				

Item		Girls		Boys		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 11. God answers prayers only when happy with me	Agree	122	54.5	104	56.8	2	.230	.892	NS
	Not Sure	39	17.4	30	16.4				
	Disagree	63	28.1	49	26.8				
Item 12. God speaks to my mind by giving me instructions	Agree	205	92.8	166	88.8	2	2.761	.251	NS
	Not Sure	10	4.5	16	8.6				
	Disagree	6	2.7	5	2.7				
Item 13. I sing and worship God as a way of saying thank you to Him	Agree	210	93.8	173	93.5	2	2.494	.287	NS
	Not Sure	5	2.2	8	4.3				
	Disagree	9	4.0	4	2.2				
Item 14. I thank God when bad things happen to me	Agree	115	51.8	96	54.2	2	.365	.833	NS
	Not Sure	33	14.9	23	13.0				
	Disagree	74	33.3	58	32.8				
Item 15. I trust God knows best for my life	Agree	208	94.5	167	93.3	2	1.799	.402	NS
	Not Sure	5	2.3	8	4				
	Disagree	7	3.2	4.	2.2				
Item 16. God want me to be happy and live peacefully with others	Agree	217	96.9	176	98.3	2	.931	.628	NS
	Not Sure	4	1.8	2	1.1				
	Disagree	3	1.3	1	.6				
Item 17. God wants me to obey His word and my parents	Agree	216	96.4	176	95	2	1.880	.391	NS
	Not Sure	3	1.3	6	3.2				
	Disagree	5	2.2	3	1.6				
Item 18. God wants me to be honest and truthful	Agree	210	95.9	174	94.1	2	1.453	.484	NS
	Not Sure	5	2.3	4	2.2				
	Disagree	4	1.8	7	3.8				
Item 19. God dislikes kids playing rough or with blades.	Agree	98	44.3	77	43.5	2	.028	.986	NS
	Not Sure	59	26.7	48	27.1				
	Disagree	64	29.0	52	29.4				

Item	Response	Girls		Boys		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 20. When I do my devotions or read my Bible God speaks to me	Agree	207	91.2	162	87.6	2	1.431	.489	NS
	Not Sure	14	6.2	16	8.6				
	Disagree	6	2.6	7	3.8				
Item 21. I understand that when I pray God's presence is near me	Agree	212	93.0	170	91.4	2	3.860	.145	NS
	Not Sure	8	3.5	13	7.0				
	Disagree	8	3.5	3	1.6				
Item 22. God is with me when I am in trouble or in danger	Agree	211	95.0	176	94.1	2	.910	.634	NS
	Not Sure	7	3.2	5	2.7				
	Disagree	4	1.8	6	3.2				
Item 23 God's presence goes far from me when I sin	Agree	137	62.0	138	75.4	2	9.643	.008	SD
	Not Sure	41	18.6	27	14.8				
	Disagree	43	19.5	18	9.8				
Item 24. I cannot answer a question during exam means God is far from me.	Agree	62	27.9	69	37.5	2	5.451	.066	NS
	Not Sure	62	27.9	37	20.1				
	Disagree	98	44.1	78	42.4				
Item 25. God is far when things are not going on well with me.	Agree	81	37.3	68	37.2	2	.003	.998	NS
	Not Sure	37	17.1	31	16.9				
	Disagree	99	45.6	84	45.9				
Item 26. When I see a king, with a crown, sitting on a throne with a royal garment I think of God.	Agree	156	70.9	123	68.0	2	.847	.655	NS
	Not Sure	26	11.8	27	14.9				
	Disagree	38	17.3	31	17.1				

Item	Response	Girls		Boys		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 27. God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly everywhere	Agree	86	39.1	73	40.1	2	.093	.995	NS
	Not Sure	72	32.7	57	31.3				
	Disagree	62	28.2	52	28.6				
Item 28 Creation: flowers, animals, insects remind me of God	Agree	160	72.1	119	67.2	2	1.200	.549	NS
	Not Sure	36	16.2	32	18.1				
	Disagree	26	11.7	26	14.7				
Item 29. The moon, stars, sun, rain and wind and fire remind me of God.	Agree	166	75.5	122	68.2	2	4.095	.129	NS
	Not Sure	27	12.3	35	19.6				
	Disagree	27	12.3	22	12.3				
Item 30 When I see the Bible or church I think of God.	Agree	198	90.4	159	87.8	2	1.807	.405	NS
	Not Sure	10	4.6	14	7.7				
	Disagree	11	5.0	8	4.4				
Item 31. Colours red, white and purple remind me of God	Agree	112	50.2	92	51.7	2	2.040	.361	NS
	Not Sure	55	24.7	34	19.1				
	Disagree	56	25.1	52	29.2				
Item 32. Christian pictures, books and music help me think about God.	Agree	178	79.8	143	78.6	2	.227	.893	NS
	Not Sure	26	11.7	21	11.5				
	Disagree	19	8.5	18	9.9				
Item 33. God is sad when I fight	Agree	175	82.5	142	82.6	2	.188	.910	NS
	Not Sure	18	8.5	13	7.6				
	Disagree	19	9.0	17	9.9				
Item 34. God can cause sinners to have accidents, sickness and death etc.	Agree	94	42.9	87	47.3	2	1.118	.572	NS
	Not Sure	53	24.2	45	24.5				
	Disagree	72	32.9	52	28.3				

