

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE PERCEPTION OF MISSIONS AMONGST 12 YEAR
OLDS AT NAIROBI CHAPEL AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY

By
FAITH WAMBURA NGUNJIRI

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Missions.

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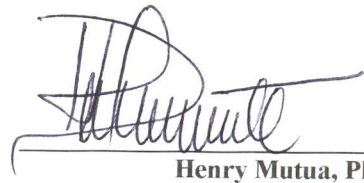
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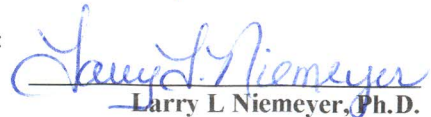
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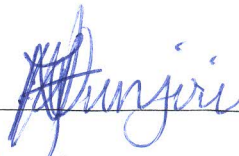
DECLARATION

**THE PERCEPTION OF MISSIONS AMONGST 12 YEAR
OLDS AT NAIROBI CHAPEL AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY**

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

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of
Theology or the examiners.

Signed: _____



Faith Wambura Ngunjiri

July 2002

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out the perception of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel. The findings have been used to draw implications for ministry with children at Nairobi Chapel in relation to teaching children missions. The researcher has reviewed relevant substantive and methodological literature showing that children can and should be taught about missions in order to give them the chance to make decisions concerning life-long commitment to the same. The significance of this study in terms of contributing to ministry practitioners and curriculum developers at Nairobi Chapel and churches with similar children ministry programs has been drawn from the findings of the study.

Three research questions were used. Firstly, what is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel? Secondly, what is their understanding of the scope of missions? Thirdly, in what ways are they involved in missions?

To the first research question, the study revealed that the children are able to define missions and missionaries, even giving the biblical verses to support missions. They understand the fact that missions have to do with travelling to near and distant places to tell others about Jesus Christ. They also understand the facts about Jesus Christ, his person and work, and the need to respond to him in faith.

To the second research question, the study revealed that the children are familiar with both local, foreign missions, and the challenges thereof. They understand that God expects them to serve as missionaries to their schools and neighborhoods.

The third research question revealed the area of missions perception that the children are missing. This is the practical aspect of missions. While they are able to describe activities that they could engage in and abilities that they could use in missions, the children affirm their lack of practical experience of missions.

The implications for ministry are drawn mainly from the findings on the third research question. The researcher suggests that the children's ministry directors at Nairobi Chapel need to plan for theoretical as well as practical aspects of missions education. The researcher also noted that the teachers who work with the children have done a commendable job in teaching them the facts about missions, the scriptural mandate for missions, and the subject of missions, Jesus Christ. However, they need to also be involved in missions activities, because children learn from the written as well as the hidden curriculum. They learn from what is modeled before them as well as, or more than what is verbally communicated to them.

The researcher concludes that the 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel have a clear perception of missions in terms of its definition and scope, but they need practical exposure and experience if they are to have a full understanding on which they can gauge their decisions for future careers in missions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Nairobi Chapel has been in existence since the 1950's, having started as an expatriate church. However, by the late 80s, it had dwindled to less than 10 members as many had died or returned to Britain. The few remaining people invited the Nairobi Baptist Church to begin anew by bringing in a pastor and some members. This happened in 1989. The church then had about 20 people, mostly final year students at the university and a few young couples.

The Sunday school has been a very important gateway into the Nairobi Chapel. Since a majority of the congregation at its re-establishment in 1989 was young adults between the ages of 21-28, they soon had children who needed spiritual nurture. This was taken care of within the Children's Ministry. Currently, there are 500-600 children in the various Saturday and Sunday services. In Nairobi Chapel, every year there is a missions emphasis month, usually in July. During this month, the congregation is encouraged to engage in missions. The themes differ from year to year, for example year 2000 the theme was 'Mobilized For Missions', year 2001 it was on AIDS. The biggest challenge that the Children's Ministry faces during missions emphasis month is how to come up with missions programs for the children. Part of the aim of this research will be to study how successful these attempts at teaching children missions have been by studying the children's perceptions of missions. The results will be used to come up with implications for the Children's Ministry, and recommendations on curriculum development. The Nairobi Chapel Children's Ministry has had the challenge of developing culturally relevant and age appropriate curriculum materials, especially for use to teach missions, but also to teach other principles and values. The Nairobi Chapel is committed to missions as seen from the various missions activities carried out throughout each year, and its mission statement - "equipping God's people to disciple the nations for Christ". This commitment must be seen to start where it can best take root - with the children. Reading the bulletin for the year 2000 and 2001 missions months, this researcher realized that there is no record of the children taking part in missions. This is not so much because they did not take part in any mission activities. Perhaps the reason is that those who put up the

bulletin did not think the children's activities were mission-related. For example, every year, the children take part in "Tree Of Joy", a service activity for the orphans and destitute in Children's Homes. This researcher assumes that many of the children and the adults do not regard that as missions. Yet it is.

Problem Statement

The researcher aims at investigating the 12-year-olds' perception of missions. The 12-year-olds are (ideally) the oldest class in children's ministry at Nairobi Chapel. They have been in Sunday school for as long as 10 years, depending on whether they have been coming to Nairobi Chapel all along. Their perceptions of mission will throw some light on how well the programs at children's ministry have been understood to be mission related. It will help to show whether in fact the children's ministry is intentional about training children to serve God from an early age.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the perception of missions amongst 12-year-olds'. The findings have been used to draw implications for the Children's ministry at Nairobi Chapel.

Research Questions

Three research questions were used to guide the process of carrying out this study thus:

1. What is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel?
2. What is their understanding of the scope of missions?
3. In what ways are they involved in missions?

Significance

This study will contribute to the world of studies and academia: to missions and Christian education by linking the two. The researcher has noted the lack of research from the missions department at NEGST to do with missions and children, and the same is true of the Christian Education department. This researcher is firmly convinced that children can learn, understand and be effectively involved in missions. This study has picked up where others have left off in the area of children's

ministries such as Wawire (1999), Matta (2001), Nangale (2001), and Wambugu (1993). Wawire recommends that there is need for research in the area of effectiveness of such programs as 'missionettes' in nurturing saved children, and how to prepare children who are saved to serve the church (Wawire 1999,43). By investigating the children's perception of missions, this researcher is able to make educated recommendations for curriculum and program developers. Researchers who want to do further research might find this study useful.

This study also aims at contributing to practitioners, the children's workers in the churches who are faced with the challenge of teaching missions to children. First, it contributes to the Nairobi Chapel Children's Ministry in developing culturally relevant missions programs and curriculum for the children. While not actually giving a curriculum guide, it will help curriculum developers at Nairobi Chapel find out the impact and relevance of their programs, and where to start from in curriculum development. Secondly, the study should also contribute to curriculum developers and program developers in other urban churches that have demographics similar to Nairobi Chapel's, such as Nairobi Baptist Church, Karura Community Church and Karen Community Church. The capacity to generalize will depend on how similar the Children's Ministry is to Nairobi Chapel's.

Delimitation and Limitations of Study

Since this research is delimited to 12-year-olds, the results may be affected by the cognitive abilities of specific children. While the assumption is that children at that age can express themselves, and can relate cognition to perception, it is likely that not all the children will be found to be at the same level. Cognitive abilities may not be uniform even if chronological age is the same. The researcher will handle this by using a questionnaire that has been thoroughly pre-tested to ensure its level of difficulty is applicable to the 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel.

Assumptions

This researcher made various assumptions in the preparation and process of carrying out this study. These are based on theory, practice at Nairobi Chapel, and or literature reviewed.

1. This researcher assumes that the children in Nairobi Chapel have been taught lessons that are missions related.

2. The researcher assumes that 12 year olds are mature enough to explain what they understand by missions, and to write this down in the questionnaires.
3. The researcher assumes that the missions related lessons and programs at Nairobi Chapel have had an impact on the children, and that this will come through in their response.
4. The researcher also assumes that the 12-year-old children in Nairobi Chapel know how to use their Bibles.
5. Finally, the researcher assumes that knowing should lead to doing. That is, if one knows something, they should be in a position to do it.

Definitions

Missions - the term is used throughout this research paper in its comprehensive sense of evangelism, service in church, school, home and neighborhood. Missions is also used in its broadest sense to include activities that are carried out for service to God and to humanity, any form of ministry that the child engages in.

Perception - refers to understanding, comprehension, apprehension, and cognition. In this research, it will refer to all these in relation to what children perceive to be the meaning and scope of missions.

Ministry - It refers to pastoral care, ministration that is done either by clergy or laity. In Nairobi Chapel, ministry often refers to service rendered within the church or beyond the church, such as ushering, choir, worship, teaching, intercession, visitation, Short Term and Long Term Missions, Streets and slum work, etc. whether this is carried out by pastoral staff or by members of the congregation.

