

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

TEACHING THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION
TO CHILDREN OF FIVE TO TWELVE YEARS OLD

BY

PIUS M. WAWIRE

JULY, 1999

THE
BV
1475.2
.W39
1999

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

TEACHING THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION
TO CHILDREN OF FIVE TO TWELVE YEARS OLD
BY
PIUS M. WAWIRE

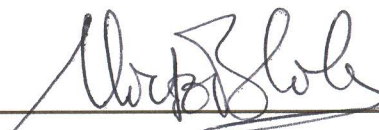
A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Education

APPROVED:
SUPERVISOR:



Dr. Suraja Raman, Ph.D.

SECOND READER:



Dr. Victor Cole, Ph.D.

EXTERNAL Reader:



Dr. Ruthie Rono, Ph.D.

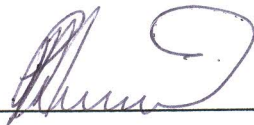
JULY 1999

Declaration

TEACHING THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION TO CHILDREN OF FIVE TO TWELVE YEARS OLD

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

Signed: _____



Mr. Pius Majimbo Wawire

Date: July, 1999

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the biblical basis of teaching the concept of salvation to children of ages five to twelve years old, and to find out the teaching methods that will facilitate the learning of this concepts, with the intention of making recommendations towards improving children's ministry at the Kenya Assemblies of God church, Bahati.

The main areas of inquiry which were foundational to this study are, children's church workers and precedents derived from the review of related literature.

Two instruments, a questionnaire and interview questions were formulated. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended Questions. The information gathered were analyzed and summarized by use of various tables and graphs where necessary.

The findings of the study revealed the following about children's ministry at the Kenya Assemblies of God church, Bahati:

1. The church of the Kenya Assemblies of God, Bahati has a strong children's ministry programme but there is a need for the leadership to set well defined goals which should be made known to every worker in the Children's church.
2. There is an intentional effort on the part of workers in the children's church to teach the concept of salvation to children. The children demonstrated their level of comprehension as they answered the questions in the interview. Due to the cognitive difference between children of five to seven and eight to twelve, the teaching methods will vary. The former understand and retain biblical information in story form, hence the teacher should learn how to effectively use story telling method. The latter can understand ideas and specific topics and can recall factual content. Hence the teacher must learn to use a variety of teaching methods including storytelling.
3. Though the teachers are aware of many other teaching methods apart from drama, Bible study projects, skits, general singing, puppets, and Bible games, they should be trained to use other teaching methods.

The writer recommends that the leaders set clearly defined goals for the children's church, teachers training on how to use teaching methods relevant to cognitive level of the child and that teachers be trained in understanding children cognitive development.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Jecintah Muthoni, my children Salome Nekesa, Kevin Wawire, and all Sunday school teachers who have committed themselves to leading children to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

Because God loves Children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To God be the glory, honor and adoration for being my Ebenezer (Thus far the Lord has brought me). I could not have made it without His providence upon my life.

The following people also contributed tremendously towards the completion of this academic document:

1. Dr Suraja Raman who graciously accepted to be my first reader and supervisor. Her readiness to help, direct, guide and encourage cannot be forgotten. The final words after a long discussion were always "Let us pray."
2. Dr. Victor B. Cole, my second reader. Though with a busy schedule as the Vice Principal for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and the Head of the Christian Education Department, he gave his time to read and help me think and organize my thoughts.
3. My family: my wife Jacintah and children Salome and Kevin, for the love and understanding during the times I was under pressure to meet the deadlines.
4. Pastors: Rev. Peter Njiri, the General Superintendent of the Kenya Assemblies of God and Senior Pastor of Kenya Assemblies of God church, Bahati and Pastor James Macharia, Children's church pastor, for allowing me to conduct my research in the church.

5. Rev. John Karanja, the Principal of East Africa School of Theology and the entire Administrative committee, for the financial support while writing this thesis

6. Mrs. Bonnie Ness, for accepting to be the initial editor of the proposal.

7. My classmates in the Christian Education Department, whom I greatly benefited from as we struggled together writing thesis: Margret Muhia, Sandress Msiska and John Isoka Shihemi. They were a great team.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS.....	x
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose of this Study.....	2
Research Questions.....	2
Significance Of The Study.....	3
Delimitations.....	3
CHAPTER 2.....	5
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Biblical Basis of Teaching Children.....	5
The Theology of Children.....	8
Teaching Methods.....	9
Presenting the Gospel to Children.....	12
Age Of Accountability.....	13
Summary of Literature Review.....	14
CHAPTER 3.....	16
METHODOLOGY.....	16

Population	16
Sample.....	16
Designing the Instrument	17
Pilot Testing	17
Entry	18
Research Design.....	18
Administering the Instrument.....	20
Method of Data Analysis	21
CHAPTER 4.....	22
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	22
CHAPTER 5.....	40
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	40
Summary of Findings	40
Recommendations	42
Recommendation for Further Research.....	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY	44
APPENDICES.....	47
A: Children's Church Workers Questionnaire	47
B: Interview Questions for Children.....	51
C: Letter from the Academic Dean	52
D: Reply from the Pastor.....	53
E: The Gospel Glove (by CEF).....	54
CURRICULUM VITAE	

LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

1. Questionnaire returns	22
2. Goals of Children's Church	24
3. Response of teachers concerning the goals	24
4. Teaching the concept of salvation	26
5. Scriptures used to teach the concept of salvation.....	27
6. Key words/phrases used to explain the concept of salvation.....	28
7. Difference in explaining salvation experience.....	29
8. How children accepted Jesus as their savior	31
9. Difference in remembering Bible information	33
10. Programmes provided to help nurture children who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.....	36
11. Teachers choice of teaching methods	38
Chart 1. How children accepted Jesus as their savior	32
Chart 2. Difference in remembering Bible verses.....	34

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG), Bahati Church in Nairobi, Kenya is one of the many churches that emphasize ministry to children. At the moment, they have a Children's Church which has a membership of over one thousand children. The population of children in Kenya is increasing rapidly and the church is faced with the challenge of nurturing these children in the ways of the Lord. As such, many programs have been introduced in churches in order to teach children about God. Various ways have been applied to teach children the concept of salvation. These children are required to make a definite decision to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Bahati KAG children's ministry has experienced children coming in great numbers when the invitation to accept Christ is given.

Dresselhaus asks, "who of us has not watched with excitement as children have gone forward to accept Jesus as their Savior and then wondered later if those same children really understood what had happened?"¹ This generates more questions such as, was their decision genuine? Is it worth the painstaking, the money and other resources of the church to reach and teach children the concept of salvation?

Eldridge strongly suggests that, "today's boys and girls need Jesus. They still need a teacher who will love them and teach them about God"² The teaching should be done in the best way possible, using the right methods, the

