

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Parents' Perception of their Involvement in the Spiritual
Nurture of their Children at Karinde Free Methodist Church*

BY
UYAMBAJE THERESE G.

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Divinity in Christian Education*

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL NURTURE OF THEIR CHILDREN AT KARINDE FREE METHODIST CHURCH

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

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

(Signed)

Uyambaje Therese G.

July, 2006

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this grounded study was to understand and explain parents' perception of their involvement in the spiritual nurture of their children of six to twelve years of age. It explored parents' understanding of the Biblical teachings and their application to the same as well as factors hindering their involvement in the spiritual development of their children.

Data collected was by means of interviews with six parents who were hand-picked among the nine parents. These parents are members of Free Methodist Church/ Karinde.

The research findings revealed the following results:

- There is a need for children of six to twelve years of age to grow spiritually because it is a Biblical mandate.
- The Bible is the basic tool for spiritual nurture of children.
- Prayer, obedience to God and to the people, reading the Bible, teachings on the goodness of the church, respect to God and parents are the things the parents teach their children to help them grow spiritually.
- Home is the place whereby this spiritual growth takes place, though it is done occasionally.
- Parents' past spiritual experiences (both positive and negative) serve as motivating factors for them to nurture their children spiritually.
- Factors that hinder parents from being fully involved in nurturing their children spiritually include: lack of quality time, lack of consistency, forgetfulness and the feeling of inadequacy.

From the findings, some recommendations were proposed to the parents, the ministers of the church, and the Sunday school teachers in understanding the need of helping the children of six to twelve years old to develop spiritually, with a view of helping them better fulfill their God-given responsibility so that these children can embrace Christ Jesus as their Savior and become His disciples.

To
Dad and Mum

You are my heroes and through you, I have embraced Jesus Christ with all
that I am

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest days of the human race in the Garden of Eden “the family has been the most educational agency on earth” (Gangel and Wilhoit 1994, 68). God designed the family and gave parents full responsibility for the spiritual care of their children. The Hebrew nation never got away from the centrality of the home in nurturing children spiritually. The Bible places upon parents the responsibility of nurturing the spiritual lives of children. The book of Proverbs recommends teaching children when they are still small, thereby equipping them with the values that will become the guiding principles for the rest of their lives. It is the wish of all Christian parents that children grow in a good relationship with God. What parents want for their children is that they grow as children of God, who know the Bible and apply it in their daily lives.

Parents are encouraged to lay the ground work for their children to experience salvation, commit themselves to God’s loving care and guidance. Parents are to strive to make their children a priority in nurturing them spiritually so that those children are able to become whole in Jesus Christ. They need to know that they are to be role models to them, that they need to provide them with sound Biblical truth, discipline and love. To this effect, and because of the role of the home which is to facilitate, aid, and teach these Biblical principles, it is necessary to gain a detailed understanding of parents’ perception of their