Children's Ministry - as used in this paper, this refers to the administrative organ within Nairobi Chapel that caters specifically to the needs of Children.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to find out the perception of missions amongst 12-year-olds'. The findings have been used to draw implications for the Children's Ministry at Nairobi Chapel in reference to curriculum programs and giving missionary education to children. Three research questions have been used to guide the research data collection procedure. These are:

1. What is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel?
2. What is their understanding of the scope of missions?
3. In what ways are they involved in missions?

In this section, the researcher has reviewed both substantive and methodological literature. The aim was to show from scripture, research, the developmental arena and ministry practitioners the possibility and place of missions education for children. It shows that it is possible for children to be prepared for present as well as future missions practice. It also shows that 12-year-olds are capable of expressing what they comprehend in the area of missions.

More than half of the world's population is said to be below 25 years of age. 34% of Kenya's population is aged between 10-24 years, the fastest growing segment of society (Shorter and Onyancha 1997, 103). Missions in Africa have for a long time been the prerogative of Europeans and Americans. For many people, the word missionary denotes a *Mzungu* (Anglo-Saxon) working in a frontier area with un-reached people groups. As such, they do not think of Africans' involvement in missions, let alone children. The perception of missions within the adult congregation affects what is handed down to the children.

The great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 is often used as the impetus for missions. However, for a majority of people, the great commission does not include children. Wawire (1995) gives several reasons why people disregard children in spiritual matters like salvation and missions:

- They believe that children are unstable in their decisions

- They believe that children cannot be saved
- They do not see how children would support the children's worker

(Wawire 1995, 1).

Those who do not believe that children can be saved would likewise not believe that children could serve God. Even those who believe in child evangelism may not necessarily believe that the same children can serve in ministry. The involvement or lack thereof of children in missions is dependent upon the theology that the church holds in regards to the salvation of children.

Biblical Precedents

Contrary to popular opinion where children in some churches are treated as a nuisance, the Bible shows examples of young people serving God with commitment and fervor. There are several people in the Bible whose entry into service to God came while they were yet children.

Joseph and his dreams

Genesis 37-50 - Joseph was a young man of 17 when he had dreams of being the head of his family, the savior of his people. Though it took him many years and many painful experiences to reach the place that God had intended for him, his calling came while he was a teenager. It should be possible that the Children in Nairobi Chapel could receive their calling to missions just as early.

Samuel

1 Samuel 1-3 tells the story of Samuel who was born of Hanna, a woman whose lot in life had been miserable because of her barrenness. She prayed to God for a son, promising to dedicate him to God for all his life. When Samuel was weaned, his mother kept her promise to God, and took him to the Temple where he was to serve God for the rest of his life (1 Samuel 2:11). His service in the Temple was pleasing to God and man alike. Samuel's life however was not to be spent merely as a priest, God had other plans for him. God called him to be a prophet (1 Sam 3). Samuel was at the right place - the temple/tabernacle where God's presence dwelt (Leviticus 24:1-4). When Samuel heard God's voice, he did not recognize it as God until Eli guided him to the fact that it was God calling him, not old Eli. This

call became the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry extending to all Israel, yet he began as a young lad.

David

In 1 Samuel 16 David was anointed king over Israel while he was yet a boy, the youngest of his father's sons, and one with the humble task of shepherding his father's sheep. It would take him many years in the king's service, and as a warrior before he was finally equipped to serve as Israel's king (1 Samuel 16-31:13), but his calling came while he was a boy.

The Servant Girl and Naaman

2 Kings 5 - God used the testimony of a mere servant girl to bring Naaman to Israel where he would be humbled and healed by Elisha the prophet. The result is that Naaman not only got healed, but he recognized and worshipped the God of Israel as the only true God. The servant girl's testimony achieved an evangelistic purpose; she acted as a missionary, an emissary of the True God.

Josiah the King

2 Kings 22 - Josiah was 8 years old when he began to reign in Jerusalem as king. He was one of the best kings that Israel ever had, although he began his reign as a young lad. The Bible says that "he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or the left" (2 Kings 22:2). When he was 26 years of age, he led Judah through a time of repentance and a return to following the law. He was careful not to follow in the footsteps of the majority of Judah's kings, who did not follow the law and led the people in sin and idolatry. His youthfulness did not deter him from being an exemplary king. These examples of men who started serving God in their childhood should serve as a great motivator to children to want to emulate them. Children can be able to see that they do not have to wait to be adults to serve God, but that they can begin to serve him right now. The job of the teachers and parents is to equip them to serve, and show them ways in which they can serve as missionaries around their homes, schools, and even far from their comfort zones.

Jesus Ministry among Children

The ministry of Jesus on earth included children; he healed them, used them to do miracles, used them as illustration of spiritual truths, and essentially made it clear that they are important in the kingdom. In Matthew 17:14-18, Jesus healed a young boy who was suffering from demon-causes seizures and was suffering greatly. In Mark 5:21-43, Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus, a synagogue ruler, from the dead. In John 6:1-13, Jesus made use of a little boys lunch to perform a miracle, to show the disciples that God is a God of Provision and cares even about the food they eat. In all three examples, Jesus worked through or for the young persons, and he showed no bias against them.

From these scriptural references, it is evident that God has used children in history to accomplish his divine purposes, calling them to his service while they are yet children. Children should therefore be equipped to serve God. Children are not sidelined in the kingdom of God, Jesus said that the kingdom belongs to those who are like children (Matthew 18:13-15).

Children in God's Plan

Joel 2:28-32

When God uttered these words through the prophet Joel, he made it clear that children were included. Joel 2:28-29 says that, "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" (NIV). Andrew Murray commenting on this verse says,

What a place is given to the children in this foundation promise! 'Your sons and your daughters will prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.' The seed of Gods people have such a place in his heart that even in the promise of Pentecost the first thing introduced is not the disciples now anointed to preach but the sons and daughters prepared to prophecy (Murray 1975,143).

The scripture has made it clear from Joel that indeed the Holy Spirit, who is the one who empowers and emboldens people to witness to God's saving works would be poured out even upon the children. The church has the responsibility to complement the family, or where the family is not Christian to supplement the family in training children to serve God, while they are young and in their future.

2 Timothy 3:15

Paul commends Timothy because of the knowledge he had gained in his childhood. He says, "but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"(NIV). Wawire, commenting on this verse says that Timothy had gained his faith in his childhood, and uses it to recommend child evangelism (Wawire 1999,7). This researcher agrees that indeed not only does this lend itself to child evangelism but also to missionary training. Timothy, though still young by the time he received this letter from Paul, had become a leader, a missionary alongside Paul. Teaching children to witness for Christ has the potential to produce future missionaries.

Matthew 18:1-6; 19:13-15

Jesus made it clear that children are important in the Kingdom of God, so much so that "whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:4). When little children were brought to him for blessing, the disciples rebuked those who brought them but Jesus responded " Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). The importance and place of children in the Kingdom can therefore not be overemphasized. Jesus laid the precedent for how one is to regard children, as part of the community of faith, whose goal is to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.

Developmental Perspective

Twelve-year-olds have been variously described as preteens or in terms of the changes taking place in them. Shelly refers to the stage of development as later elementary years (using the school years) ages 10-12. They describe children at this stage thus:

During the later elementary years (age ten to twelve) children begin to judge their own and others behavior according to some standard ... they also begin to think about how faith relates to life, and can discuss and explain what they believe (Shelley 1992,43).

Twelve-year-olds are capable of communicating their faith to other children and even to adults. Shelley suggests that the children at this stage are able to notice inconsistencies between belief and action, as they can synthesize what they have learnt about God (Shelley 44). She adds that what they have learnt from the Bible undergird an ongoing relationship with God. She suggests that heroes strongly attract the child, biographies and novels about Christians who lived out their faith provide role models for decision making and behavior:

Missionary speakers challenge and excite the older children, giving them a personal glimpse into countries they are studying at school. Many will be stimulated to study history, geography and people of other countries. Some may want to become 'penpals' with a missionary or a child from another country (Shelley, 46).

As children grow physically, they also develop mentally and spiritually. Age 12 finds them beginning to make up their minds about religion, as they move from inherited faith to one that is personal, autonomous, internalized, their very own faith (Ratcliff 1992,73). Berryman suggests that

Religious education must be wary of getting distracted by the transfer of cultural data, theological abstractions, or providing children with second-hand, prefabricated answers. It must allow children to make their own journey of faith, and equip them with the skill to use language that can help them make meaning of their lives in a community of the christian way (Ratcliff 1992, 28).

This is to say that, children must be exposed to experiences that help them understand better what it means to be a christian, and this is more so important in older children. As children develop, their cognitive and spiritual abilities also mature. As Habermas and Issler suggest,

At first, all childhood abilities represent only potential. These at birth endowments are latent, but not fully usable. As evidence of maturity appears . . . we launch them toward interdependent roles . . . to serve as co-laborers with us" (Habermas and Issler 1992, 268).

