

Determining Parental Involvement in the Sunday School of Burundi Free Methodist Church in Buterere Parish

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Abstract

To educate children, it is the task of both church and parents to raise them in God's way. As we know, formal education needs a school. The church has a Sunday school program, so the children's ministry must be a priority. Parental involvement is the key element for children's success in Sunday school education in the church or at home. The focus of this study was to determine parental involvement in the Sunday school, which refers to the many different behaviors and practices at home or at school, including parental aspirations, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs regarding their child's education. This investigation used questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. A descriptive research design was conducted to identify the problems met by the parents in getting involved in the Sunday school. A cross-sectional survey based on parental involvement in Sunday school of the Buterere parish was done in October 2020 of research based on Deuteronomy 11: 18-19, the passage that reveals that parents were responsible for the education of their children. Thirty Parents were selected according to their availability and required to have children in Sunday school. They were chosen randomly from the Buterere Parish, which is made up of two local churches with 100 Christian parents. Some are widowed, married, and divorced. There are illiterate parents, and those with literacy levels from primary and secondary schools, to university level literacy. The analysis and interpretations of the data were processed by using Word and Excel. The findings confirmed that the parents were not significantly involved in the forms of Sunday school education, there are barriers to involvement for parents, and the respondents were not involved in forming strategies for overcoming these barriers. Due to the findings, the researcher formed recommendations to the stakeholders.

Keywords

Sunday School, Parental Involvement

1. Introduction

Sunday school did not start as we know it today. In fact, Robert Raikes, as its prime mover, began the Sunday School Movement in 1780 in England in order to break with poverty and crime in his country. Raikes first worked with adult prisoners, and after several years he turned his attention to children, mostly abused and illiterate. Because lower-class children worked six days a week, Sunday was the only day for instruction. Raikes began a school that was to meet every Sunday to teach children to read and write. After that, Raikes was to take them to worship. He believed that, if children knew how to read, they could study the Bible and the Catechism and learn to obey God. So children were taught in Raikes' school on Sunday (Willis, 1985: pp. 9-10).

The Sunday School Movement then swept around the world from its early beginning. By the early 1800s, such schools were the great agency of religious education in England. After that, Sunday schools followed the British pattern in the eastern parts of the United States. Later, Sunday schools became the only available form of religious instruction for children. Traditionally, they were meeting in homes or in public buildings, but in America most Sunday schools were incorporated into existing churches, whereby Sunday school was combined with other church programs. This is one of the reasons the movement kept its vitality in the United States. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of churches included both worship service and a Sunday school (Willis, 1985: p. 10).

It has been realized that Sunday school was the most valuable channel of righteous living; therefore, some important people like J. Edgar Hoover, Roger Babson, Calvin Coolidge, and Theodore Roosevelt have recognized the place of Sunday school in the history and the life of people. It appears that religious instruction once depended more largely on the Sunday school than any other agency of the church (Price, 1959: pp. 229-230).

The previous sub-point was about the fact that Sunday school came to become an important part in the church structure. Allen and Parker (1979: p. 29) also underscore the value of Sunday school when they say that as Sunday school grows, so grows the church. As for Willis, he balances the importance of morning worship service in Protestant Churches with Sunday school. According to him, if a worship service is the most important feature of church life, Sunday school ordinarily is the most common activity (Willis, 1985: p. 10).

Willis (1985: p. 11) says that both the worship service and Sunday school, though being the most important activities in churches, need revitalization. The fact that those programs have been a standard part of the church does not justify their continued existence.

However, there is a need to re-examine what Sunday school today is doing for the building of character and life. Is it really changing the lives of those who attend it? There are some critics of the Sunday school who suggest keeping a child at home on Sunday and giving him religious instructions. The question is whether parents will know how to do this, since few homes give their children

any vital religious teaching today (Price, 1959: p. 230).

Today Sunday school teaching is active. Everywhere the Free Methodist Church is planted there are Sunday schools and the parents recommend bringing their children to Sunday school. So, there is a need to re-examine what is going on and what have been the roles played by the parents of SS (Sunday school) kids. Are the parents involved at all?

In Christian educational literature it is often claimed that involvement of parents in children's Christian/spiritual education results in better spiritual achievements than if parents are not involved. The aim of this research is to see if this relationship exists at the parish in Burundi FMC (Free Methodist Church), a new parish that faces enormous Christian education challenges. The role of parents is undeniable. Scholars said the role of parents in the religious education of children was of paramount importance. Since parents are the first educators of their children, they provide the foundation for everything that follows in education and experience.