Item	Response	Girls		Boys		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 35. I would draw God with a face, because God made us in His own image	Agree	114	51.8	90	48.9	2	3.184	.204	NS
	Not Sure	52	23.6	35	19.0				
	Disagree	54	24.5	59	32.1				
Item 36. I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God.	Agree	94	43.1	97	53.3	2	5.643	.060	NS
	Not Sure	56	25.7	31	17.0				
	Disagree	68	31.2	54	29.7				
Item 37. God dislikes children backbiting and abusing men of God	Agree	169	76.8	144	78.3	2	.128	.938	NS
	Not Sure	25	11.4	20	10.9				
	Disagree	26	11.8	20	10.9				

Freq. = Frequency, % = Percentage, NS= No Significant Difference, SD = Significant

Difference, df = Degree of Freedom, χ^2 = Chi- Square.

Summary of Denomination and the Responses of Children's Views of God

Table 10.1: Summary of denomination and children's views of God, Part 2

.	Item		Church					
1	Which of the following names would you call God?		Baptist		Christ Apostolic		Glory Tabernacle	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Everlasting Father	Yes	121	77.6	127	85.2	92	80
		No	35	22.4	22	14.8	23	20.
	Prince of peace	Yes	92	59	78	47.7	68	40.1
		No	64	41	71	52.3	47	59.1
	Emmanuel	Yes	91	58.3	71	47.7	67	58.3
		No	65	41.7	78	52.3	48	41.7
	Counselor	Yes	68	43.6	43	28.9	45	39.1
		No	88	56.4	106	71.1	70	60.9
	Saviour	Yes	94	60.3	86	57.7	72	62.6
		No	62	39.7	63	42.3	43	37.4
2	Eru-jeje	Yes	63	40.4	76	51.0	50	43.5
		No	93	59.6	73	49.	65	56.5
	Oba awon oba	Yes	109	69.9	111	74.5	77	67.0
		No	47	30.1	38	25.5	38	33.0
	Olorun	Yes	88	56.4	93	62.4	78	67.8
		No	68	43.6	56	37.6	37	32.2
	Chineke	Yes	48	30.8	61	59.1	60	52.2
		No	108	69.2	88	40.9	55	47.8
	Oba-okun	Yes	22	14.1	27	18.1	21	18.3
		No	134	85.9	122	81.9	94	81.7
3	Jehovah Shalom	Yes	66	42.3	87	58.4	69	60.0
		No	90	57.7	62	41.6	46	40.0
	Jehovah Nissi	Yes	59	37.8	70	47.0	72	62.6
		No	97	62.2	79	53.0	43	37.4

			BAPTIST	Christ Apostolic		GTM	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%

			BAPTIST Freq.	%	Christ Apostolic Freq.	%	GTM Freq.	%
	Jehovah Elohim	Yes	45	28.8	48	32.2	48	41.7
		No	111	71.2	101	67.8	67	58.3
	El Shaddai	Yes	79	50.6	78	52.3	75	65.2
		No	77	49.4	71	47.7	40	34.8
	Alpha and Omega	Yes	109	69.9	102	68.5	79	68.7
		No	47	30.1	47	31.5	36	31.3
4	The king of this World	Yes	61	39.1	92	61.7	56	48.7
		No	95	60.9	57	38.3	59	51.3
	Rose of Sharon	Yes	37	23.7	62	41.6	43	37.4
		No	119	76.3	87	58.4	72	62.6
	Lily of the Valley	Yes	40	25.6	50	33.6	43	37.4
		No	116	74.4	99	66.4	72	62.6
	Lion of Judah	Yes	93	59.6	83	55.7	78	67.8
		No	63	40.4	66	44.3	37	32.2
	Ancient of Days	Yes	79	50.6	80	53.7	79	68.7
		No	77	49.4	69	46.3	36	31.3
5	I see God as							
	My Father	Yes	106	67.9	115	77.2	101	87.8
		No	50	32.1	34	22.8	14	12.2
	My Friend	Yes	43	27.6	55	36.9	49	42.6
		No	113	72.4	94	63.1	66	57.4
	My Creator	Yes	108	69.2	108	72.5	78	67.8
		No	48	30.8	41	27.5	37	32.2
6	Who behaves like God?							
	My church pastor	Yes	80	51.3	76	51.0	68	59.1
		No	76	48.7	73	49.0	47	40.9
	My mother	Yes	20	12.8	37	24.8	34	29.6
		No	136	87.2	112	75.2	81	70.4
	My father	Yes	25	16.0	40	26.8	36	31.3
		No	131	84.0	109	73.2	79	68.7
	My elder sister	Yes	15	9.6	26	17.4	19	16.5
		No	141	90.4	123	82.6	96	83.5

