

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE INFLUENCE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL ON THE SPIRITUAL
DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN:
KARINDE FREE METHODIST CHURCH

BY

NEREAH ADALA MATTAH

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

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

**THE INFLUENCE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL ON THE SPIRITUAL
DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN: 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) Nereah Adala
Nereah Adala Mattah

July, 2001

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to find out the extent to which the Free Methodist Church Sunday school has had an impact on the spiritual development of children of ages 6-14. The main areas of inquiry, which were foundational to this study, are the parents of the children aged between 6-14 and the Sunday school curriculum used in the Karinde Free Methodist Church. The instruments, which were formulated and used, included questionnaires for parents and teachers. The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions. There were also interview questions for the children. The information gathered was analyzed and summarized by use of various tables and graphs where necessary.

The findings of the study revealed the following about the Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday school. The influence of the Sunday school in the learners' relationship with God was weak. Its influence on the children's relationship with other people was strong. It had very weak influence on the learners' relationship with nature (their environment). The regularity with which learners practiced lessons learnt about God was weak. Practice of lessons learnt about relating with other people was strong while practice of lessons learnt about nature was very weak.

The writer recommends that the church considers training the Sunday school teachers thereby equipping them for the noble ministry to children and that the children be divided up in the Sunday school according to age groups to enable teachers minister adequately to them bearing in mind the unique characteristics of particular age groups. The church could draw a regular budget to equip the Sunday school with modern learning facilities. Parents ought to be more involved in the spiritual nurture of their children by going through the lessons learnt in Sunday school with them and helping them to apply the same in their lives.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Naphtaly Mattah, our three children Calvary, Joy, Zion and my sister Helen. Special thanks goes to BTL and the Calvary Church, North Carolina, USA who have sponsored my studies at NEGST.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Free Methodist Church of Kenya was founded in 1992 by a Burundian church leader called Elie Buconyori. The church has since then had two parishes namely the Karen parish and the Riruta parish. Under the Karen Parish are: the Karinde local Church, the Kibera local Church, the Kirigu fellowship and the Udhiru fellowship. The Karinde local Church was built in order to evangelize the unreached peoples of the area. The researcher intended to base her study in the Karinde Free Methodist Sunday School, which has the largest congregation in the Karen Parish.

Today many changes that have shaped the family have had particular impact on the children in the home. Several marriages for instance have ended up in separation or divorce, single parent families are growing rampantly, many parents work outside the home and therefore are hardly with their children much less actively involved with the spiritual nurture of the children. On the other hand some children have faced all sorts of abuses ranging from physical, psychological and emotional.

Today we are faced with the reality of many things held in the past as science-fiction. Wide television networks, video, magazines with pornographic materials are received easily in the homes. Children are only left confused with such exposures. When a seed is

planted, the possibility of germination is inevitable. Today's children grow up in a different world than their parents grew up in. Children are touched by divorce, depression, and increased mobility of families, lack of contact with extended family, abuse and neglect, suicide, non-Christian values, drugs and delinquency, and pressure to grow up too quickly. The challenge to plant and nurture the good seed is urgent therefore. It is vital that the influence of Sunday school on the children be looked into with great concern.

Problem statement

Every one who endeavors to teach does so with the intention to bring about change. On the other hand those who involve themselves in the educational ministry of the church do so with the aim of impacting change in the lives of the learners. The concern of the writer is to find out the contribution of the Sunday school programme in the spiritual development of the children in the Free Methodist Church. This is in line with Wawire's recommendation that there is need to conduct research to find out the effectiveness of such programmes as the Bible club, Sunday school and missionettes in nurturing the children who have given their lives to the Lord Wawire (1999, 43). The researcher intended to find out what the children in Karinde Free Methodist Church have been taught in the last two years and the extent to which they are practicing what they have learnt.

Purpose of study

The researcher explored the extent to which Sunday school had influenced the spiritual development of children. The findings of the research are intended to make the Free Methodist Church aware of the issues in the local Church Sunday Schools in order for the Church to strategize solutions according to their need. The study was limited to the Karinde Free Methodist Church. It was further limited to children of ages ranging from 6-14 as opposed to the earlier targeted group that comprised ages 7-9. This was because the researcher found out that the previously targeted group was too small and would therefore not contribute sufficiently the data that was required for the study. All the findings of the research were collected from children who had been attending the Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday school for at least two years and their parents or guardians. The writer believed this was sufficient time for the children to have begun practicing some of the lessons that had been learnt in the Sunday school. The study was intended to assess the contribution of the Sunday school towards the spiritual development of the children in the Free Methodist Church. The writer assessed this from the perceptions of the parents of the children who attended the Sunday school on the extent to which the children practiced what they had been taught. The research covered the content of Christian education that had been taught in the last two years and the extent of its impact on the learners.

The researcher hopes that findings from the study of the Free Methodist Church in Nairobi will serve as an example for drawing conclusions based on biblical models for

effective ways to enhance spiritual development of children in the Free Methodist churches and elsewhere.

Criteria for judgment

Judgment of the extent to which the Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday school has impacted the lives of the children aged between 6-14 was based on what they have been taught in the last two years. This information was found in the church's Sunday school curriculum. The following category of objectives and criteria of judgment were followed.