Home is the first classroom. Parents are their children's first and most essential teachers (Boyer, 1991: p. 33). In other words, parents are their children's first nurturers, socializers, and educators.

Winters says: "To work with a child and not with the parent is like working with only part of the pieces of a puzzle. It would be like a person who put a puzzle together with a thousand pieces, then as he finished found the center part missing" (United States House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1988: p. 8). Working together, schools and homes will succeed in educating the next generation. Recent research emphasizes increased opportunities for children's success when the home and school work together (U.S. Department of Education, 1986, 1987).

Epstein (1992: p. 1141) argues that "students at all grade levels do better academic work and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviors if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved."

Hence, Epstein's suggestions for the motivation and methods of parents' engagement in children's education established six levels of parental involvement in school related activities (Epstein, 1992, 2007). They are:

- ✓ Efforts to assist parents with child-rearing skills (caring for and nurturing the child);
- ✓ Communication with families (shares information about school programs and students' progress, and the opportunities for two-way communication between home and school);
- ✓ Provides school with volunteer opportunities (deals with information and activities of recruiting and organizing parental help and support in school);
- ✓ Involves parents in home-based learning (giving information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning);
- ✓ Involves parents in decision making (part of the school's decision-making

structure);

- ✓ Involves parents in school-community collaboration (representing the school in partnerships with other organizations).

The following biblical passages have to be the models for Christian parents in relationship to their role in children's education: In Esther 2: 5-20, we see how Mordecai taught his cousin Esther to keep a secret; in Job 1: 1-5, Job always purified his children by offering sacrifices for each child; in 1 Samuel 1: 21-2: 11, Hannah and Elkanah treated their son in a godly way; in Luke 15: 11-32, the lost son got forgiveness from his father; in Luke 2: 41-52, Mary and Joseph controlled Jesus' activities; in Daniel 1: 1-21, Daniel did not forsake the instructions he got from his childhood. Some bad models of education are found in Mark 6: 14-29, where Herodias' daughter asked a cruel thing (John's head) because of her mother's interest. Then in 1 Samuel 2: 12-26, Eli forgot to instruct his sons well until they died as wicked people.

The literature search has shown the importance of parental involvement in the education of children. Since the author is a member of the FMC Buterere parish, a group of parents having children in SS was sampled for their involvement. The study design is presented in section 2.1 and data collection in 2.2. Ethical considerations are discussed in 2.3. Section 3.1 presents data analysis, and 3.2 presents forms of parental involvement, shown in **Table 2**. Barriers to parental involvement are discussed in 3.3 and shown in **Table 3**. Strategies to motivate parental involvement are presented in 3.4 and **Table 4**. Section 4 discusses the forms (4.1), barriers (4.2), and strategies (4.3), with conclusions in section 5.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design

The researcher was concerned to identify the problems met by the parents in getting involved in the SS of Buterere Parish. The population was the Christian parents from that parish who had children in SS. Since the study was about determining the parental involvement in the SS education of children, research data was sampled from the population concerned. The respondents were identified according to sex, age group, marital status, education level, and position in the church, as indicated in the Results and Data Analysis.

2.2. Data Collection

The researcher began by getting permission from HAU (Hope Africa University) and FMC Buterere Parish authorities to arrange for going to the field and getting respondents to collect data through interviews. Once permission was granted, the researcher sought consent from the respondents and established a mutual agreement upon the interview site, which was convenient to the respondents.

As a researcher, I went to the church to meet participants before the interviews were conducted in order to book appointments for the interviews. At that time, the participants and I made an interview schedule which favored every one

of us. I was sincerely welcomed by participants and they were open enough to tell me that they wanted to express their feelings. I appreciated them, and told them that I was researching for an academic purpose. The interviews were arranged for the parents in a context convenient to them, giving time to describe their experience, and probing to assist them in reflecting on its significance for them. Respondents were asked to feel free to answer according to their personal views and to express their opinions without thinking of any consequences. To get the needed data, the researcher proceeded with questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with the selected people within the churches considered. Actually, the interview survey is an important method for data collection. That is why the researcher considered this method to be the most reliable in collecting the needed information. For the study, the tools used were the NIV (New International Version) Bible, Bible dictionaries, concordances, and commentaries.