			BAPTIST		Christ Apostolic		GTM	
		.	Freq.	%	Freq.		Freq.	%
	My Sunday school teacher	Yes	34	21.8	48	32.2	35	30.4
		No	122	78.2	101	67.8	80	69.6
	Nobody I know	Yes	64	41.0	74	49.7	30	26.1
		No	92	59.0	75	50.3	85	73.9
	Me	Yes	30	19.2	31	20.8	41	35.7
		No	126	80.8	118	79.2	74	64.3
	God made everything (creator)	Yes	123	78.8	122	81.9	96	83.5
		No	33	21.2	27	18.1	19	16.5
	God knows all things (omniscient)	Yes	70	44.9	89	59.7	76	66.1
		No	86	55.1	60	40.3	39	33.9
	God is ruler of the whole universe.	Yes	56	35.9	73	49.0	74	64.3
		No	100	64.1	76	51.0	41	35.7
	God gets angry with sin	Yes	46	29.5	75	50.3	64	55.7
		No	110	70.5	74	49.7	51	44.3
	God is all powerful (omnipotent)	Yes	77	49.4	97	65.1	79	68.7
		No	79	50.6	52	34.9	36	31.3
8	God will Judge everyone	Yes	75	48.1	82	55.0	76	66.1
		No	81	51.9	67	45.0	39	33.9
	God is holy	Yes	100	64.1	120	80.5	95	82.6
		No	56	35.9	29	19.5	20	17.4
	All God does is correct, good	Yes	65	41.7	80	53.7	68	59.1
		No	91	58.3	69	46.3	47	40.9
	God is everywhere omnipresent	Yes	89	57.1	96	64.4	83	72.2
		No	67	42.9	53	35.6	32	27.8
	God is the owner of the universe	Yes	48	30.8	53	35.6	53	46.1
		No	108	69.2	96	64.4	62	53.9

Freq. = Frequency, % = Percentage, NS= No Significant Difference, SD = Significant Difference, df = Degree of Freedom, χ^2 = Chi- Square

Table 10.2: Summary of denomination and children's views of God, Part 3

Item		Church Denomination						df	χ^2	P<	
		BAPTIST		Christ Apostolic		GTM					
		Freq	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 1. I see God as spirit or Ghost	Agree	70	49.3	85	59.0	38	37.3	4	14.285	.006	SD
	Not Sure	30	21.1	33	22.9	27	26.5				
	Disagree	42	29.6	26	18.1	37	36.3				
Item 2. God and Jesus are the same	Agree	61	40.7	68	48.6	56	51.9	4	8.835	.065	NS
	Not Sure	27	18.0	26	18.6	26	24.1				
	Disagree	62	41.3	46	32.9	26	24.1				
Item 3. God is Father, son and Holy Spirit	Agree	135	90.6	124	84.9	100	90.9	4	6.946	.139	NS
	Not Sure	6	4.0	16	11.0	5	4.5				
	Disagree	8	5.4	6	4.1	5	4.5				
Item 4. I think God lives in heaven	Agree	141	2.6	130	93.5	109	99.1	4	8.354	.079	NS
	Not Sure	7	4.6	3	2.2	1	.9				
	Disagree	4	92.8	6	4.3	0	.0				
Item 5. God is called my heavenly Father	Agree	147	96.1	137	92.6	111	99.1	4	9.675	.046	SD
	Not Sure	3	2.0	9	6.1	0	.0				
	Disagree	3	2.0	2	1.4	1	.9				
Item 6. God gives me safety when I travel	Agree	149	97.4	141	94.6	111	99.1	4	6.250	,181	NS
	Not Sure	3	2.0	7	4.7	0	.0				
	Disagree	1	.7	1	.7	1	.9				
Item 7. God protects me from armed robbers	Agree	146	95.4	131	89.7	111	98.2	4	9.394	.052	NS
	Not Sure	3	2.0	5	3.4	1	.9				
	Disagree	4	2.6	10	6.8	1	.9				