As such, it becomes clear that children should be prepared today, for service tomorrow. Only as they acquire both knowledge and skills can they make decisions regarding their future involvement in missions. Hall suggests that children need opportunities to take responsibility, make choices and be creative (Hall 1980,43). She argues that the need to learn to make choices is related to the child's spiritual maturation process, as the child needs to decide for himself to follow God and obey his commands. Perhaps this need would be met in allowing children opportunities to minister to others, to serve others in creative ways with the limited resources available to them. In that case, children at age 12 can be stimulated through mission stories to think about how they can be involved in missions, and later on in life perhaps on a full time basis. They now possess greater potential, raise tougher questions,

and present new challenges thus need help in making lifelong commitments (Habermas and Issler, 271). The seed planted at this stage is likely to continue to grow and mature in adult or later teen years.

Research in Missions and Children's Ministries

The Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions surveyed their missionaries to find out when they first received a call into missions. More than half responded that they were young when they felt God directing them towards missions. These were the results:

6% said they were called at ages 5-9

0031198

11% said the call came when they were between 10-14 years old

25% said at ages 15-19 (Kilgore 1997, 30).

This research shows that many of the missionaries in the field in Assemblies of God were first called as children or in their teen years (42% of their missionaries). George Barna of the Barna Institute did research on what makes certain churches more popular than others. One of his findings is that an effective and vibrant children's ministry serves as an attraction into the church. This, Barna suggests, is because children represent the highest potential for conversions. Studies done reveal that 2 out of 3 adult believers in America made that decision before they were 18 years old (Barna 1991,123). Barna suggests that children affect the spiritual development of their parents even more than pastors, a phenomenon that has not yet been researched. If this is true, children can serve God even while they are still young, in their homes, neighborhoods and churches (Barna,123). The resource available in children can be best tapped by training them and preparing them to serve.

Children should be taught about missions because for many, the decisions made then affect the course of their future choices. Barna says that:

Although kids in this age group (10-12) constitute only 4% of the American population, it is the time frame when more than a 1/4th of all believers decide to follow Jesus. If one stretched this age group to 8-13 years, that six-year stretch of time defines when roughly 1/2 of all Americans made the decision to become Christians. . . . By the time students enter high school, the odds of accepting Christ as savior are radically reduced . . . after high school, the odds are stacked against such a choice to a staggering degree (Kilgore 1996,7).

From these researchers, one can conclude that many Americans receive salvation as children, and decide to choose missions as a vocation while still young. Research is required in Africa to find out whether the same is true here.

Precedents from Ministry Practitioners

When children make a decision to serve Christ, they have the whole of their lifetime ahead of them in which to act on that decision. D.L. Moody while reporting on a preaching assignment said that 2 ½ souls had been saved. Asked whether this meant two adults and one child, he said no. This meant two children and one adult, because the adult had lived half his life already and had only a half to offer Christ, while the children had their whole lives ahead of them (Lebar 1952,27). This should serve as impetus for churches and children's ministries to engage in training children for ministry and missions.

Ralph Williams gives four reasons why it is important to win children to Christ:

- Win a child and you save a life
- some of the greatest men and women of God were converted in early child hood
- It is much easier to win a child than an adult to Christ
- Converted children are among the most useful workers for Christ (Williams 1996, 6-7).

These four reasons are strong motivators for both child evangelism and preparing children to serve God, the last is especially motivating to train them to be Christian workers.

Some children's workers have given testimonies of how they have seen children learning to serve and actually engaging in missions. Muriel Lawson describes how children in her children's church are involved in praying for others to receive Christ. She says that some children not only pray for their unsaved friends, relatives and neighbors but also take the step of witnessing to them about Christ, with astounding conversion results. She encourages other children's workers to let the children serve God; they are able to do so in their own child like ways (Lawson 1995, 27).

Theresa Thomas, children's church worker in Christian Community Church Columbus, reports that children in her church have been trained to recognize and use their gifts to serve God. This is done within the children's church, their schools and their neighborhoods (Thomas 1995, 28-29). Cindy Hunnicut, Children's Pastor of Roswell, Georgia, Church of God reports that she has been involved in training children to minister. She has a program dubbed 'K. I. D. S', Kids in Divine Service, in which children are taught how to minister in the Children's church, as well as outside of church. This she argues is important preparation for future areas of ministry such as evangelism, worship, teaching (Hnnicut 1996, 8-9).

Choun and Lawson suggest that children workers should create mission awareness in children, to give them opportunity for long-term personal involvement in service and to share Christ (Choun and

Lawson 1998). On the other hand, Dick Copp suggests that teachers should train their students not only to learn the Word, but put it into practice. Copp says that teens and children can be involved, a necessary step because "they need to see what is being done by others in the name of Christ, and they need to be a part of doing it" (Copp 1997, 10). Keith Wilson, an associate pastor at Cary North Carolina Church of God says that children do not want to just be told about missions. Instead, they want to experience it. He suggests that children can make meaningful contributions to missions, through prayer, encouraging missionaries, giving to missions, helping in mission awareness through songs, drama and poetry. He says from experience, he has seen children engage in service to God and they are very effective (Wilson 1997, 10-11).

Pazmino suggests four results of a good Christian Education Program:

- It should result in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ
- It should result in a call to which one responds
- It should result in a mission to tell others about Jesus (Mission and Service)
- In addition, it should result in a following of Jesus unto death, firm commitment (Pazmino 1992,163-164).

According to Pazmino then, mission and service should be an expected outcome of the Christian Education programs. Perhaps these need to be included in the goals of the children's ministry programs, as the expected outcome that guides the children's workers.

Hall reports on the missionary education of children within the Nazarene Church. She gives 3 goals of the program of missionary education for children as:

1. To inform children about missions. The Nazarenes use a variety of materials designed to achieve this end, such as, Sunday school lessons on missions, annual VBS missionary emphasis, annual children's missionary packet and annual missionary books to be read by the children. The curriculum content includes biblical basis for missions as well as facts on Nazarene Missions. The children learn the customs of people everywhere, the missionaries posted to these lands, and the needs of both natives and missionaries.
2. Inspiring children to want to participate in missionary work through modeling a concern for and sacrifice towards missions.
3. Involving children in missions efforts such as praying for missionaries by name, giving monies and other material gifts towards the work of missions and engaging in projects to reach out to

others (Hall 1980, 146-150).

This researcher believes it should be inherent in any children's ministry activities and curriculums, as an expected outcome of discipleship of believing children. The Church and the children's ministries must be committed to giving missions education to children in order to found them biblically and experientially for future decisions towards full time, part time or support towards missions. Joyce L Gibson has similar opinions and urges churches to give missionary education to the children, for the purpose of inspiring them to be involved, illustrating to them what it means to serve God at home or abroad (Gibson 1975,298). She argues that missionary education should begin from the nursery, to lay a foundation from preschool years so that educators and ministers will not need to tear down faulty concepts and rebuild according to God's word later in life (Ibid.). If children have been given this kind of training, it will show in their perception of mission.

Methodological Literature Review

Vianello et al (1992, 75-76) look at various methods of research used in the past to research on children. The first one, which they discredit as untenable, is adult recollections of childhood. This is untenable because the adult filters his childhood experiences and interprets them in light of his adult knowledge and experience. Instead they note that other methods are in current usage with children such as pure observation, questionnaires, projective techniques, drawing pictures, responding to drawings, attitudinal scales, analysis of children's prayers, among others. They indicate 5 responses that children can give:

1. Any old answer- the child is not trying to be funny, but gives the first response that comes to mind.
This is not fabricated and it's random.
2. Fabulations - children often make up stories in response to questions.
3. Prompted belief - in response to a leading question, children give the answer they know the researcher expects to hear, in order to please him.
4. Induced belief - the question being new requires the child to think, to reflect before responding.
5. Spontaneous belief - the child has no need to reflect because the question raises an issue he has thought about before, and the response ready at hand.

The three researchers suggest that the first three responses are of no use in serious research, while prompted belief reveals the child's first thoughts about an issue. The answer would probably be different if the context were not so structured as in a research situation as the child would have more time to reflect deeply into the issue raised. Spontaneous belief is useful although at times it could well be rote memorization of concepts, or rephrasing and verbalizing previously heard concepts.

From these researchers, it is clear that whatever methodology is employed, the researcher has to be careful to only analyze induced and spontaneous beliefs. Vianello et al suggest that this kind of research of finding out the children's understanding of concepts helps to reveal what the child really understands, and therefore points to what should be included or excluded from the content of religious instruction (Vianello, 76).