Table 1. Criteria for judgment

Category of objectives	Criteria of judgment
The learners' relationship with God	To what extents do the children practice the following: Prayer, praise, reading the Bible, choice to do right and obedience to God's word.
The learners' relationship with other people	To what extent do the children practice the following: Charity/ generosity, kind acts to the needy and the handicapped, forgiving others, obeying parents.
The learners' relationships with nature	To what extent do the children do the following: Speaking of what they have learnt about God from nature, thanking God for nature, caring for the church compound.

The above criteria helped to portray the extent to which the Sunday school had impacted the lives of the children of ages 6-14 in the Karinde Free Methodist Church.

Significance of the study

The study was aimed at finding out whether and to what extent the teaching of Sunday School in the Karinde Free Methodist Church had had impact on the spiritual development of the children of ages 6-14. The study is extremely important and relevant today due to the many factors that compete with the spiritual development of children. Natana quotes Barbour as having noted, “ There is a sense of urgency that motivates you to want to introduce your 2s and 3s to your precious Lord. You realize that each day is important in a child’s spiritual growth. Children like tender plants, must be nurtured during their early growth period in order to reach the maturity God has planned for them” (Natana 1996, 7).

Findings from the study will be particularly helpful to the Free Methodist Church’s Educational ministry to the children as it has highlighted some of the needs of the ministry and hence it will assist the church in prioritizing the church’s needs and programmes meaningfully. It would also be an eye opener to many parents who perhaps, out of ignorance, have ignored the spiritual needs of their children.

Research Questions

R.Q.1. What has been taught in the Free Methodist Church Sunday school in the last two years?

R.Q.2. To what extent has spiritual development been realized in the Free Methodist Church Sunday School in the last two years?

Delimitation

The study was delimited to the Free Methodist Church's Sunday school. It was further limited to children of ages ranging from 6-14 years who attend the Sunday school, their parents and teachers.

Limitation

The study looked into the content of Christian education that has been taught in the Sunday school in the last two years and the extent of spiritual development (measured by the extent to which the children practiced what had been learnt in Sunday school from their parents' perspective). The researcher did not look into other factors that might influence the spiritual development of the children such as media, peer groups or the parents. Again the researcher observed that most of the children did not read Bibles but was limited in such an observation because literacy levels as well as ownership of Bibles were not ascertained.

Assumptions

In this study, the following assumptions were made:

- i) That the instruments used in the study accurately reflected the extent to which the Sunday school had impacted the children's lives.
- ii) That the scores obtained reflect the extent of learning that has taken place in the Free Methodist Church Sunday School.

Definition of concepts

In order to provide a relatively undisputed comprehension of the concepts that were used in the study, the researcher gave some definitions as they are meant in the context of the study.

Spiritual Development: This was used to refer to the elements of positive change that has occurred in the children's lives. It was judged in terms of the children's level of the application of truths learnt in Sunday school.

Sunday school: The term implies the informal Christian education of children in the church.

Parents: This denoted biological parents or in their absence, any adults with whom the child/ children lived and who played the parental role.

Summary

This study was designed to investigate the extent to which the Free Methodist Church Sunday School has had an impact on the spiritual development of the children aged between 6-14 years old.

In this section the researcher has presented an introduction and background of the Karinde Free Methodist Church, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and definition of concepts.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The goal of this study was to discover the extent to which the Karinde Church Sunday school had impacted the lives of the children aged between 6-14 years. This chapter looks into the substantive precedents that exist in the literature. It covers the following areas: the place of children in God's plan, the possibility of spiritual development of children, the importance of spiritual development in children, factors towards the spiritual development of children and the role of Sunday school in the spiritual development of children.

Children in God's Plan

Wawire notes that children are included in the great commission that Christ gave the church. It is a known fact that children can be born again.

“The debate concerning the age of accountability cannot be solved easily because it extends beyond child development into doctrinal and theological convictions. One's belief concerning salvation in general determines how one views salvation for children. The biblical basis for salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:31 RSV)” (Wawire 1999, 14).

Scriptures support this view. For instance, when Christ was on earth he set a little child in the midst of His teaching and preaching (Matt. 18:2 RSV). He said to His disciples, ‘Verily I say unto you, except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. 18:3 RSV). It was as a lowly babe that God

sent into the world His only son, the savior who was the great final revelation of Himself. As a child, Jesus grew “in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52 RSV). He set the pattern for the growth of the children of all time.

Swindoll also observes,

“God’s plan for humankind always included children. Young ones were neither a postscript nor the result of a curse on Adam and Eve. God’s command to ‘be fruitful and multiply’ (Gen 1:28 RSV) came prior to the fall” (Swindoll 1993, 16).

The inclusion of children into God’s eternal plan for mankind remains an undeniable fact therefore.

The Possibility of Spiritual Development of Children

The possibility of spiritual development in children is clearly spelt out in the words of Fillmore who views the years of childhood as exciting surges. He notes that each child struggles in the direction of maturity. He sees Christ as having responded to the children with a welcome. He notes that the adults who surrounded Christ tried to hinder the children from reaching Him. According to Fillmore the rebuke of Christ to the disciples could be taken to denote “Do not hinder them with adult ways and values” (Fillmore 1981, 156-157).