		BAPTIST		Christ Apostolic		GTM		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 8. God provides for my daily needs	Agree	148	96.1	137	94.5	112	100	4	7.217	.125	NS
	Not Sure	4	2.6	7	4.8	0	0%				
	Disagree	2	1.3	1	.7	0	0%				
Item 9. God teaches me during exams	Agree	137	89.5	121	82.9	106	93.0	4	8.155	.086	NS
	Not Sure	9	5.9	16	11.0	3	2.6				
	Disagree	7	4.6	9	6.2	5	4.4				
Item 10. God works through the governor	Agree	87	58.0	72	49.3	63	56.8	4	8.323	.080	NS
	Not Sure	33	22.0	33	22.6	32	28.8				
	Disagree	30	20.0	41	28.1	16	14.4				
Item 11. God answers prayers only when happy with me	Agree	90	59.6	79	54.1	57	51.8	4	3.180	.528	NS
	Not Sure	27	17.9	23	15.8	19	17.3				
	Disagree	34	22.5	44	30.1	34	30.9				
Item 12. God speaks to my mind by giving me instructions	Agree	135	91.2	127	87.0	109	95.6	4	5.962	.202	NS
	Not Sure	9	6.1	13	8.9	4	3.5				
	Disagree	4	2.7	6	4.1	1	.9				
Item 13. I sing and worship God as a way of saying thank you to Him	Agree	142	93.4	131	90.3	110	98.2	4	6.594	.159	NS
	Not Sure	5	3.3	7	4.8	1	.9				
	Disagree	5	3.3	7	4.8	1	.9				
Item 14. I thank God during bad times	Agree	81	55.1	70	49.6	60	54.1	4	2.096	.718	NS
	Not Sure	22	15.0	18	12.8	16	14.4				
	Disagree	44	29.9	53	37.6	35	31.5				

		BAPTIST		Christ Apostolic		GTM		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 15. I trust God knows best for my life	Agree	139	95.2	133	91.1	103	96.3	4	5.044	.283	NS
	Not Sure	5	3.4	7	4.8	1	.9				
	Disagree	2	1.4	6	4.1	3	2.8				
Item 16. God want me to be happy and live peacefully with others	Agree	147	96.1	136	97.1	110	100.0	4	4.560	.336	NS
	Not Sure	4	2.6	2	1.4	0	.0				
	Disagree	2	1.3	2	1.4	0	.0				
Item 17. God wants me to obey His word and my parents	Agree	146	96.7	135	92.5	111	99.1	4	10.228	.036	SD
	Not Sure	1	.7	7	4.8	1	.9				
	Disagree	4	2.6	4	2.7	0	.0				
Item 18. God wants me to be honest, truthful	Agree	143	95.3	132	92.3	109	98.2	4	4.670	.323	NS
	Not Sure	3	2.0	5	3.5	1	.9				
	Disagree	4	2.7	6	4.2	1	.9				
Item 19. God dislikes rough play or with blades.	Agree	67	44.7	56	40.3	52	47.7	4	3.004	.557	NS
	Not Sure	44	29.3	36	25.9	27	24.8				
	Disagree	39	26.0	47	33.8	30	27.5				
Item 20. Observing devotions or reading Bible God speaks to me	Agree	140	91.5	124	84.4	105	93.8	4	10.096	.039	SD
	Not Sure	9	5.9	14	9.5	7	6.3				
	Disagree	4	2.6	9	6.1	0	.0				
Item 21. when I pray God's is	Agree	139	90.8	134	90.5	109	96.5	4	14.555	.006	SD
	Not Sure	12	7.8	5	3.4	4	3.5				
	Disagree	2	1.3	9	6.1	0	.0				

near me							df	χ^2	P<	
		BAPTIST		Christ Apostolic		GTM				
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%			
Item 22. God is with me when I am in trouble or in danger	Agree	141	93.4	133	92.4	113	99.1				
	Not Sure	7	4.6	4	2.8	1	.9				
	Disagree	3	2.0	7	4.9	0	.0	4	9.848	.043	SD
Item 23 God's presence goes far from me when I sin	Agree	95	63.8	95	66.0	85	76.6				
	Not Sure	22	14.8	32	22.2	14	12.6				
	Disagree	32	21.5	17	11.8	12	10.8	4	12.118	.016	SD
Item 24. I cannot answer a question during exam means God is far from me	Agree	50	33.1	49	34.5	32	28.3				
	Not Sure	38	25.2	38	26.8	23	20.4				
	Disagree	63	41.7	55	38.7	58	51.3	4	4.369	.358	NS
Item 25. God is far when things are not going on well with me.	Agree	62	41.6	57	40.1	30	27.5				
	Not Sure	24	16.1	25	17.6	19	17.4				
	Disagree	63	42.3	60	42.3	60	55.0	4	6.790	.147	NS
Item 26. Seeing a king, crown, throne and royal garment I think of God.	Agree	105	70.9	92	64.8	82	73.9				
	Not Sure	14	9.5	21	14.8	18	16.2				
	Disagree	29	19.6	29	20.4	11	9.9	4	8.183	.085	NS
Item 27. God has wings or feathers like an angel to fly	Agree	68	44.7	64	45.4	27	24.8				
	Not Sure	46	30.3	41	29.1	42	38.5				
	Disagree	38	25.0	36	25.5	40	36.7	4	13.910	.008	SD