In order to elicit responses from children, two types of questions are in use in research, closed-ended and open-ended. Mugenda and Mugenda give three advantages of using closed-ended questions,

- They are easier to analyze since they are in an immediately usable form
- They are easier to administer because each item is followed by alternative answers
- They are economical to use in terms of money and time (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999,72)

However Closed-ended questions have disadvantages as well, especially in limiting the respondent to only a set of given responses. To counter the disadvantages of closed-ended questions, open-ended questions are used. Mugenda and Mugenda suggest four advantages of open-ended questions,

- They permit a greater depth of response
- They are simpler to formulate mainly because the researcher does not have to later come up with appropriate response categories
- Respondents answers may give insight into their feelings, background, motives, interests and decisions
- They stimulate a person to think about his feelings and to express what he considers most important (Mugenda and Mugenda,73).

Combining closed-ended and open-ended questions in a questionnaire balances out the disadvantages and advantages of each, for responses that are more accurate.

In terms of length of the testing instrument, short questions and a short questionnaire would be preferable. Best and Kahn suggest that "tests that can be given in a short period of time are likely to gain

the cooperation of the subjects and to conserve the time of all those involved in the test administration" (Best and Kahn 1989,285). They also suggest that the testing instrument should only be long enough to get sufficient essential information for purposes of the research (Best and Kahn, 307). In terms of language used, the testing instrument, in this case the questionnaire must be clear, the meaning of words used should be simple to comprehend (Mugenda and Mugenda, 76-77). To ensure that the instrument is valid and reliable, it should be tested on a small group of subjects similar to those being studied (Best and Kahn,308). The researcher has followed the suggestions from the literature reviewed to come up with a questionnaire that contained mainly open-ended items, with only a few closed-ended items, and pre-tested it to ensure its reliability and validity.

Summary of Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the biblical precedent of young people who served God in their young years and showed that children are included in God's plans for missions to the world. Also discussed are materials on the developmental perspective, showing that children, more so 12-year-olds are in a position to clarify what they believe and explain this to others. The available research on children and missions was also discussed, showing that many Christians are reported to have accepted Christ as children, and others to have felt their call to missions as children. Those in children's ministries in America report their experiences of teaching missions to children, showing how and why they do it, as well as some of their results. Their methods and results are seen as an encouragement to pursue teaching children missions.

The researcher also looked at methodological literature with a view to finding out how to carry out research with children, and how to prepare the instruments for such a research. From all the material reviewed, it is clear that children can and do understand something about missions, and they were able to reflect this understanding during the research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research aimed at investigating the perception of missions amongst 12-year-old children at Nairobi Chapel. The findings have been used to draw implications for ministry with children in Nairobi Chapel. This study is descriptive, targeting 12-year-old children at the Nairobi Chapel Children's Ministry. It has made use of quantitative research methodology.

Entry

The researcher is an employee of Nairobi Chapel and did not need formal introduction into the Children's Ministry. The researcher took the time to discuss the research project with the Children's Ministry Director and her assistant at Nairobi Chapel. This she ^{did} prior to the research in order to solicit their help in explaining the project to the teachers whose classes were to be disrupted during the research. The researcher also explained the project with the teachers in the 11-12 year old classes when she went to pick up the 12-year-olds from the classes to administer the questionnaire to them. These teachers had been told of the intent to carry out the research beforehand and were very cooperative. The researcher also explained the project to the children involved before administering the questionnaire to them.

Population

The population for this study is the 12-year-old children at the Nairobi Chapel Children's Ministry. The entire population of 12-year-olds in the Children's Ministries is manageable for study this there was no need for sampling. 12 year olds are able to express themselves, they can define what they believe in. They are the oldest group in Sunday school at Nairobi Chapel and as such, they may have spent up to 10 years in the Sunday school.

Research Design

The researcher used quantitative research designs for this descriptive study. A descriptive research design tells 'what is', describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting the existing conditions. The data collection was through questionnaires. The researcher had intended to also use interviews, but this was seen to be unnecessary after the pilot study, as the children were able to express themselves well enough for the purposes of the study.

The researcher employed the use of a questionnaire/opinionnaire. The questionnaire/opinionnaire gathered factual data as well opinions about beliefs and attitudes. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended items.

The combination of closed-ended and open-ended items on the research instrument helped to cater for the disadvantages of each method, as well as give more comprehensive data than would be possible with just one type of questions. The researcher was interested in stimulating the children to think, to evaluate what they know and how they use what they know about serving God. However, the researcher ensured that the test instrument was short in length, as the respondents are children.

The researcher also had to ensure that the tests are interesting and enjoyable for the 12-year-olds, in order to gain their cooperation (Best and Kahn 1989, 281). The interview was to be used consolidate some of the responses that the children give, and to clarify issues that may arise after they have filled the questionnaire. However, the pilot testing showed this as unnecessary, since the items in the questionnaire were answered clearly and sufficiently for the purposes of the research.

Three research questions were employed:

R.Q.1 What is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel?

From the literature review, it is evident that children at that age are able to understand the concept missions, the field research aimed to answer questions specific to Nairobi Chapel.

Questionnaire items 1-5 in section A of the questionnaire aimed at answering this research question.

R.Q.2 what is the understanding of the scope of missions amongst the 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel?

This further clarified whether they understand what missions are about by extending the question to scope. Items number 6-10 in section B of the questionnaire gathered information for this research question.

R.Q.3 In what ways are the children involved in missions?

If the children understand what missions is about, are they able to show how they practice missions. This was answered by item 11-15 in section of the questionnaire. With these items, the researcher was in a position to realize what the children understand and how they practice what they understand. This information was helpful in making recommendations to the Children's ministry at Nairobi Chapel in regards to curriculum content as well as extra-curricular activities that would encourage children to be interested and engaged in missions.

Instrument validity and reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, the researcher made use of the children's ministries directors at Nairobi Chapel and one student from Christian Education Department. These three were in a position to tell whether the items are understandable for 12-year-olds. All three were asked to read through the items and to respond to whether they think the items would be clear for 12 year olds in terms of clarity and simplicity. The researcher gave the instruments to an expert in research methodology, who pointed out areas of structure of items in the questionnaire that helped to improve its validity and reliability. The researcher was able to re-organize the items in the questionnaire such that it is in three section, each section covering items for one research question. The items were also reduced to 15.

Pilot Testing

The researcher pilot tested the instrument using 12 year olds at Karura Community Chapel, Gigiri. The choice of Karura Community Chapel is based on the similarity in ministry values between the two churches, Karura having been started as a church plant of Nairobi Chapel. Though Karura is now autonomous, there are existing relationships between ministry directors, and constant dialogue on curriculum design and program choices. The two churches also hold a joint Vacation Bible School every year, and the demographics are similar. The responses given by 10 of Karura community's 12-year-olds helped the researcher to further clarify the wording in item 10 and 13.

Administering the instrument

The researcher attended all the services on the weekend of April 6-7th. There are five classes of 12-year-olds, in five services (Saturday 5:00 PM, Sunday 8:15, 10:00 Chapel, 10:00 Ufungamano and 12:00 o'clock). The 12-year-olds were given the questionnaire in their classes after a short introduction of what the researcher is seeking to find out. It was possible to get instrument distributed within that one weekend, and the children were able to respond and give the questionnaires back to the researcher before the end of each class. The children took about 30 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. The researcher provided them with Bibles and pencils and sat with them as they filled them in. As such, the rate of returns was 100% with all respondents giving back their questionnaires. The researcher had talked to the teachers for these classes in order to get their consent to administer the instrument in their classes.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This research aimed at investigating the perception of missions amongst 12-year-old children at Nairobi Chapel. The findings have been used to draw implications for ministry with children in Nairobi Chapel. Three research questions were used to guide the data collection:

R.Q.1. What is the understanding of missions amongst the 12-year-olds in Nairobi Chapel?

R.Q.2. What is their understanding of the scope of missions?

R.Q.3. In what ways are they involved in missions?

The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire that had both open-ended and closed-ended questions (Appendix A). Each item in the questionnaire aimed at providing answers to the research questions. The researcher presented 25 questionnaires, and all of them were returned, thus rate of returns was 100%.

Understanding of the Meaning of Missions

R.Q.1 what is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel?

This research question was answered by items 1-5 in section A of the questionnaire. The research question aimed at investigating the understanding of the concept of missions. This understanding was gauged by the responses to the five items given by the children under study. The responses are given in tables of frequencies, and these are analyzed and reported in simple percentages. 9 tables were employed in analyzing the responses, and each table was then interpreted to draw the meanings of the given responses.

1. Who is a missionary?

This open-ended question aimed at finding out whether the children in the study understand the concept of missionary. Their responses are summarized in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Who is a Missionary

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (f/Nx100)
A person who travels to other places/countries to preach the good news	14	56%
Someone who tells others about his/her own religion and tries to convert them	6	24%
A person who tells others about God/shares the gospel	3	12%
Someone who has a mission	1	4%
A person who works for God voluntarily	1	4%
Total responses	25	100%

N=25

Fifty six percent of the respondents think that a missionary is someone who travels to other places and countries to preach the good news. Twenty four percent believe it is anyone who tells others about his religion, with the aim of converting them. Twelve percent believe that it is any person who tells others the gospel message. Four percent think that a missionary is one who has a mission and another 4% that it is somehow who works for God voluntarily.