He argues further that the way adults view development among adults must be different from the way they ought to view children. However, children are capable of spiritual development. Among the factors that adults ought to understand about children when considering their spiritual developments are:

1. Children have difficulty with abstracts, generalizations, and symbolism
2. They think concretely and need many different situations, and many different explanations from different angles.
3. They have difficulty verbalizing what is known and difficulty in interiorizing truth.
4. They believe what those in authority say are right.
5. They recognize their own inadequacy and weakness.
6. They try to please adults.
7. They are sensitive and receptive to God.

The knowledge about some of these facts about children will be instrumental in helping adults know what to expect from children in measuring their spiritual development.

According to Eldridge, religious development is a part of the natural development of the child. He notes four things about which children are naturally curious namely; God, church, death and heaven (Eldridge 1995, 227).

Choun also notes “Persons have inherent capacity for growing and developing physically, intellectually, emotionally, and morally” (Choun 1993, 38). All persons therefore including children seek a meaningful understanding of life.

Brubaker notes,

“A child is not a miniature adult. He is a person living in a period of dependence and preparation. Childhood lays the foundation for the remaining years of life”, (Brubaker 1984, 7).

Evidently we would be wrong to ignore issues concerned with the spiritual development of children on the pretext that children are incapable of comprehending spiritual knowledge.

The Importance of Spiritual Development in Children

Looking at Proverbs 22: 6 RSV “ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” The word translated “train” is in the original, a military term; Train a child as a soldier, to keep file, obey the word of command, and carry his weapons. “In the way he should go”, implies vastly more than teaching or telling of the one who is the way the truth, and the life. It means continual decision in favor of him who is the way to God, personally seeking the truth of God, and daily living in the will and power of the Son of God.

Meier notes that all persons are made up of body, soul and spirit and that the development of the child’s spirit is the most important of all since it is what gets into an eternal destiny either in hell or in heaven (Meier 1977, 91).

It is important to be concerned about the spiritual development of children because if they go the wrong way it becomes more difficult for them to yield to the Lord. Eldridge notes that children show their greatest interest in spiritual things in the elementary years hence he recommends that parents should get their children to the church for religious training. (Eldridge, 227). The church that concerns itself with the spiritual development

of children would confidently look forward to its continued existence in the times to come.

Wawire quotes Doharty as noting the dangers of waiting until the child is grown up before teaching him the word of God. He asserts that factors such as materialism, atheism, sects and crime do not wait until the children are grown before influencing them hence the more reason why the spiritual development of children should be considered with great concern (Wawire, 7).

Factors Contributing to Spiritual Development of Children in Sunday Schools

The spiritual development of children in Sunday school is based on their understanding of the content that they are taught and their ability to apply what they have learnt in their own life situations. Edge suggests that effective teaching for results entails teaching with a conduct response aim as well as teaching with a knowledge aim. This means that apart from the knowledge that one gathers through the learning process, certain behavioral changes ought to be evident in ones life as a proof that actual learning has taken place. The conduct response aim denotes that the teacher seeks to lead class members to begin expressing in a specific way some Christian action in daily life, while the knowledge aim denotes that the teacher seeks to lead the class in a serious systematic study of a significant portion of Bible material in order to help class members understand and master that knowledge (Edge 1995, 54-55).

Milton puts it in a more elaborate way by expressing that,

“There has to be a testing and proving that teaching has been done through reviewing, rethinking, reknowing, reproducing and applying of material that has been taught, the knowledge and ideals and arts that have been communicated” (Milton 1954, 19).

According to Gangel, effective learning involves an understanding of the qualities of a Christian teacher as well as of the learning styles of the learners of various age groups. The teachers’ qualities entail dedication, sacrifice, knowledge and maturity. He asserts that sensory experiences sharpen learning for children and hence recommends that for effectiveness in teaching, the Christian teacher ought to make use of the children’s senses of seeing, touching, smelling and tasting. Instructional aids that are used in teaching children ought to be age appropriate.

Glass on the other hand lays emphasis on the appropriateness of methodology in the teaching of children. Among the suggested methods that enhance learning in the Sunday school are, story telling, dialogue, use of pictures, mime and symbols, creative writing, poetry, testimonies, drama, biographical studies, and topical Bible studies (Glass 1981, 7).

The Role of Sunday Schools in the Spiritual Development of Children

According to Wilhoit, the focus of the educational ministry of the Church must be the spiritual development of her people (Wilhoit 1995, 197). What is clear from this position is that there is no need to have any educational programme in the Church unless it endeavors to lead people towards spiritual development. The Sunday school is not

exempted from this as its involvement with children is often basically for the purpose of teaching the children in the ways of God.

Richards viewed Sunday school as a faith community. He notes that being a faith community. The Sunday school ought to concern itself with being the people of God. The church is called by God to be body and family. The Sunday school ought to concern itself with the making of a people of God.

Summary of Literature Review

In this section the researcher discussed the place of children in God's plan, the possibility of spiritual development in children, the importance of spiritual development of children, some factors towards the spiritual development of children in Sunday school, and the role of Sunday school in the spiritual development of children.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this section is to explain the necessary procedures and methods that were used by the researcher to conduct the field study. They include: Entry process, basic research design, population definition, instrument design, instrument validation, instrument administration, and methods of data analysis.