The research questionnaire and interview survey were used to collect data from respondents in their comments. The questionnaires were designed in the Kirundi language because the respondents speak Kirundi, so it was very easy for them to give their point of view. It was also translated into English, for the work itself is in English. The questionnaire consisted of both close-ended questions as well as open-ended questions to minimize the limitation of the researcher during the analysis of the questionnaires, considering the respondents who read and write Kirundi. The researcher developed the questionnaires from materials gleaned from the literature review in the view of the hypothesis. The questionnaires were prepared considering the research questions on which the whole thesis is based.

2.3. Ethical Considerations

Participants were comfortable being involved in this study and came to understand the purpose of the study. The researcher respected the rights of respondents by considering their suggestions. “The researcher is responsible for keeping the data anonymous and for analyzing and publishing the data in ways that respect confidentiality... Participants in a focus group are also responsible for keeping confidential what they hear during discussions, and the moderator should encourage them to do so” (Litosseliti, 2003: p. 52). The researcher respected the choice of the respondents for the place where the interviews took place, and participants’ names were not communicated publicly or mentioned in the thesis. The researcher did not exaggerate in analyzing their views during data analysis. Moreover, the respondents were not forced to answer every question or forced to answer according to the researcher’s aims.

3. Results

3.1. Data Analysis

The researcher took notes about participants’ views and talked to every one of them in a quiet place for about 30 minutes. Afterward, the researcher organized data properly so as to analyze responses effectively.

Therefore, for data analysis, the following steps were used: data was organized and grouped according to similarity, or by dividing the categories into groups to facilitate classifying answers to a question. Respondents were asked interview questions that required narrative responses.

For the 30 respondents, there were 18 males (60%) and 12 females (40%). For highest education obtained, 6 were unschooled (20%), 9 were primary school graduates (30%), 7 were secondary school graduates (24%), and 8 were university graduates (27%). For position in the church, there were 2 pastors (7%), 2 catechists (7%), 9 elders (30%), 3 Ushers (10%), and 14 members (47%). For age categories, there were 6 respondents ages 20 - 29 (20%), 12 age 30 - 39 (40%), 6 age 40 - 49 (20%), and 6 age 50 and above (20%). For marital status, there were 3 divorced respondents (10%), 6 widowed (20%), and 21 married respondents (70%). **Table 1** below presents the number of research partners in detail.

Of the 30 people interviewed, all answered for 100% participation. There were 2 pastors, 2 Catechists, 6 widows, 3 divorced persons, and 7 married women, and 10 married men. The number of men is greater than women because where the researcher was meeting a married couple, the woman let her husband give the interview, and the researcher must respect this because it is the Burundian culture or family organization. And all leaders of the church, pastors, or catechists, are men, which shows that the number of women is less than men in the administration of the church.

3.2. Forms of Parental Involvement in Buterere SS

The first specific objective of the present research was to identify forms of parental involvement in the Christian education of their children. Nine (9) question items were formulated to address this specific objective. That question was asked on the field based on 9 close-ended questions, and 1 open-ended question. **Table 2** below presents interviewees' responses in detail.

3.3. Barriers to Parental Involvement

The second question was formulated in this manner: What are the barriers to parental involvement in SS in Buterere FMC? This question was asked on the field based on 2 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question. **Table 3** shows the two main barriers.

The Buterere families' socio-economic conditions are not good. Because they are poor, many do not have jobs, so rely on getting ration money for their family. They use their time for improving the lifestyle of their children. Sometimes they miss the money to pay house rent. Some children give up school because of the lack of school materials like copy books, uniforms, shoes, etc., and hunger; even for those who finished secondary school, the parents lack money to send them to university, and again they lack jobs after finishing secondary schools and live unemployed in big numbers. These causes can affect our society and block families' development, as well as church and country.

Table 1. Return questionnaires.

Categories	Respondents	Answered	Percentage
Pastors (males)	2	2	100%
Catechists (males)	2	2	100%
Divorced	3	3	100%
Widowed	6	6	100%
Married (women)	7	7	100%
Married (men)	10	10	100%
Total	30	30	100%

Source: Research on the Field, October 2020.

Table 2. Forms of parental involvement.