From the data given in Table 1.1, the respondents have a fairly good understanding of who a missionary is. However, the almost all of the definitions are connected to preaching and teaching about the Christian faith. They were able to describe and or define in their own words what they think a missionary is in relation to what his occupation entails.

2. What does a missionary do? Give two examples of activities that missionaries engage in.

This item aimed at finding out whether the children can explain what being a missionary entails. Each respondent was required to give two examples of the activities of missionaries. Their responses reveal the concept of missions work as they understand it. These responses are summarized in Table 1.2.

One respondent gave one activity and stated 'I don't know' for the second activity. Sixty two percent of the respondents stated in one way or another that the missionary spreads the gospel, through preaching, or teaching about God and or about Christ. Fourteen percent felt that missionaries undertake charity work in helping the poor or disadvantaged as a way to reach people for Christ. Six percent felt that missionaries do a lot of travelling from place to place in their endeavor to preach the gospel. Four percent felt that missionaries undertake Bible translation into local languages, another 4% that they plant churches, while another 4% think that missionaries pray for and baptize new believers. Yet

another 4% think that what missionaries do involves socializing and fitting in with the people, having already given up their former lives in order to serve God.

Table 1.2. Actions/Activities of Missionaries

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Preach in churches, schools, and tells non-Christians about Christ etc	31	62%
Helps the poor/disadvantaged	7	14%
Travelling to various destinations	3	6%
Translating the bible into local languages	2	4%
Church planting	2	4%
Pray for and baptize new believers	2	4%
Socialize and fitting in with the people having given up his own life to serve God	2	4%
I don't know	1	4%
Total responses (each gave 2)	50	100%

It is safe to conclude from the data in Table 1.2 that the respondents are well aware of the activities, actions and procedures involved in the work of missionaries as they evangelize and disciple people for Christ. Only one respondent, that is 4% of respondents could not come up with a second activity that missionaries engage in. The children see the work of missions in relation to preaching and teaching about God and Jesus Christ, with only a few of them recognizing charity as part of missions.

3. If you had to tell someone about Jesus, what are some of the things you would tell them?

The respondents had four spaces in which to write some facts about Jesus in this open-ended question. The researcher has categorized their responses into four: who Jesus is, what he did on earth and its significance, what he does now, and how to respond to Jesus. The total number of responses was ninety-three out of a possible one hundred, because some of the respondents came up with less than four facts about Jesus. The Tables 1.3-1.6 give their responses organized into the four categories.

As shown in Table 1.3, the children felt that it was of importance to tell others who Jesus is. Eleven responses were based on his being God's son, while five responses specifically mentioned his being the Savior and Messiah. One respondent stated that He is the way, truth and life, while two others mentioned his virgin birth and the fact of his being the greatest person in history. There were nineteen responses based on who Jesus is.

Table 1.3. Who Jesus is

Response	Frequency
Gods son	11
Savior and messiah	5
The way, truth and life	1
Born of a virgin	1
Great person	1
Total responses in category	19

Table 1.4 gives the responses based on what the respondents believe Jesus does in the life of believers.

Table 1.4. What Jesus Does

Response	Frequency
Jesus loves and cares about us	14
He forgives sinners if they repent	7
He watches over us	2
He heals	1
He reveals God to us	1
Total responses in category	25

Based on Table 1.4, the most important fact in relation to the work of Christ that the children felt they would communicate to someone else about Jesus Christ is the fact that he loves and cares for them. There were fourteen responses, that would mean 56% of respondents felt that this was very important. Twenty eight percent of respondents indicated that Jesus forgives sinners if they repent. Eight percent of the respondents indicated that Jesus watches over them, while 4% indicated that Jesus heals and another 4% that he reveals God to humanity. There were twenty-five responses in this category.

As shown in Table 1.5, this response category of Jesus life and its significance had the most responses given. Seventy-six percent of total respondents indicated that Jesus suffered and died on the cross to save sinners, that being the response with the highest number of respondents. Second in this category is that Jesus rose from the dead, having 28% of respondents indicating that it was something worth telling others about. Third response in this category was that Jesus went to heaven but will come

back to judge the world, having 24% of respondents mentioning it. Fourth, 20% of respondents mentioned that fact that Jesus was tempted but did not sin. Eight percent indicated that Jesus performed miracles, while 4% mentioned the fact of his having had twelve disciples.

Table 1.5. The Life of Jesus and Its Significance

Response	Frequency
He suffered and died on the cross to save us from our sins	19
Jesus rose from the dead	7
Jesus went to heaven but will come back to judge the world	6
Jesus was tempted but did not sin	5
He performed miracles	2
He had twelve disciples	1
Total responses in category	40

Table 1.5 contained forty responses in total, out of ninety-three responses given. This points to the fact that the life of Jesus and its significance is the category where most of the respondents would pick their facts about Jesus. It is noteworthy that these four categories were drawn out of the raw data in the process of coding, and as such, it shows that the respondents shared similarities in facts about Jesus worth using in evangelism. Table 1.6 gives the responses given on how each individual ought to respond to Jesus.

Table 1.6. How to Respond to Jesus

Response	Frequency
He/she must be born again/must accept Jesus into his/her heart	7
He/she should learn to pray for others	1
He/she must be coming to church	1
Total responses in category	9

Table 1.6 gives nine responses related to how to respond to Jesus Christ. Seven respondents felt that whoever they would be speaking to must accept Jesus Christ into his/her heart, that is 28% of respondents indicated that need for personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Four percent indicated that the person should learn how to pray for others, and another 4% that the person must start attending church.

The three facts that the respondent felt were important to communicate to others about Jesus were:

- Jesus suffered and died for our sins. Seventy-six percent of the respondents mentioned that fact. It seems viable to conclude that the respondents felt that this is one fact that most of them would mention when telling someone else about Jesus.
- Jesus loves and cares about human beings. Fifty-six percent of the respondents felt that this was an important fact to tell others about Jesus.
- Forty four percent of total respondents mentioned that Jesus is the Son of God.

This item was important in showing whether the respondents, knew enough about the Christian faith to be able to communicate it if the opportunity arose. Given that 80% of them answered item one in terms of communicating the faith or religion to others as the essence of a missionaries occupation, the responses given here indicate that they understand the essence of the christian religion. The data shows that the respondents have a comprehensive knowledge of Jesus, and should be able to communicate this knowledge to others.

4. From the list below, choose the items that best describe what missions is.

This was a closed-ended item, with five options to choose from. Of these, three were right, and two were unrelated to missions. Their responses would show how well they understood missions. All the respondents answered this item, however, some picked only one option, others two, others three, and some four options. Their responses per option are given in Table 1.7.

As per table 1.7, 88% of the respondents felt that missions have to do with telling others about Jesus. Sixty eight percent think that missions has to do with going to a remote place to preach, while 36% picked on giving to the poor. Four percent also picked on going to church and 8% on visiting a sick grandmother in hospital as representing missions, the two options in this closed-ended question that do not have anything to do with missions.

Table 1.7. A Description of Missions

Response	Frequency	percentage
a. Telling others about Jesus	22	88%
b. Going to a remote place to preach the gospel	17	68%
c. Giving to the poor	6	36%
d. Coming to church	1	4%
e. Visiting your sick grandmother in hospital	2	8%

Table 1.8 gives the combinations of responses as given by the respondents.

Table 1.8. Combinations of Responses to A Description of Missions

Response category	Frequency (f)	percentage (F/Nx100)
A and b only	9	36%
A only	6	24%
A, b and c	4	16%
B only	2	8%
A, d, c, d	1	4%
A, d, c and e	1	4%
A, b, e	1	4%
A and c	1	4%
Totals N=25	25	100%

Only 16% of respondents recognized all the three possible correct responses in this item.

Thirty six percent, the highest number of responses gave a and b only. That is, mission has to do with telling others about Christ and travelling to remote places to preach. Twelve percent of the respondents gave d and e as relating to missions, that is going to church and visiting a sick grandmother in hospital, the two items in the list that have nothing to do with missions. However, the three respondents also recognized a, telling others about Jesus as a part of missions. In total, only two respondents, 8% of the total, felt that missions is only about going to remote places to preach the gospel for Christ.

As such, 88% of all respondents gave correct responses, and only 12% had a wrong item as part of missions. It shows that though only 16% of the respondents showed a comprehensive understanding of mission, a good majority, that is 88% had correct notions of what missions consists in. There were no respondents who got the whole question wrong, none of them chose items d or e as the

only components of missions. It is safe to say that the respondents have a fair understanding of what missions is, though a few (12%) have some misconceptions.

5. Write one example of a verse that you think talks about missions.

The aim of this item was to find out whether the children could give a biblical rationale for missions. Table 1.9 gives their responses to verses related to missions.