		BAPTIST		Christ Apostolic		GTM		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 28 Creation: animals and insects remind me of God	Agree	115	76.2	86	61.9	78	71.6	4	20.340	.000	SD
	Not Sure	11	7.3	34	24.5	23	21.1				
	Disagree	25	16.6	19	13.7	8	7.3				
Item 29. Moon, stars, sun, rain, wind and fire remind me of G.od	Agree	115	76.2	95	68.3	78	71.6	4	8.024	.91	NS
	Not Sure	14	9.3	28	20.1	20	18.3				
	Disagree	22	14.6	16	11.5	11	10.1				
Item 30 Seeing the Bible or church I think of God.	Agree	134	90.5	127	88.8	96	88.1	4	11.232	.024	SD
	Not Sure	5	3.4	7	4.9	12	11.0				
	Disagree	9	6.1	9	6.3	1	.9				
Item 31. Colours red, white and purple remind me of God	Agree	81	54.7	64	44.8	59	53.6	4	6.170	.187	NS
	Not Sure	25	16.9	37	25.9	27	24.5				
	Disagree	42	28.4	42	29.4	24	21.8				
Item 32. Christian pictures, books, music help me think of God.	Agree	120	78.9	107	73.8	94	87.0	4	6.819	.146	NS
	Not Sure	18	11.8	22	15.2	7	6.5				
	Disagree	14	9.2	16	11.0	7	6.5				
Item 33. God is sad when I fight	Agree	111	77.6	111	83.5	95	88.0	4	7.372	.118	NS
	Not Sure	18	12.6	8	6.0	5	4.6				
	Disagree	14	9.8	14	10.5	8	7.4				

		BAPTIST		Christo Apostolic		GTM		df	χ^2	P<	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%				
Item 34. God cause sinners to have accidents, problems sickness or death.	Agree	74	49.0	58	41.4	49	43.8	4	1.775	.777	NS
	Not Sure	34	22.5	36	25.7	28	25.0				
	Disagree	43	28.5	46	32.9	35	31.3				
Item 35. I'll draw God with a face, God made us in His own image	Agree	76	50.0	71	49.3	57	52.8	4	.841	.933	NS
	Not Sure	31	20.4	34	23.6	22	20.4				
	Disagree	45	29.6	39	27.1	29	26.9				
Item 36. I'll draw God with no face because no one has seen God.	Agree	72	48.0	71	50.4	48	44.0	4	7.987	.092	NS
	Not Sure	26	17.3	38	27.0	23	21.1				
	Disagree	52	34.7	32	22.7	38	34.9				
Item 37. God dislikes children backbiting and abusing men of God	Agree	109	72.2	107	75.4	97	87.4	4	11.702	.020	SD
	Not Sure	19	12.6	21	14.8	5	4.5				
	Disagree	23	15.2	14	9.9	9	8.1				

Freq. = Frequency, % = Percentage, NS= No Significant Difference, SD = Significant

Difference, df = Degree of Freedom, χ^2 = Chi- Square.

APPENDIX 11

Summary of Children's responses to Items (Part 2 and 3) in the questionnaire

Table 11: The Views children have calling God with biblical names

Part 2, Item 1		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Everlasting	Yes	340	81.0		
Father	No	80	19.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Prince of	Yes	238	56.7		
Peace	No	182	43.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Emmanuel	Yes	229	54.5		
	No	191	45.5	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Counselor	Yes	156	37.1		
	No	264	62.9	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Saviour	Yes	252	60.0		
	No	168	40.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Part 2, Item 3 Divine Names of God		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Jehovah Shalom	Yes	222	52.9		
	No	198	47.1	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Jehovah Nissi	Yes	201	47.9		
	No	219	52.1	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Jehovah Elohim Yes		141	33.6		
	No	279	66.4	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
El Shaddai	Yes	232	55.2		
	No	188	44.8	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Alpha and Omega	Yes	290	69.0		
	No	130	31.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		

Table 12: The Views children have calling God with biblical Names (Continued)

Part 2, Item 4		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
King of this World	Yes	209	49.8		
	No	211	50.2	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Lily of the Valley	Yes	133	31.7		
	No	287	68.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Rose of Sharon	Yes	142	33.8		
	No	278	66.2	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Lion of Judah	Yes	254	60.5		
	No	166	39.5	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Ancient of Days	Yes	238	56.7		
	No	182	43.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		