Entry

In order to carry out data collection, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Academic Dean of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology to the pastor of the Free Methodist Church of Karinde. This letter allowed the researcher to get permission to conduct the study in the church. Once this was granted, the researcher collected data without difficulties.

Basic Research Design

The study involved describing the categories of objectives and aims of the lessons in the Free Methodist Church Sunday school curriculum on one hand and gathering information through questionnaires and interviews for evaluation.

Data interpretation was carried out on the basis of the findings. Generalizations, conclusions and further recommendations were made accordingly.

Population

The population of this study was made up of the current Sunday school children (ages 6-14), Sunday school teachers as well as parents/ guardians of the children in the Karinde Free Methodist Sunday school. All the groups were manageable with respect to administering the questionnaires for the parents and teachers as well as the interview questions for the children. The group included both the girls and boys in the Sunday school who were aged between 6-14 years.

Validation of Instruments

The instrument that is used in any research depends on the type of research; therefore the key thing is its validity, which is the ability of the instrument to measure what it claims to measure. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996, 290), questionnaires and interviews must meet the standard of validity and reliability that apply to data collection measures in Educational research. The validity and reliability of questions in the interview and questionnaires in this research were examined in the following manner. First, the constructed questions in the interview and questionnaires were handed to one research expert in the education department of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. This was instrumental for the researcher in making necessary corrections. Second, the questions were jury tested. The jury of six persons included two lecturers in the Christian education programme, one alumnus, two Master of Theology Students at Nairobi

Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, and one-second year student in the Christian education department. These people have knowledge and experience in the field of educational research and were instrumental in examining the effectiveness of each question in the questionnaires and the interviews in light of the research questions and made possible comments. Four out of the six members of the jury needed to agree on the clarity of each item on the questionnaires and interview questions to regard each item as valid or invalid. In response to their comments the researcher either deleted or corrected the questions that appeared as less likely, vague and difficult for respondents. The writer then made necessary corrections to make the items in the instruments appear clear to the respondents.

Administration of the Instrument

When the questionnaires were ready for administering, the researcher distributed them to the respondents. The instruments were handed to the Sunday school teachers and parents of children aged 6-14 years that have attended the free Methodist Church Sunday school for at least two years. The researcher conducted the interviews for the children on two Sundays. The researcher then made a follow up within three weeks.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis followed as soon as the instruments were gathered. This constitutes the bulk of the content of chapter four in the thesis. The questionnaires, which were used in the study, had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Being a descriptive research, the data collected were analyzed by using percentages and were tabulated. For a better

understanding of the perception of the parents in the Karinde Free Methodist Church as to the extent to which the Sunday school had influenced their children, the questionnaires were grouped in two parts. The first part concerned the regularity with which the children practiced the lessons learnt while the second part entailed the extent to which the children practiced the lessons learnt in Sunday school. The findings were analyzed by the use of a Likert scale.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research was to find out the extent of Christian growth impacted to children in Sunday school through Christian education. This section presents the data collected, data analysis and interpretations in light of the research questions of the study. The following groups in the Karinde Free Methodist Church provided data for analysis and interpretation: 9 Sunday school teachers, 34 parents of Sunday school going children (ages 6-14), and 38 children. The data was studied with the purpose of understanding the extent to which the Sunday school had contributed to the spiritual development of children aged between 6-14. The findings were described in words, charts and graphs. The first part deals with the returns of the questionnaires and demographic profiles of the respondents. The second part deals with the survey of findings presented in text and tables. The interpretation of the findings was done in light of the research questions.

Questionnaires Returns

The researcher herself administered all the questionnaires. The table below shows the rate of returns of questionnaires distributed to Sunday school teachers and parents of children aged between 6-14.

Table 2. Rate of questionnaire returns

Group	Numbers Given out	Number returned	Returned %
Parents	40	34	85%
Teachers	9	9	100%
Total	49	43	88%

N=49

The table above illustrates the number of questionnaires that were given out to both the teachers of Sunday school in the Karinde Free Methodist church and the parents. It shows that the rate of returns of questionnaires from the teachers was higher than that of the parents. The percentage of returns of questionnaires for both the Sunday school teachers and the parents was 88%.

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

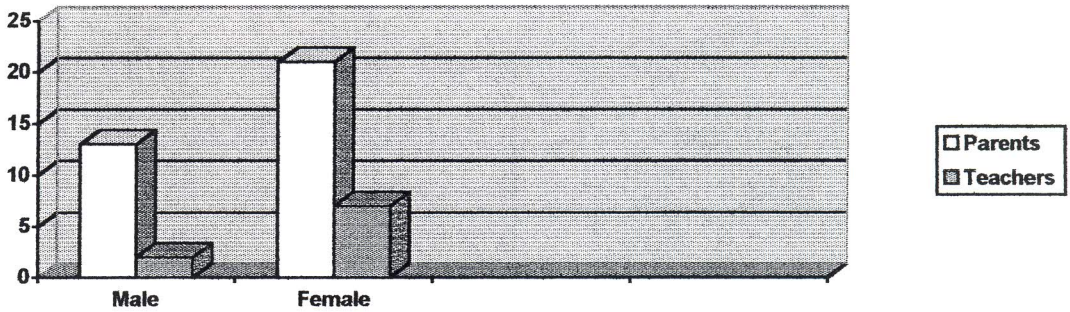
Table 3. Distribution of respondents by gender

Group	Male	Female	Total
Parents	13	21	34
Teachers	2	7	9
Total	15	28	43
Percentage	35%	65%	100%

N=43

Graph 1 Distribution of respondents by gender

Number of respondents



From the table above it can be seen that there were 35% of male respondents and 65% of female respondents. It is also clear that the number of female respondents was higher than that of male respondents.