Forms of parental involvements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Do Not Think So		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. I do minister to the children at home			6	20%	3	10%	21	70%			30	100%
2. I give Biblical teachings to my children			6	20%	6	20%	18	60%			30	100%
3. The children demonstrate interest in participating in S.S.	3	10%	9	30%	3	10%	15	50%			30	100%
4. I have provided necessary teaching aids at home			3	10%			27	90%			30	100%
5. I have influence upon my children			11	37%			12	40%	7	23%	30	100%
6. All the necessary facilities and equipment are provided			9	30%	6	20%	15	50%			30	100%
7. Parents are contributing to a special budget			6	20%	3	10%	21	70%			30	100%
8. I am aware of S.S. curriculum for all groups of children			6	20%	3	10%	21	70%			30	100%
9. I feel that parents must be assistant teachers of S.S.			21	70%	3	10%	6	20%			30	100%

Source: Research on the Field, October 2020.

Table 3. Barriers to parental involvement.

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Do Not Think So		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1.Church and home have plans					9	30%	12	40%	9	30%	30	100%
2. Social evil of poverty demotivates			15	50%	9	30%	6	20%			30	100%

Source: Research on the Field, October 2020.

Based on the result obtained, the researcher found that the parents have barriers that hinder them from being in SS, and many children are led into sin from various causes like great poverty, resulting in insufficient food and clothing. Some leave home to beg and live in the streets, later becoming delinquents, killers, thieves, and so on. There are also many people who harm children and do sexual acts by promising them things like money, clothes, and so on. Other children have been influenced by false teachers. Many of the parents live by trading with small capital, handcrafts, and working as small farmers.

3.4. Strategies to Involve Parents in Sunday School

The third specific question was designed to address the issue of putting in place some effective and efficient strategies to motivate parental involvement in the Christian upbringing of children. Six (6) close-ended questions were constructed to find out the way in which strategies could be established to encourage parental involvement in the Christian education of their children at the Buterere FMC. Also, one open-ended question was asked on the field. **Table 4** below sketches the interviewees' responses in detail.

The researcher found from the forms of parental involvement in the Christian education of their children that the parents of Buterere FMC are not involved in the SS education of their children because of lack of training about working with children.

To all those responses, the researcher found that the church needs to train the parents as SS workers, to prepare gifts for children, to motivate parents, to provide a variety of activities (because a child is a whole person), to let parents know about the recruitment of SS teachers, and to collaborate with parents, doing home visitation.

4. Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to "Determine Parental Involvement in the Sunday school of Buterere Free Methodist Church". The paragraphs below briefly discuss the findings.

Table 4. Strategies to involve parents in christian education.

Character	Strongly Agree		Agree		Do Not Think So		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. Training provided for parents as S.S. workers							6	20%	24	80%	30	100%
2. Gifts given to your children			6	20%	3	10%	21	70%			30	100%
3. Motivation scheme designed for parents			3	10%	6	20%	18	60%	3	10%	30	100%
4. A variety of activities					3	10%	24	80%	3	10%	30	100%
5. Recruitment of S.S. teachers			6	20%	21	70%	3	10%			30	100%
6. Home visitation					3	10%	24	80%	3	10%	30	100%

Source: Research on the Field, October 2020.

4.1. Forms of Parental Involvement in Buterere SS

In Buterere parish, the results have shown that the parents are not actively involved in the Christian education of their children. The Bible has much to say about parental involvement in children's education. In fact, several references such as Deuteronomy 4: 9; 32: 46; Psalms 78: 1-8; and Proverbs 22: 6, talk about educating children by leading them to obey God and teaching them His Word and works of grace. The church is also called to support the parents and train them in the way of educating children and raising them to respect God's commandments. [George Barna \(2003: p. 218\)](#) has advised that churches must begin now to come alongside parents and equip them to provide their children—at the earliest age possible—with biblical precepts that will protect them from a barrage of worldly ideas and teaching that is hostile to the biblical worldview. Churches must also think in terms of providing parents with information and counseling that will help them rear their children to be followers of God. It is time to wage a spiritual war, time to equip parents to help their children become the spiritually mature church of tomorrow, literally transforming them into spiritual champions!

Fathers and mothers have a responsibility to nurture and influence the spiritual development of their children, since the family is the first community of faith that children find themselves in, and it has a powerful influence on the development of children's faith. Parents are the first educators of children in spiritual matters. When parents talk about God and practice godly virtues, they in-

fluence their children's spirituality (Roberto, 2007: p. 40). So the church needs to train the parents and share the task of raising children.