Table 13: African names for God

Part 2, Item 2		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Eru-jeje	Yes	189	45.0		
	No	231	55.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Oba awon oba	Yes	297	70.7		
	No	123	29.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Olorun	Yes	259	61.7		
	No	161	38.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Chineke	Yes	169	40.2		
	No	251	59.8	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Oba-okun	Yes	70	16.7		
	No	350	83.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		

Table 14: Children's views about their relationship with God

Part 2, Item 5		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
God is my Father	Yes	323	76.9		
	No	97	23.1	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
God is my Friend	Yes	147	35.0		
	No	273	65.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
God is my Creator	Yes	294	70.0		
	No	126	30.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		

Table 15: Children's views about God's representative on earth

Part 2, Item 6 Who behaves like God?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Church Pastor	Yes	224	53.3		
	No	196	46.7	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Mother	Yes	91	21.7		
	No	329	78.3	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Father	Yes	101	24.0		
	No	319	76.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Elder sister	Yes	60	14.3		
	No	360	85.7	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Sunday School Teacher	Yes	117	27.9		
	No	303	72.1	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Nobody	Yes	168	40.0		
	No	252	60.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
Me the Respondent	Yes	102	24.3		
	No	318	75.7	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		

Table 16: Children's views of God as creator, ruler and owner of the universe

Part 2, Item 7		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
God made	Yes	341	81.2		
Everything	No	79	18.8	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
God is Ruler	Yes	203	48.3		
of the	No	217	51.7	100.0	100.0
Universe	Total	420	100.0		
God is the	Yes	154	36.7		
Owner of the	No	266	63.3	100.0	100.0
Universe					
Total		420	100.0		

Table 17: Children's views on holiness, judgment, anger and actions of God

Part 2 Items 7 & 8		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
God is	Yes	315	75.0		
Holy	No	105	25.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
God gets	Yes	185	44.0		
Angry	No	235	56.0	100.0	100.0
with Sin	Total	420	100.0		
God will	Yes	233	55.5		
Judge	No	187	44.5	100.0	100.0
Everyone	Total	420	100.0		
All God	Yes	213	50.7		
does is	No	207	49.3	100.0	100.0
Correct	Total	420	100.0		
and Good					

Table 18: Children's views omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresence of God

Part 2 Items 7 & 8		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
God is all	Yes	253	60.2		
Powerful	No	167	39.8	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
God knows	Yes	235	56.0		
all Things	No	185	44.0	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		
God is	Yes	268	63.8		
Everywhere	No	152	36.2	100.0	100.0
	Total	420	100.0		

Table 19: God is called heavenly father

Part 3 Item 5		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	6	1.4	1.5	1.5
	NOT SURE	12	2.9	2.9	4.4
	AGREE	395	94.0	95.6	100.0
	Total	413	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	7	1.7		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 20: God lives in heaven

Part 3 Item 4		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	10	2.4	2.5	2.5
	NOT SURE	11	2.6	2.7	5.2
	AGREE	380	90.5	94.8	100.0
	Total	401	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	19	4.5		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 21: God is a spirit or ghost

Part 3 Item 1		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	105	25.0	27.1	27.1
	NOT SURE	90	21.4	23.2	50.3
	AGREE	193	46.0	49.7	100.0
	Total	388	92.4	100.0	
Missing	System	32	7.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 22: God has wings and feathers to fly everywhere

Part 3 Item 27		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	114	27.1	28.4	28.4
	NOT SURE	129	30.7	32.1	60.4
	AGREE	159	37.9	39.6	100.0
	Total	402	95.7	100.0	
Missing	System	18	4.3		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 23: God is Trinity

Part 3 Item 3		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	19	4.5	4.7	4.7
	NOT SURE	27	6.4	6.7	11.4
	AGREE	359	85.5	88.6	100.0
	Total	405	96.4	100.0	
Missing	System	15	3.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 24: God and Jesus are the same

Part 3 Item 2		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	134	31.9	33.7	33.7
	NOT SURE	79	18.8	19.8	53.5
	AGREE	185	44.0	46.5	100.0
	Total	398	94.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	5.2		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 25: God gives protection from accidents

Part 3 Item 6		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	3	.7	.7	.7
	NOT SURE	10	2.4	2.4	3.1
	AGREE	401	95.5	96.9	100.0
	Total	414	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	6	1.4		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 26: God gives protection from robbers

Part 3 Item7		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGEE	15	3.6	3.6	3.6
	NOT SURE	9	2.1	2.2	5.8
	AGREE	388	92.4	94.2	100.0
	Total	412	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	8	1.9		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 27: God provides for my daily needs