Table 4. Teacher gender and qualifications

Gender	Trained	Not trained
Female	1	6
Male	1	1
Total	2	7

N=9

From the table above it is clear that the Karinde Free Methodist church has a total of 2 male teachers and seven female teachers. Out of the nine, one male teacher and one female teacher are trained. The total sum of those who are not trained teachers is seven. They received training from teacher training institutions and not necessarily on Sunday school handling.

Besides this the researcher conducted interviews with the children (ages 6-14) who attend the Free Methodist church Sunday school.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by gender

Response	Children (ages 6-14)	Percentage
Male	23	61%
Female	15	39%
Total	38	100%

N= 38

From the above table it can be seen that 61% of the respondents are males and 39% are females. Further the table reveals that there are more male children of ages 6-14 who attend the Free Methodist Sunday school than there are females.

Age profile of the respondents

The ages of respondents in the Sunday school was represented in groups and not in exact years of individual respondents. The ages range from 6-14years. (See table 4.)

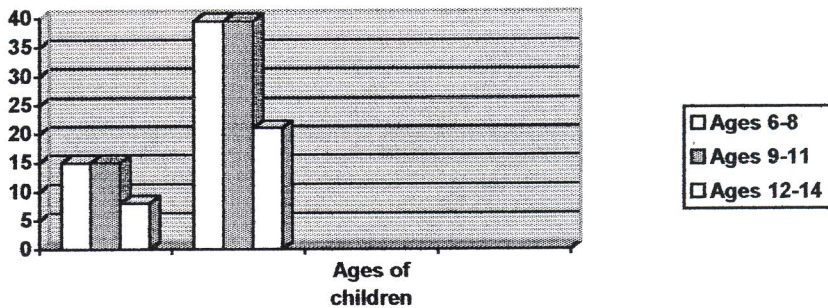
Table 6. Age profile of respondents

Age band	Number of children	Percentage
6-8	15	39.5%
9-11	15	39.5%
12-14	8	21%
Total	38	100%

N=38

Graph 2. Age profile of respondents

Percentage



The above table and graph reveal that the number of respondents of ages 6-8 is equal to that of respondents of ages 9-11. Each of the age groups makes 15% of the total number of respondents. Twenty one percent (21%) of the respondents are of age group 12-14 and comprise 21% of the total population of the respondents. It is clear that most of the respondents fall in the age group between 6-11.

Response to Attitudes in Sunday School Attendance

The table below illustrates the responses of the children when asked whether or not they enjoyed attending the Karinde Free Methodist church Sunday school.

Table 7. Attitudes to Sunday school attendance

Respondents	Enjoyed Sunday School	Percentage	Did not enjoy Sunday School	Percentage
Girls	13	87%	2	13%
Boys	23	100%	0	0%

N=38

The table above illustrates that 100% of the male respondents enjoyed attending the Karinde Free Methodist church Sunday school while 13% of the female respondents did

not enjoy attending the Sunday school. Both of these respondents were female of ages 13 and 14 consecutively and both perceived Sunday school as not relevant for their age group.

Below is the response of the children when asked the most enjoyable activity in the Sunday school.

Table 8. Response towards most enjoyed activity.

Activity	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Listening to bible stories	18	48%
Singing	15	39%
Reciting memory verses	2	5%
Prayer	2	5%
Worship	1	3%
Total	38	100%

N=38

The most enjoyed activity in the Sunday school gathered from 48% of the respondents was listening to Bible stories. Singing rated second from 39% of the respondents while both reciting memory verses and prayer had each 5% of the respondents. Worship had the least respondents hence rating at 3%.

The table below shows the perception of the parents concerning how often the children practiced what had been learnt in Sunday school in the last two years

Table 9. Regularity in practice of lessons learnt

Activity	Always	%	Often	%	Rarely	%	Not at all	%
Praying	5	15%	8	24%	13	38%	8	24%
Reading the Bible	0	0%	1	3%	3	5%	30	88%
Sharing lessons learnt in Sunday school with parent	1	3%	3	5%	7	21%	23	68%
Speaking of lessons about God from nature	1	3%	5	15%	4	12%	24	71%
Practicing forgiveness	20	59%	14	41%	0	0%	0	0%
Witnessing	1	3%	3	9%	5	15%	25	74%
Total	28		34		32		110	
%	14%		17%		16%		54%	

N =204

From the table the highest scores (54%) which is 110 (total score for lessons not practiced at all), divided by 204 (the total score for the regularity of practice of all lessons) then multiplied by 100. Following the same procedure, 17% of the scores show the lessons that were often practiced, 16% show the lessons that were rarely practiced while 14% denote the lessons that were always practiced.