Cockroft and Cottrill (1984: p. 41) say that "the church and home must work closely with the secular structures, and at times beyond these structures, to keep physical and mental development balanced with healthy development of the Spirit." In other words, to be effective in the SS program, the church needs parents' contributions, as they are the first educators, and the passage from Deuteronomy 11: 18-19 reveals that parents are responsible for the education of their children. One parent commented, "Before making decisions about our concerns, ask us first."

The responses obtained on the field show that the parental involvement in SS education of children is not functioning well in FMC of Buterere Parish. Biblical teachings, interest, influence, contributions, training, and home visits are all necessary. Creating a group which will be in charge of parents, working together with the church and other things cited above is very useful to those who want to be children's workers. According to the results of the nine (9) question items formulated to address parental involvement, the parents of Buterere FMC are not involved in the SS education of their children because of lack of training in methods for working with children, lack of necessary teaching aids at home, and absence of SS curriculum.

4.2. Stated Barriers to Parental Involvement

Based on the result obtained, the researcher found that the parents have barriers that hinder them from being in SS, and many children are led into sin from various causes like great poverty, resulting in insufficient food and clothing. As stated before, some leave home to beg and live in the streets, later becoming delinquents, killers, thieves, and so on. There are also many people who harm children and do sexual acts by promising them things like money, clothes, and so on. Other children have been influenced by false teachers. Many of the parents live by trading in the streets with small capital or handcrafts. Others remove themselves from home by working as small farmers.

As stressed by Peter Mutuku Mumo (1989: pp. 49-50), "Sunday schools were introduced in Africa by western Christian missionaries from Europe and the United States of America, where the missionaries came from Sunday schools that had become a part of church programs. The core business of missionaries in Africa was the conversion of Africans to Christianity. Therefore, wherever they went they introduced Sunday schools as vehicles of gaining more followers. In contrast to Britain, where Sunday schools were initially used to equip children with literacy skills, in Africa from the beginning Sunday schools were used to instruct children in the 'Word of God' and whenever possible to convert them to Christianity. Some missionaries were convinced that to convert children was easier than to convert adults." And Dr. Maria Montessori said that a child is a whole person. This means that the children need several skills to help them grow

well in society today. The church needs to involve their parents in order to understand their children's needs and home learning activities. After children receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as their first need, the church needs secondly to think about their physical, psychological, and cognitive life needs. Sunday schools need to be expanded in other skills of today's life. Hill (1962: pp. 26-27) says that the child's mind is "a constantly flowing stream of interests," and the lesson must fit those interests. A child will attend to what catches his interest. He will not pay attention to something that does not interest him, and all the teacher will need to do is to "buy his attention."

Through the children's actions and what they do daily, the researcher found that they are energetic people who could be using their talents to help themselves, their families, their country, and their churches. Many children lack encouragement to practice activities of development in order to improve their lifestyles. Handicapped children, especially those who do not have a chance to study in school, are able to improve their socioeconomic life in other ways.

Drury & Drury (1979: pp. 7-11) stress that what the teacher needs to do is not just tell Bible stories, he must first of all seek to know the listener's past experiences, and teach him the exact truth that corresponds to his needs. Because the family knows well how children's experiences may have affected them negatively, they know more than the church. This is the great duty of any Sunday school: to understand and know the learner's needs, and try to satisfy them as he teaches.

4.3. Strategies to Involve Parents in Sunday School

Barna (2003: p. 221) states that the role of the church is to spiritually mentor parents; the role of the parent is to spiritually mentor the children; the legacy of faith continues from generation to generation.

The researcher found that a variety of activities is not being offered. Willis (1985: p. 21) stresses that various activities need to be designed for children. Actually, children are creative and possess an inner drive for activity. If you observe them as they play, they try to associate things to do more and better. They like to use their minds and such an environment satisfies them. So, a variety of activities is a very good practice for children.

My experience with a children's developmental project is described in the textbook English 103: Writing Patterns and Goals for Academic Majors (Trexler and Bantererekanye, 2019: pp. 39-40). The idea for this method came to me after hundreds of children received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in Crusades and Good News Clubs with no means to follow up on their spiritual development. Songs, skits, Bible stories, and group projects like games, art and dancing did not provide methods to influence their future lives every day.

With guidance from the Lord, I discovered that raising rabbits would afford the opportunity to present Bible lessons, teach animal care, and give families a means of income and raising meat, while keeping children out of trouble. After building a large rabbit house and birthing dozens of baby rabbits, at present

(2022) I have carried them when they are grown sufficiently to 97 families and 413 children, and the project continues.