Table 1.9. Verses on Missions

Verses	Frequency	Percentage
Appropriate verses	20	80%
Inappropriate verses	2	8%
No verse (I do not know)	3	12%
Total responses	25	100%

Twenty of the respondents, that is 80%, give a verse that is in some way related to missions. Twelve percent of the respondents could not come up with a verse that is related to missions at all, and they answered 'I do not know'. Eight percent of the respondents picked on verses that are unrelated to missions. The data in Table 1.9 shows that majority of the respondents are able to give a Biblical rationale for missions by quoting relevant scriptures.

Summary for R.Q.1

From the responses given to items 1-5 of the questionnaire as contained in Tables 1.1-1.9, the children show a fair understanding of missions. They have been able to define missions, missionary, mission work, and gave Bible verses that are related to missions. Majority defined a missionary as one who travels to preach the gospel and gave examples of activities related to preaching, teaching, charity work and planting churches. They are also very well versed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, an understanding that would come in handy should they get the opportunity to engage in missions work. The children also showed their understanding of missions in the closed-ended item number 4, where their confusion became evident as to what besides preaching, missions consists in. Most of them picked the great commission verses in Matthew 28 and Luke 24 as the Biblical rationale for missions.

Scope of Missions

R.Q.2 what do the respondents understand to be the scope of missions?

This research question is answered by items 6-10 in section B of the questionnaire. It aims at moving from the basic definitions of missions to the essentials of missions in terms location of missions activity, challenges of missions, positive aspects of missions, their opinion as to whether they should be missionaries as children.

6. Name two countries or towns where there are missionaries serving Jesus.

Each respondent was expected to give two towns or countries where they knew of missionaries serving Jesus. Table 2.1 gives their responses categorized into whether they could name countries or not. One respondent gave one country, then answered 'I do not know' for the second one. Another respondent did not give any country answering 'I do not know' for both. Ninety four percent of the respondents could give two countries or towns in Africa or the rest of the world where there are missionaries serving Jesus. The respondents are aware that there are missionaries serving Jesus in other parts of Africa and the Asian continent.

Table 2.1. Countries and Towns Where There are Missionaries

Serving Jesus

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Named towns and countries	47	94%
Unable to name towns or countries	3	6%
Total responses	50	100%

7. What does a missionary do to reach people for Jesus?

This open-ended item is very similar to item 2, except that it specifies the actions or activities of missionaries in relation to reaching people for Christ. It should give a clue as to whether the respondents understand the scope of missions related activities. Table 2.2 gives the responses.

Table 2.2. What Missionaries Do to Reach People for Jesus

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Talks or shares with people about God and Jesus Christ	15	60%
Blends in with the people and learns their culture	5	20%
Travelling to near and far destinations	1	4%
Charity work	1	4%
Suffers in their efforts to reach people	1	4%
Shares his story/testimony	1	4%
I don't know	1	4%
Total responses	25	100%

Only one respondent, 4% of total respondents could not give any activity that is related to missions, answering with 'I do not know' for that question. Sixty percent of the respondents felt that missionaries talk and share with people about God and Jesus Christ, 20% think that the missionaries blend in with the people and learn their culture. Travelling, charity, and sharing testimonies each had 4% of respondents, while another 4% thought that missionaries reach people for Jesus through suffering.

From the data given in Table 2.1, the respondents have a clear understanding of a missionary's occupation. However, the a majority think of missionary work in terms of preaching and teaching, with only a minority noting other aspects like charity work. Perhaps the preaching/teaching aspects of missions work is what the 12-year-old children have been able to grasp best. There may need to show them how comprehensive missions is in order to give them opportunity to decide on present and future involvement.

8. What do you think is the hardest part of being a missionary in a foreign place?

This question helps in finding out how well the respondents understand the challenges faced in foreign missions. Table 2.3 gives their responses.

In this open-ended question, all the respondents had an opinion about the challenges of foreign missions. Topping the list of activities was that missionaries are in danger of persecution and even death, and felt that the missionaries are likely to suffer loneliness each having 28% of respondents.

Second on the list in frequency, 16% thought that learning a new language would present communication challenges, while third on the list was given by 12% who felt that the local people might refuse to believe the message of the gospel. Four percent thought that it was a great challenge to work in war torn countries. Another 4% felt that dealing with an unfamiliar local religion might pose a challenge. Four percent of the respondents thought that spreading Christianity as a new and unfamiliar religion to the local people could be a great challenge, while another 4% picked the challenge of travel in remote places.

Table 2. 3. Challenges Faced In The Foreign Mission Field

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Might face persecutions and even death	7	28%
Loneliness after having to leave friends and family behind	7	28%
New language, communication problems	4	16%
People might refuse to believe the message	3	12%
Working in war torn countries	1	4%
Dealing with an unfamiliar local religion	1	4%
Trying to spread a new religion that is unfamiliar to the people	1	4%
Challenge of travelling in remote places	1	4%
Total s (N=25)	25	100%

As shown in Table 2.3, the respondents all showed a good understanding of what missionaries face when they leave the known and travel to spread the gospel in unfamiliar territory, where people speak a different language, have a different culture, and can resist the gospel message violently.

9. What do you think is the best part of being a missionary in a foreign place?

This item assumes that in spite of the challenges, the missionary also looks forward to some positive things in the foreign mission field. The respondents' opinions are given in Table 2.4. Only one respondent could not come up with anything to say about the best part of foreign missions. Ninety six percent of the respondents could come up with what they considered to be the positive aspects experienced in foreign missions. Forty-eight percent of them felt that the best part is seeing people responding in faith to Jesus Christ and the growth of churches. Twenty-four percent considered the

learning of the new language and culture as the high point while 16% felt meeting and making new friends was a positive thing. Four percent felt that the enabling that comes from God is what makes it worth the effort, while 8% felt that making a difference in the lives of the poor was the best part.

Table 2.4. Positive Aspects of Foreign Missions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
When people are willing to believe and are brought into relationship with God	7	28%
The chance to learn a new language and culture	6	24%
The growth of a church or christian community where there was none	4	16%
Making new friends	4	16%
Making a difference in the lives of the poor	2	8%
he enabling that comes from God	1	
I do not know	1	4%
Total responses	25	100%

As shown in Table 2.4, the respondents showed that they have a good grasp of what takes place in foreign missions, and gave good responses showing their opinions.

10. Do you think God expects you to be a missionary now? If yes, give examples of some activities you could do right now in your school or neighborhood.

This question aimed at finding out the opinion of the respondents on what God expects of them in relation to missions. That is, do they think that they should be involved in missions? This leads naturally into section C that investigates their current involvement in missions. Table 2.5 gives their opinions.

Table 2.5. God's Expectation on the Children Now in View of Missions

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	19	76%
No	6	24%
Total	25	100%

A large majority of the respondents think that God expects them to be missionaries right now, with 76% thinking that God expects them to be missionaries right now, while 24% do not think so. Those 76% who felt that God expects them to be missionaries now also had opinions on how this could take place. These opinions are contained in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6. Missions Activities that Can Be Done by The Children

Response	Frequency
Tell other pupils in school, their classmates and friends who are not Christians about Jesus Christ	13
Have a Bible study at school or at home with neighbors	6
Pray for their friends and family who are not yet Christians	2
Visiting the less privileged	1
Tell their friends how to behave as Christians, such as sharing and not bullying	2

Some of the respondents to this item gave more than one activity that they could engage in for missions in their schools and neighborhoods. Thirteen of them thought that they could tell their classmates and friends about Jesus Christ. Six thought holding a Bible study at home or at school would be a worthy missions activity, while two thought that they could in addition to either of the other activities also pray for their friends and family to become Christians. One respondent thought visiting the less privileged could work. Two others felt that they could advise their friends to stop bullying and to behave as Christians. These responses show that the 76% of total respondents who think that God expects them to be missionaries also know how they can do this.

Summary for R.Q.2

In this section containing data from items 6-10 in the questionnaire, one can conclude that the 12-year-old children in Nairobi Chapel have a very good understanding of the scope of missions. They were able to name towns and countries where missionaries are located in service to God. They could also name activities that the missionaries are likely to engage in as they attempt to evangelize and disciple people in the various places where they serve God. The children were also able to come up with

both the challenges and the exciting aspects of foreign missions. They also know that God expects them to serve as missionaries in their schools and neighborhoods, and can list activities that they could engage in to achieve that mandate.

Practice of Missions

R.Q.3 In what ways are they involved in missions?

This research question helps to move the research from mere knowledge of missions to involvement, if any. There are five items, numbered 11-15 in section C of the questionnaire.

All the questions have to do with their current involvement, or future plans for involvement in missions endeavors. Their responses show whether the children's know-how is merely theoretical or also practical in nature.