Table 10. Percentage scores for lessons always practiced and those often practiced.

Category of objectives	Activities	Percentage score for lessons always and often practiced
The learners relationship with God	Praying	21%
	Reading the bible	2%
Total		23%
The learners' relationship with other people	Sharing lessons learnt in Sunday school with parent	6%
	Practicing forgiveness	55%
	Witnessing	6%
Total		67%
Learners' relationship with nature	Lessons about God from nature	10%
Total		10%

N=62

The table above shows clearly that the area in which the children have developed mostly is in their relationship with other people. This is reflected in the 67% score (very strong).

The next significant development is in the area of the children's relationship with God reflected by a 23% score (weak) while the area of least development is in the learners' relationship with nature 10% (very weak score).

Table 11 below illustrates the extent to which the children practiced the lessons that had been learnt in the Sunday school.

Table 11. Parents' responses on the extent of practice of lessons learnt (Likert Scale)

Number of responses	Very great extent	%	Great extent	%	Small extent	%	Very small extent	%	Not at all	%
Giving	3	9%	26	76%	3	9%	2	6%	0	0%
Manual work in the church	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30	88%
Obedience to scripture	11	32%	3	9%	15	41%	5	15%	0	0%
Kindness to others	6	18%	20	59%	4	12%	4	14%	0	0%
Kindness to handicapped	6	18%	24	71%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Obedience to parents	7	21%	2	6%	23	68%	2	6%	0	0%
Choice to do right	5	15%	5	15%	14	41%	10	29%	0	0%
Praising God	5	15%	24	71%	3	9%	2	6%	0	0%
Total	42		114		63		25		30	
%	15%		42%		23%		9%		11%	

N=274

From the table above we note that the highest number of respondents towards the extent to which their children practiced lessons taught in the Sunday school gave the response denoting a great extent. The responses bear 42% of the total number of responses.

Twenty three percent (23%) of the responses denoted that the children practiced the lessons to a small extent, 15% to a very great extent, 11% not at all and 9% to a very small extent.

The table below indicates scores on the level in which the children practiced lessons learnt in Sunday school according to the criteria of judgment used in this study

Table12. Percentage scores for activities practiced to very great extents and to great extents

Category of objectives	Activities	Percentage score for activities practiced to very great extent and great extent
The learners' relationship with God	Obedience to scripture	9%
	Choice to do right	6%
	Praising God	18%
Total		33%
The learners' relationship with others	Giving	19%
	Kindness to others	17%
	Kindness to the handicapped	19%
	Obedience to parents	6%
Total		61%
Learners relationship with nature	Manual work in the church	1%
Total		1%

N=156

From the table above there are clear indications that the children have developed mostly in the area of their relationships with other people. The 61% score shows this. The next significant area of development is in their relationship with God, which has, 33% score while the least developed area is in their relationship with nature, which has a 1% score.

Based on the scale below the scores depict that the influence of the Sunday school on the learners' relationship with God was weak; their relationship with others was strong while their relationship with nature was very weak.

Table 13. Scale to measure influence of Sunday school

Outstanding influence	81-100%
Very strong influence	61-80%
Strong influence	41-60%
Weak influence	21-40%
Very weak influence	0-20%

The following table shows the various kinds of teaching methods that are used in the teaching of the Sunday school and the regularity.

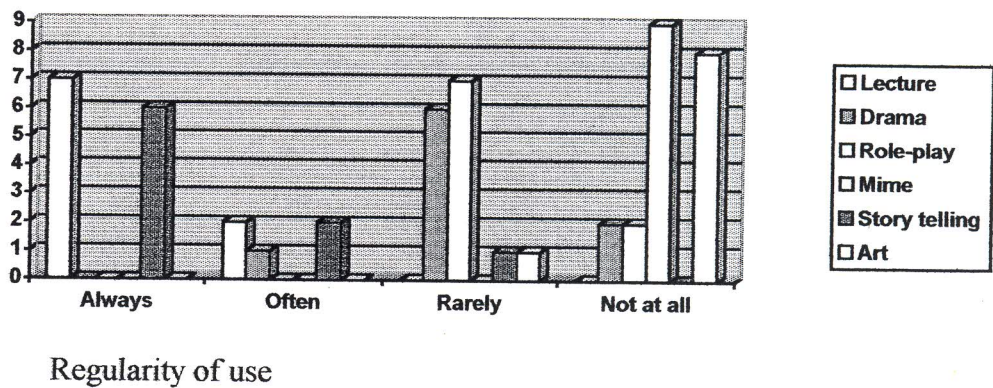
Table 14. Teaching methods and regularity

Methodology	Always	Often	Rarely	Not at all
Lecture	7	2	0	0
Drama	0	1	6	2
Role-play	0	0	7	2
Mime	0	0	0	9
Story telling	6	2	1	0
Art	0	0	1	8

The graph below illustrates this further:

Graph 3. Teaching methods and regularity

Number of respondents



The graph above shows that seven of the respondents used lecture in their teachings always, while six used story telling always. Two of the respondents used lectures often, one used drama often while two used story telling often. Six of the respondents rarely used drama, seven rarely used role-play, one rarely used story telling and one rarely used art. Two of the respondents never used story telling at all, two never used role-play at all, all (9) never used mime at all and 8 never used art at all.