Parents have appreciated this combination of evangelism mixed with activities, which keeps their children happy and well-behaved while they learn about both Jesus and job skills. Rabbits have been a particularly good option for families with little income since they are easy to manage, require little space, and provide compost for thriving crops. My reaction to this project is much thanks to Jesus and a request for more prayers, so that it will continue growing God's kingdom.

To summarize the results of my rabbit experiment, the authors of *Writing Patterns and Goals for Academic Majors* comment: "In this example we see causes and effects operating on two levels, both the spiritual benefits and the practical, agricultural benefits... Families adapt willingly to the rabbit project and experience happy results as they follow biblical teaching and smart principles for animal care. Gilbert recognizes the need to continue encouraging this arrangement in his final call for more prayers," (Trexler and Bantererekanye, 2019: p. 40). In addition, my experience has great relevance for children and families today, since the Burundian government has added to school education a new program for teaching children in school to create development projects.

Experiential activities that afford children an opportunity to learn by discovery are facilitated best in a relaxed, natural, and rich learning environment. The setting can be either in the home or in the community. The steps to developing a home learning activity, based on Gordon's program in Florida, reflect the use of natural environment. Many of the ideas for home learning activities can be enjoyed by both parents and children (Gordon & Breivogel, 1976).

Children learn best when they are actively involved. The idea of home-school cooperation does not include viewing the parent as a taskmaster intent on forcing the child to learn. Instead, the parent is viewed as a responsive, alert facilitator.

Based on respondents' confirmations, the researcher found that home visitation by church leaders is not doing well. Church and home need to think about it because it encourages the children to feel loved, gives value to the SS at home, and increases the number of children at church. And the home always remembers to assist the children, as they know the church will take consideration by doing follow-up and appraisal. According to Vygotsky (1978: p. 113), home visits provide an opportunity for preservice teachers to learn more about the child and "ways of knowing" of the household. So, home visitation provides support for parents to better understand their child's development skills through daily home activities.

To all those responses, the researcher found that the church needs to train the parents as SS workers, to prepare gifts for children, to motivate parents, to provide a variety of activities because a child is a whole person, to let parents know about the recruitment of SS teachers, and to collaborate with parents, doing home visitation.

5. Conclusion

The overall purpose of this study was to determine parental involvement in the Sunday school in the Buterere Parish of the Free Methodist Church. After considering the results from interview questions, most of the respondents mentioned that parents are not maintaining the main goals of parents' precepts from God.

The results show that children's parents have many potential roles in the Sunday school education of children, but they are not involved because of lack of Biblical knowledge, training, or interest, lack of teaching aids, experience in ministering to children, encouragement, or motivation. There is a way to enhance the Christian education of children, but the parents are not involved. Respondents suggested that parents should collaborate with SS teachers without forgetting to consult the church leaders in asking advice.

From the respondents' views, it seems that parents face many barriers that hinder them from being involved in the SS education of their children. The parents enumerated some of the barriers such as: poverty, no interest, busy involvement in today's life, illiteracy, time limitations, body's weakness or maladies, successive family ceremonies, parents' conflicts, having a church so far from home, climate change, absent SS teachers, teachers who hinder the parents from coming back, carelessness, teachings that do not change the child's life, lack of knowledge about children's SS, or misunderstanding of their responsibility in the SS teaching of their children.

The church should train the best SS teachers, and prepare workshops for both teachers and parents. The church should open the room and equipment according to children's ages, and keep in mind reaching out to the children with handicaps or disabilities through Good News Clubs, and community and home ministries. In addition, prepare teachings which all categories of children benefit from and see God's love reaching traumatized children and the handicapped. All need to learn more about God. Teaching aid materials such as children's Bibles, books, flannelgraph, puppets, DVDs, a projector, entertaining stories, and gifts for children are all very useful. Home visitation, small development projects, and handcrafts for children, followed by parents and the church, all get them involved. Motivating SS teachers and parents increases interest. Children also need to apply their knowledge related to the Sunday school lessons. Teachers and parents need to remember their responsibilities to love every child's family and develop the children's talents. The researcher suggested that parents need to overcome these barriers since they have a great responsibility, which requires commitment in the SS education of their children.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Abbreviations

#:	Number
%:	Percentage
FMC:	Free Methodist Church
HAU:	Hope Africa University
NIV:	New International Version
SS:	Sunday School