Part 3 Item 8		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	3	.7	.7	.7
	NOT SURE	11	2.6	2.7	3.4
	AGREE	397	94.5	96.6	100.0
	Total	411	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	9	2.1		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 28: God teaches me when I am doing an examination

Part 3 Item 9		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	21	5.0	5.1	5.1
	NOT SURE	28	6.7	6.8	11.9
	AGREE	364	86.7	88.1	100.0
	Total	413	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	7	1.7		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 29: God works through the governor

Part 3 Item10		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	87	20.7	21.4	21.4
	NOT SURE	98	23.3	24.1	45.5
	AGREE	222	52.9	54.5	100.0
	Total	407	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	13	3.1		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 30: I sing and worship to say thanks to God

Part 3 Item 13		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	13	3.1	3.2	3.2
	NOT SURE	13	3.1	3.2	6.4
	AGREE	383	91.2	93.6	100.0
	Total	409	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	11	2.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 31: I Thank God when bad things happen

Part 3 Item 14		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	132	31.4	33.1	33.1
	NOT SURE	56	13.3	14.0	47.1
	AGREE	211	50.2	52.9	100.0
	Total	399	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	21	5.0		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 32: God knows the best for my life

Part 3 Item 15		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	11	2.6	2.8	2.8
	NOT SURE	13	3.1	3.3	6.0
	AGREE	375	89.3	94.0	100.0
	Total	399	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	21	5.0		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 33: God wants children to be happy and live peacefully

Part 3 Item 16		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	NOT SURE	6	1.4	1.5	2.5
	AGREE	393	93.6	97.5	100.0
	Total	403	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	17	4.0		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 34: God wants children to obey Him and their parents

Part 3 Item17		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	8	1.9	2.0	2.0
	NOT SURE	9	2.1	2.2	4.2
	AGREE	392	93.3	95.8	100.0
	Total	409	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	11	2.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 35: God wants children to be honest and truthful

Part 3 Item 18		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	11	2.6	2.7	2.7
	NOT SURE	9	2.1	2.2	5.0
	AGREE	384	91.4	95.0	100.0
	Total	404	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	16	3.8		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 36: God dislikes rough play or playing with blades

Part 3 Item 19		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	116	27.6	29.1	29.1
	NOT SURE	107	25.5	26.9	56.0
	AGREE	175	41.7	44.0	100.0
	Total	398	94.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	5.2		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 37: God dislikes backbiting and abusing men of God

Part 3 Item 37		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	46	11.0	11.4	11.4
	NOT SURE	45	10.7	11.1	22.5
	AGREE	313	74.5	77.5	100.0
	Total	404	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	16	3.8		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 38: Flowers, animals and insects remind me of God

Part 3 Item 28		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	52	12.4	13.0	13.0
	NOT SURE	68	16.2	17.1	30.1
	AGREE	279	66.4	69.9	100.0
	Total	399	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	21	5.0		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 39: Moon, stars, sun, rain, wind, fire remind me of God

Part 3 Item 29		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	49	11.7	12.3	12.3
	NOT SURE	62	14.8	15.5	27.8
	AGREE	288	68.6	72.2	100.0
	Total	399	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	21	5.0		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 40: Bible and church remind me of God

Part 3 Item 30		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	19	4.5	4.8	4.8
	NOT SURE	24	5.7	6.0	10.8
	AGREE	357	85.0	89.3	100.0
	Total	400	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	4.8		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 41: Red, white and purple remind me of God

Part 3 Item 31		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	108	25.7	26.9	26.9
	NOT SURE	89	21.2	22.2	49.1
	AGREE	204	48.6	50.9	100.0
	Total	401	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	19	4.5		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 42: Christian pictures, books and songs remind me of God

Part 3 Item 32		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	37	8.8	9.1	9.1
	NOT SURE	47	11.2	11.6	20.7
	AGREE	321	76.4	79.3	100.0
	Total	405	96.4	100.0	
Missing	System	15	3.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 43: King, crown and throne remind me of God

Part 3 Item 26		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	69	16.4	17.2	17.2
	NOT SURE	53	12.6	13.2	30.4
	AGREE	279	66.4	69.6	100.0
	Total	401	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	19	4.5		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 44: God is sad when I fight

Part 3 Item 33		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	36	8.6	9.4	9.4
	NOT SURE	31	7.4	8.1	17.4
	AGREE	317	75.5	82.6	100.0
	Total	384	91.4	100.0	
Missing	System	36	8.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 45: God answers prayers only when He is happy with me

Part 3 Item 11		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	112	26.7	27.5	27.5
	NOT SURE	69	16.4	17.0	44.5
	AGREE	226	53.8	55.5	100.0
	Total	407	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	13	3.1		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 46: God speaks to children during devotion time