11. Have you ever thought about being a missionary? Why?

This open-ended question aimed at finding out whether the children ever thought about becoming missionaries either presently or in the future. The assumption was that knowing leads to doing. Table 3.1 contains their responses to the first part of the question.

Table 3.1. Whether They Have Thought of Being Missionaries or Not

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	56%
No	11	44%
Total responses	25	100%

Each respondent expressed an opinion on this question. Fifty six percent of the respondents said they had thought about being missionaries, while the other 44% said they either had not thought about it, or did not want to be missionaries. This could mean that over half of them have considered a career in missions, or at least thought about what that would entail. Forty four percent may have either thought about it and discarded the idea, or not thought about it at all. The next part of the question gave

the reasons attached to either opinion given.

The reasons given for having thought about being a missionary are given in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.3 gives the reasons given as to why some of them would rather not be missionaries.

Table 3.2. Reasons Why Some Have Considered Becoming Missionaries

Response	Frequency	Percentage
People need the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ	2	8%
In response to, and obedience to Gods call	3	12%
Because my parents are missionaries	2	8%
Because I would like to help the underprivileged	3	12%
To get God's blessing	2	8%
Because I like meeting people from non-christian countries/places	1	4%
I do not know	1	4%
Total respondents	14	56%

Eight percent of the respondents felt that people needed the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ, thus their considering becoming missionaries. Twelve percent felt that they would become missionaries if God asked them to, as an act of obedience. Another 12% thought that they would like to help the underprivileged through becoming missionaries to serve them. Eight percent have considered becoming missionaries because their parents are missionaries, while another 8% would consider it to get God's blessing. Four percent felt that their desire to meet people from non-christian countries could lead to their becoming missionaries. A final 4% had thought about it, but did not know why they would like to become missionaries.

It is possible to conclude that those who had considered missions as a future prospect had fairly good reasons why they felt the need to join missions. It is notable that 8% considered missions because their own parents are missionaries. Perhaps this would be an area worth researching, the influence of parental occupation on children's choice of a career.

Table 3.3. Reasons Why Some Do Not Want To Be Missionaries

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I don't think that it is my path, or I have other plans for myself	8	32%
I don't really know why I have not thought about it	2	8%
It is a very hard thing to do(to be a missionary)	1	4%
Total	11	44%

Thirty-two percent of respondents had thought about missions, but had other plans for themselves, perhaps because they did not think they had a 'call' to missions. Eight percent confessed that they had not really considered missions as a prospective future career. A final 4% simply considered missions work very hard, and therefore did not want to be missionaries in the future.

These responses show that the children thought about missions, enough to have figured out that perhaps that is not where they would like to end up. It is possible that if they learnt about aspects of missions such as tent-making they could give further thought to missions. Most of those who said they had other plans for themselves gave the career of choice. It might be of benefit for such to learn that indeed they can pursue their career and yet serve God as missionaries.

12. What abilities do you have that God might be able to use as a missionary?

This question aimed at finding out whether the respondents would consider their gifts, talents and abilities as usable in missions. The responses they gave are contained in Table 3.4. Twenty percent gave natural talents such as singing and dancing, while 12% gave learned skills as usable abilities in missions. Sixteen percent gave their love for sharing the gospel as a useful ability in missions, while confidence and courage were picked by 12% of respondents. A further 12% felt that being talkative could come in handy in the field of missions, while 4% recorded kindness as useful. Another 4% felt the most useful ability they could possess is the Spirit of God while a final 20% did not know any useful ability that they possess as pertains to missions. Eighty percent of respondents could give an ability, either natural or learned that can be of use in missions, while 20% could not give any.

Table 3.4. Abilities that God could use in missions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Natural talents such as singing, dancing, drawing, acting and running	5	20%
Learned skills such as computer literacy, and leadership	3	12%
A love for sharing the Gospel and praying	4	16%
Confidence and courage	3	12%
Being talkative	3	12%
Kindness	1	4%
The spirit of God within me	1	4%
I don't know	5	20%
Total responses	25	100%

It is therefore fair to conclude that majority of the children know what abilities they possess that could be of use in the missions field should they end up there.

13. Are you involved in any missions activities?

The aim here was to find out if the children are actually involved in missions in their schools or neighborhoods. Some of the children said that they were involved in missions, while the bigger majority are not involved in any missions activities. The frequency of involvement or non-involvement is given in the table 3.5.

Table 3.5. Involvement or Non-Involvement in Missions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	24%
No	19	76%
Total responses	25	100%

Only 24% of the respondents claim to be involved in any missions activities, while 76% are not involved.

These are the activities that the 24% who are involved claim to engage in:

- a) Evangelistic drama group
- b) Giving gifts to the needy
- c) Raising money for the church through the church summit walk

- d) Keeping the school clean and planting trees
- e) Hiking to places to preach the gospel
- f) Helping in the Chinese church
- g) Helping out at the mission agency's preschool

While some of these activities are missionary in nature, others like keeping their school clean and planting trees are not. This shows that even amongst those who claim to be involved in missions activities, there is confusion they are not very clear as to what really rates as missions. It is then possible that such are not actually involved in missions, but thought that they should claim to be involved.

14. If your answer to number 13 is no, what are some activities you would be interested in doing for missions?

The aim was to find out what they felt they could engage in if opportunity arises. The respondents gave various activities that they would like to be involved in. These are contained in Table 3.6. Some of the respondents gave more than one activity that they would be interested in engaging in. Seven of them felt that they would like to share the gospel, while charity work, Bible study and praying for non-believers had two respondents each. One respondent would like to become a doctor and use that in the missions field, while encouraging missionaries, raising money for the church, teaching young children, drawing pictures and raising money for missionaries had one respondent each. Another respondent would like to be involved in camping as an evangelistic activity, while a last respondent did not know what they would like to do.

Nineteen respondents had indicated that they are not involved in missions in item 13. The data in Table 3.6 shows that although these respondents are not involved in missions activities, they might be interested in involvement. Some would be interested in preaching while others would like to help by raising money or encouraging missionaries, thus not being directly in the field but assisting those who are in the field. However, the question remains, why are they not involved? Some of the activities like sharing the gospel with others and holding bible studies are activities they could do as children with other children.

Table 3.6. Activities that The Respondents Would Be Interested in Doing for Missions

Response	Frequency
Preaching, sharing the gospel with others	7
Charity work	2
Giving bibles and bible studies	2
Praying for non-believers	2
Get a career and use it in missions work (medicine)	1
Encouraging missionaries who are in the field	1
Chapel fund raising summit walk	1
Teaching young children	1
Drawing pictures to use in evangelism	1
Helping to raise money for missionaries	1
Camping	1
I do not know	1
Total responses (some gave two)	21

15. What can you do now, to be ready, if God calls you when you are older to be a missionary?

This item aimed at finding out whether the respondents know what they how they could prepare for future involvement in missions. That is, although they may or may not be currently involved in missions, are they aware of how to be ready for future involvement? The responses indicated that indeed they were aware of what they could do to be ready. These are contained in Table 3.7.

Sixteen percent of the respondents had no idea what they could do to be ready, while 84% thought that they could prepare by reading the Bible more regularly and keenly (44%), practicing by sharing with family and friends (20%), praying about missions involvement (16%) or learning a foreign language (4%).

Table 3.7. Preparation for Future Missions Work

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Reading the Bible more often and keenly	11	44%
Start sharing the gospel with family and friends	5	20%
Pray about it	4	16%
Learn a foreign language	1	4%
I don't know	4	16%
Total responses	25	100%

Summary for R.Q.3

From the data in Tables 3.1-3.7, it is clear that though the 12-year-old children in Nairobi Chapel have factual knowledge of missions work, a very small minority are actually currently involved. They are able to state ways in which they can be involved, and talents, gifts or special abilities that would be useful in missions, but there is hardly any real involvement. One of the researchers basic assumptions has been that knowing should lead to doing. In this case, knowing about missions does not seem to have lead to doing missions. The issue arising is whether it is the quality of the knowledge that is at fault, or whether it is a lack of opportunity to practice what they have learnt. It seems more likely that the knowledge is sufficient, but the ministry directors at Nairobi Chapel may need to also provide opportunities for the children to practice that which they have learnt.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out the perception of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel and to use the findings to draw implications for ministry with children at Nairobi Chapel. The study has made use of three research questions: what is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel; what is their understanding of the scope of missions; and , how are they involved in missions?

The significance of the study is threefold:

1. to contribute to the world of academia by showing a connection between missions and christian education;
2. to contribute to ministry practitioners in the field who are faced with the challenge of teaching children missions;
3. and to contribute to curriculum and program developers at Nairobi Chapel and similar churches in the area of missions with children.

Summary of findings

Three research questions were used to gather data for the study, and these were answered by the corresponding items in the questionnaire.

R.Q.1. What is the understanding of missions amongst 12-year-olds in Nairobi Chapel?