Research question 1: What has been taught in the Free Methodist Church Sunday school in the last two years?

The Content of the Curriculum used in the Karinde Free Methodist Church

The study sought to know the extent to which the Sunday school had had an impact on the children aged between 6-14 in the Karinde Free Methodist church. The research

question one was aimed at knowing the lessons that the children had been taught in a period of two years. The researcher summarized the findings indicating the objectives which include the aim of enhancing the children's' relationship with God, with other people and with nature from the Sunday school curriculum as shown below:

Category of objective 1: Enhancing the learners' relationship with God.

Aims:

1. To lead the learners to pray always
2. To lead the learners to read scripture always
3. To lead the learners to obey scripture
4. To lead the learners to live in the fear of God always
5. To lead the learners to practice praising God always

Category of objective 2: Enhancing the learners' relationship with other people.

1. To lead the learners to share lessons learnt in Sunday school with their parents
2. To lead the learners to practice forgiveness always
3. To lead the learners to witness to others to come to Christ
4. To lead the learners to give
5. To lead the learners to show kindness to others
6. To lead learners to show kindness to the handicapped
7. To lead learners to obey their parents

Category of objective 3: Enhancing the learners' relationship with nature

1. To lead the learners to appreciate and speak of what nature teaches about God
2. To lead the learners to revere and care for the church compound.

Research Question 2: To what extent has spiritual development been realized in the Free Methodist Church Sunday school in the last two years?

Discussion

Data analysis above revealed that there is a remarkable tendency among the children in the Karinde Free Methodist Sunday school in the practicing of forgiveness. This denotes a strong development of their relational abilities. It was also noted that scriptures were not read by the majority of the children. Only 2% of the entire population of children read scripture.

Below are the suggestions made by the Sunday school teachers on ways to enhance spiritual growth of children.

1. Teachers ought to be trained in order for them to understand the various age group characteristics of the children and their implications on the teaching of the children.
2. The church ought to draw a budget for the purchase of modern teaching facilities e.g. video machines and tapes, overhead projectors, puppets, etc.
3. More Sunday school teachers are needed to teach the various age groups of children.
4. The church ought to organize children retreats or Sunday school weeks to give special attention to establishing the needs of the Sunday school and to strategize ways of meeting those needs.
5. There is need to set a format to evaluate the teaching as well as its impact on the children regularly.

6. Intercession for the children ought to be regularly done in the church. Children could be involved in it.
7. Parents ought to be offered training on Christian parenting techniques to enable them give support to the Sunday school in the Christian nurture of their children.
8. More of the Parents ought to purchase Bibles for their children and to help them develop a habit of studying scriptures.
9. Parents to have copies of the Sunday school curriculum and to regularly follow up on what their children have been taught
10. Parents to be role models for their children at home

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the research findings, possible implications and important recommendations for strategies for increased spiritual growth in the Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday school as well as recommendations for further research.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The significance of this research is twofold

1. The findings from it can be instrumental in the improvement of the educational ministry of the Karinde Free Methodist Church with due respect to the children's ministry.
2. It would re-awaken the parents, teachers and the leadership of the Free Methodist Church to seek ways to ensure consistent spiritual development of their children.

This descriptive study was an attempt to find out the influence of Sunday school on the children aged between 6-14 in the Karinde Free Methodist Church and find out the necessary measures that could be taken for improved spiritual development of children in the Sunday school. This was done through finding answers to the following research questions.

R. Q. 1. What has been taught in the Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday school in the last two years?

R. Q. 2. To what extent has spiritual development been realized in the Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday school in the last two years?

In light of the two Research Questions posed at the beginning of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn from the summarized findings given in this chapter.

1. What the children had covered according to the criteria used in this study sufficiently addressed the objectives stated thus: to enhance the learners' relationship with God, other people and with nature, this was ascertained by the researcher on the basis of what the teachers reported to have been covered in the last two years.
2. The greatest influence that the Sunday school has had on the children is in their relationships with other people.
3. The area of the children's relationship with nature has been least influenced.
4. On the regularity in the practice of lessons learnt in Sunday school the learners' relationships with one another was found to have been very strong, their relationship with God was weak while their relationship with nature was very weak.
5. Some of the lessons that have been taught in the Sunday school have not been applied at all by some of the learners.

6. There is an alarming number of children who do not read scriptures at all however the literacy levels was not ascertained and the researcher did not find out how many of the children owned Bibles.
7. Few of the children did not enjoy attending Sunday school.
8. Despite the fact that the curriculum had with it take- home materials for parents to go through with their children, a majority did not share what had been learnt in Sunday school with their parents.
9. The area in which the children were strongest was in practicing forgiveness while the area in which they were weakest was in doing manual work in the church.
10. The activities that the children enjoyed most in the Sunday school were listening to Bible stories and singing.