Part 3 Item 20		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	13	3.1	3.2	3.2
	NOT SURE	30	7.1	7.3	10.4
	AGREE	369	87.9	89.6	100.0
	Total	412	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	8	1.9		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 47: God speaks to the mind of children

Part 3 Item 12		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	11	2.6	2.7	2.7
	NOT SURE	26	6.2	6.4	9.1
	AGREE	371	88.3	90.9	100.0
	Total	408	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	12	2.9		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 48: God makes bad things to happen to sinners (Punishes)

Part 3 Item 34		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	124	29.5	30.8	30.8
	NOT SURE	98	23.3	24.3	55.1
	AGREE	181	43.1	44.9	100.0
	Total	403	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	17	4.0		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 49: I would draw God with face

Part 3 Item 35		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	113	26.9	28.0	28.0
	NOT SURE	87	20.7	21.5	49.5
	AGREE	204	48.6	50.5	100.0
	Total	404	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	16	3.8		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 50: I would draw God with no face because no one has seen God

Part 3 Item 36		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	122	29.0	30.5	30.5
	NOT SURE	87	20.7	21.8	52.3
	AGREE	191	45.5	47.8	100.0
	Total	400	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	4.8		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 51: God is near me when I pray

Part 3 Item 21		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	11	2.6	2.7	2.7
	NOT SURE	21	5.0	5.1	7.7
	AGREE	382	91.0	92.3	100.0
	Total	414	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	6	1.4		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 52: God's presence far when I cannot answer examination questions

Part 3 Item 24		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	176	41.9	43.3	43.3
	NOT SURE	99	23.6	24.4	67.7
	AGREE	131	31.2	32.3	100.0
	Total	406	96.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	3.3		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 53: God's presence near when I am in trouble

Part 3 Item 22		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	10	2.4	2.4	2.4
	NOT SURE	12	2.9	2.9	5.4
	AGREE	387	92.1	94.6	100.0
	Total	409	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	11	2.6		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 54: God's presence goes far from me when I sin

Part 3 Item 23		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	61	14.5	15.1	15.1
	NOT SURE	68	16.2	16.8	31.9
	AGREE	275	65.5	68.1	100.0
	Total	404	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	16	3.8		
Total		420	100.0		

Table 55: God's presence far when things are not going well

Part 3 Item 25		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	183	43.6	45.8	45.8
	NOT SURE	68	16.2	17.0	62.8
	AGREE	149	35.5	37.3	100.0
	Total	400	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	4.8		
Total		420	100.0		

<div align="center">**VITA**</div>

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Masters of Philosophy in Christian Education African International University   2011
Masters of Divinity in Religious Education, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
Ogbomoso   2005
Post Graduate Diploma in Education, Benue State University, Makurdi   1998
Computer Program & Data Processing for Accountants.   1991
Higher National Diploma in Accountancy, Yaba College of Technology, Lagos 1990
Ordinary National Diploma in Accountancy, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi   1987
West African .E.C St. Louis Girls Grammar School, Akure   1983
Primary School Leaving Certificate, Mayville Primary School, England

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Ministerial Officer, Nigerian Baptist Convention   2005 to date
First Baptist Church Magodo, Associate Pastor, Long Vacation,   2003
Sabo Baptist Church, Ogbomoso, Pastor, Children's Section,   2002 – 2005
First Baptist Church Magodo, Children's Dept. Leader   2001 – 2002
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ilorin, English Children's Chapel,   1998 – 2000
Teaching practice Gov't Day Secondary School, Makurdi,   1997-1998
Instructor for Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc. Trainings   1998 to date
First Baptist Church. Makurdi, Director, Children's Department,   1996 – 1998
First Baptist Church Bida, Leader Children's Department English Section 1992 – 1996
NYSC: International School, University of Lagos   1990 –1991
SEEPC Nig. Limited, Benin City Salaries & Wages Dept   1990
Industrial Attachment, National Bank, Oregun   1987 – 1988
National Bank, Benin City and Ikeja (June-September)   1985, 1986, 1989

RESEARCH WORKS (THESIS)

1. Indiscipline among Secondary Schools Student,   PGDE
2. The Role of the Church in bringing up the crisis Ridden Children (emphasis on Child Sexual Abuse)   Master of Divinity
3. Prevailing Views about God among African Children in Selected Churches in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria.   M Phil Research Thesis

BOOKS AUTHORED

1. Ola, Foluke Bosede. 2007. *The story of the shepherd as told by Azor Ethan*. Ibadan: Reach Out T Productions.
2. Ola, Foluke Bosede. 2008. *Child sacrifice*. Ibadan: Azor Ethan Ventures.