The children also have a very good understanding of the work of missionaries, varying from preaching and teaching, to charity work and church planting, to Bible translation and discipling new converts.

The children are well versed in the knowledge of the person and work of Christ and are able to point out facts that they would share with others, since they believe that the bulk of the missionaries work lies in preaching and teaching about Christ. They are able to describe who Jesus is in terms of his divinity and what he does as forgiving and showing his love to repentant sinners. They understand that Jesus suffered and died to save sinners from their sins, and each individual must respond to this knowledge by accepting Christ into his or her heart.

The children also showed that they understood missions in terms of telling others about Christ. However, they revealed their confusion as to other elements of missions activities, with only a very small percentage being able to correctly identify these. As such, this area would require more work in teaching children missions, so that they can understand how comprehensive missions are in terms that they can comprehend. The children also revealed a good grasp of biblical rationale for missions by quoting relevant scriptural references. As such, in response to research question number 1, it is fair to acknowledge that the 12-year-old children in Nairobi Chapel are well versed in the definitions of missions, missionary, mission work, and the biblical rationale for the same.

R.Q.2. What is the understanding of the scope of missions?

The children showed that they know places where there are missionaries serving Jesus around the world. They have a good understanding of the activities that missionaries engage in to reach people for Jesus, and were able to give examples of such activities. They also have a very good understanding of the challenges faced in foreign missions. They recognized persecution, loneliness, communication barriers in language and culture and the people's hardness of heart as some of the challenges.

They also have a good conception of the aspects of foreign missions that missionaries can look forward to once in the field. These they see as having churches where there were none because people have believed in Christ as well as being able to make a difference in the lives of the less privileged, as well as the joy of having the spirit and serving God. A majority of the children feel that God expects them to be missionaries in their schools and neighborhoods. In response to the second research question, one sees that the children have a clear understanding of the scope of mission work.

R.Q.3. how are the children involved in missions?

In spite of the fact that a majority of them feel that God expects them to be missionaries now, only 56% were willing to consider being missionaries. The rest felt that they would rather consider careers in law, medicine, acting rather than thinking about being missionaries. Paradoxically, most of the children in this study could point out abilities that they felt God could use in the area of missions, such as natural gifts and learned skills.

Another paradox emerged in that though the children can point out abilities that could be useful in the field of missions, only 24% are involved in any missions activities at present. These emerging paradoxes point out that the children have head knowledge of missions, but they have not reached the point where they can make heart commitments for involvement in missions now or in the future. They understand both local and foreign missions, but most of them have not been involved even in their schools and neighborhoods in spite of the knowledge that God expects them to be involved.

The children were able to point out ways in which they could be involved in missions although they are currently not involved. In other words, they have the knowledge, but they do not put it into practice. Finally, the children showed head knowledge of what they should be doing to prepare in case God were to call them into missions. These findings reveal the main flaw in the perception of missions amongst 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel; it is merely head knowledge with no corresponding heart commitment. They can give excellent answers on what should be done, but they are not doing it.

Conclusion

It is evident that the 12-year-old children have a clear perception of missions, in terms of its definition. However, the children showed confusion in their perception of the scope of missions and most are not involved in missions activities at present. It is therefore necessary for the children's ministry directors at Nairobi Chapel to work at developing curriculum and programs that not only give the children factual knowledge but also give them opportunity to get practical experience of missions. this dual process of theory and practice would help the children to better understand missions, in order to be in a position to decide whether to choose missions as a future career path.

Implications for Children's Ministries at Nairobi Chapel

Firstly, the 12-year-olds at Nairobi Chapel display a lot of head knowledge on what missions are, and how they could be involved in missions. However, they do not seem to practice that which they seem to know and understand so well. As such, the children's workers need to find creative ways to teach facts as well as application of those facts. The children's workers need to provide the children with opportunities to practice that which they learn. This is important if the children are going to be able to move from 'head' knowledge of missions to 'heart' commitment to missions now and in their later years.

Secondly, for the children to be both aware of, and involved in missions, there might be need for retraining of the teachers so that they would communicate more than mere facts. Perhaps the teachers should be encouraged to be involved in missions activities with other teams as well as with the children, so that what they teach is not merely book knowledge, but is coupled with experience. Children learn from what they are taught in lessons as well as from what they watch the adults doing - so that aspect of modeling mission commitment is important too. Teachers should therefore be trained to model a heart commitment to missions, as they show compassion for the underprivileged and concern for the lost.

On a positive note, the teachers should be encouraged to continue teaching children about Jesus Christ - this being the one area which the children have a very clear understanding as of importance to mission content. However, the children must be taught and shown by example that they should tell others about Jesus Christ. They need to again move from knowledge and personal commitment to Christ, to the next step of sharing their faith with other children in their schools and neighborhoods, as well as with adults if possible.

Fourthly, the teachers should be commended for their teaching of scripture. However, they should be encouraged to teach and model to the children not only scripture memorization, but, the application of scriptural principles to daily living. For example, a majority of the children in this study could quote a scripture reference that is related to the command to spread the gospel to all men in Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:27. Yet, the children did not show evidence of having obeyed this command. They should therefore be taught scripture as fact to know, truth to believe in, and principles to guide their daily existence. They must be taught in such a way that they move from mere knowledge to wisdom, the application of that knowledge and practicing it in their lives. The illustration 1 shows the researcher suggestion for complete educational process.

year, culminating in a missions project for children. For example, for the last 4 years that this researcher has been a ministry assistant in the children's ministry at Nairobi Chapel, there has been a project dubbed 'tree of joy'. This project aims to involve the children in giving gifts to orphans in children's homes within the city. However, it is not accompanied by lessons on missions, or giving to the less fortunate. This is one project that this researcher feels would be well used as a climax to lessons on missions such as giving to the poor, and caring about the welfare of the less fortunate through sharing the gospel and sharing material goods. Other than this, the directors can also come up with other creative ways to have missions lessons, and to practice these by getting the children to do a project. Examples could include:

1. Biblical examples - this can start with Biblical characters who choose to, or were called to serve God from their childhood or youth like David, Samuel, and King Josiah. Secondly, it can have lessons based on the life and work of Peter as missionary to the Jews, and Paul, missionary to the Gentiles, as well as other apostles who were martyred in the process of spreading the gospel.
2. Missionary biographies from the past such as William Carey, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor and Adoniram Judson who made an impact on world missions and are well remembered for their devotion and contribution in spite of the challenges they faced.
3. Missionary stories from the present, both local and foreign missionaries. At Nairobi Chapel there is a fairly large missionary presence, with their involvement ranging from Youth ministries, Slum health, bible translation and theological training. Local missionaries are involved in areas like street children, slum ministries, frontier missions and orphan care. Such missionaries could be involved in telling their personal stories as well as ministry work amongst whichever group they serve, and this could help the children to put a face to the facts on aspects of missions that they may have learnt.

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APPENDIX A

The questionnaire for Children¹

MISSIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Birthday Day ____ Month ____ Year ____

Class/Grade in School _____

Section a

1. Who is a missionary?

2. What does a missionary do? Give two examples of activities that missionaries engage in.

3. If you had to tell someone about Jesus, what are some of the things you would tell them?

- ☺ _____
- ☺ _____
- ☺ _____
- ☺ _____

4. From the list below, choose the items that best describe what missions is.

- ☺ Telling others about Jesus
- ☺ Going to a remote place to preach the Gospel
- ☺ Giving to the poor
- ☺ Coming to church
- ☺ Visiting your sick grandmother in hospital

5. Write one example of a verse that you think talks about missions (either write the verse e.g. Mark 16:15, or the words of the verse e.g., go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation)

Section b

6. Name two countries or towns where there are missionaries serving Jesus.

7. What does a missionary do to reach people for Jesus? Give one example.

8. What do you think is the hardest part of being a missionary in a foreign place?

9. What do you think is the best part of being a missionary in a foreign place?

10. Do you think God expects you to be a missionary now?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, give examples of some activities you could do right now in your school or neighborhood.

Section c

11. Have you ever thought about being a missionary? Yes

_____ No _____

Why?

12. What abilities do you have that God might be able to use as a missionary?

13. Are you involved in any mission activities in your church, school or neighborhood?

Yes _____ No _____ if no, go to number 14.

If yes, give examples of some of the things you have been doing.

14. If your answer to number 13 is no, what are some activities you would be interested in doing for missions?

15. What can you do now, to be ready, if God calls you when you are older to be a missionary?

ⁱ This questionnaire/opinionnaire has been adapted from "Missions made fun for kids: creative ideas to involve kids in missions" by Elizabeth Whitney Crisci.

FAITH WAMBURA NGUNJIRI

OBJECTIVE

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES FOR CHILDREN

EDUCATION

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1993 - 1997 KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, NAIROBI
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SECOND CLASS HONORS (UPPER DIVISION)

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1997- 1998 ST CHRISTOPHER'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL
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