Possible Implications

In view of the related literature review in chapter two it is apparent that successful teaching entails a combination of many factors. Failure to observe this could be a major hazard in the attempt to impact the lives of the children positively in the Sunday school. Putting much effort in the children's ministry would rely greatly on our perception of the place of children in God's plan, our realization that they are capable of spiritual development, our realization of the importance of their spiritual development and of the mission of the church.

Lack of qualified teachers as well as lack of support from parents might be a major drawback in the process of enhancing the spiritual development of children in the Sunday school and lack of creativity in teaching hinders effective learning.

Recommended Strategies for the Improvement Karinde Free Methodist Church Sunday School

In view of the research findings I would like to make the following recommendations

1. That the programme be reviewed and be treated with all the seriousness it deserves.
2. Teacher qualifications features as a crucial point that ought to be addressed
3. The church could raise funds in order to equip the Sunday school appropriately
4. The Sunday school classes ought to be divided appropriate to the ages of the children and the guidance given in the teaching manuals.

Recommendations for Further Research

There is a need for research to be conducted in the following areas:

1. An examination of the qualifications of Sunday school teachers and the implications for the ministry.
2. Factors affecting the spiritual maturity of children.
3. To examine the influence of parents, media and peer groups on the spiritual development of children.

Summary

There appears to be no shortcuts in preparing tomorrow's Church. It is very vital then that the Karinde Free Methodist Church embarks on a serious plan to nurture its young. If no serious action is taken to improve the situation today we risk having no church tomorrow. There is an urgent need for the joint efforts of parents, teachers and the leaders of the church to begin working on strategies to improve the Sunday school.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for parents in Karinde Free Methodist Church.

Introduction: The aim of this section is to find out the extent to which the children in Sunday school have been able to apply what has been learnt. This will be taken from the parent's/ guardian's point of view.

Kindly supply the appropriate answers to the following questions.

1. How often does your child do the following things?

a) Praying:

- ii) Always
- iii) Often
- iv) Rarely
- iv) Not at all

b) Reading the bible:

- i) Always
- ii) Often
- iii) Rarely
- iv) Not at all

c) Sharing with you lessons learnt in Sunday school orally

- i) Always
- ii) Often
- iii) Rarely
- iv) Not at all

d) Speaking of what he/she has learnt about God from nature

i) Always

ii) Often

iii) Rarely

iv) Not at all

2. To what extent does your child forgive others who offend him/her?

i) Always

ii) Often

iii) Rarely

iv) Not at all

3. How often does he/she witness to others to come to Christ?

i) Always

ii) Often

iii) Rarely

iv) Not at all

4. To what extent is your child a giver to others (sharing)?

i) Very great extent

ii) Great extent

iii) Small extent

iv) Very small extent

v) Not at all

5. To what extent is your child involved in doing voluntary manual work in the church
e.g. cleaning the church?

i) Very great extent

ii) Great extent

iii) Small extent

iv) Very small extent

v) Not at all

6. To what extent does your child obey scripture?

- i) Very great extent
- ii) Great extent
- iii) Small extent
- iv) Very small extent
- v) Not at all

7. To what extent does your child show kindness to others?

- i) Very great extent
- ii) Great extent
- iii) Small extent
- iv) Very small extent
- v) Not at all

8. To what extent does your child show kindness to the handicapped?

- i) Very great extent
- ii) Great extent
- iii) Small extent
- iv) Very small extent
- v) Not at all

9. To what extent does your child obey you?

- i.) Very great extent
- ii). Great extent
- iii). Small extent
- iv). Very small extent
- v). Not at all

10. To what extent does your child choose to do right when he/ she is on his/ her own?

- i). Very great extent
- ii). Great extent
- iii). Small extent
- iv). Very small extent
- v). Not at all

11. To what extent does your child enjoy praising God?

- i) Very great extent
- ii) Great extent
- iii) Small extent
- iv) Very small extent
- v) Not at all

Thank you very much for answering all the questions.

APPENDIX B:

Questionnaire for Sunday school teachers in Karinde Free Methodist Church.

Introduction. The aim of this study is to find out the extent of spiritual development of the children in the Sunday school. In this regard you are kindly requested to answer the following questions as completely as possible to the best of your knowledge

Demography

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Are you a trained teacher? Yes No

Methodology

Please tick below the various methods you use in your teaching of Sunday school and indicate how often you have done so.

Lecture

- | | | |
|------|------------|--------------------------|
| i) | Always | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) | Often | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii) | Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv) | Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Drama

- | | | |
|------|------------|--------------------------|
| i) | Always | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) | Often | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii) | Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv) | Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Role-play

i) Always ii) Often iii) Rarely iv) Not at all

Mime

i) Always ii) Often iii) Rarely iv) Not at all

Story telling

i) Always ii) Often iii) Rarely iv) Not at all

Art

i) Always ii) Often iii) Rarely iv) Not at all

3. Please suggest some ways in which the spiritual development of children could be enhanced in your church.

Thank you very much for responding to the questions.

APPENDIX C:

Interview Questions for the children (Ages 6-14)

1. Sex Male Female
2. Do you enjoy coming to Sunday school?
3. What do you enjoy most in Sunday school?

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Nereah Adala Mattah