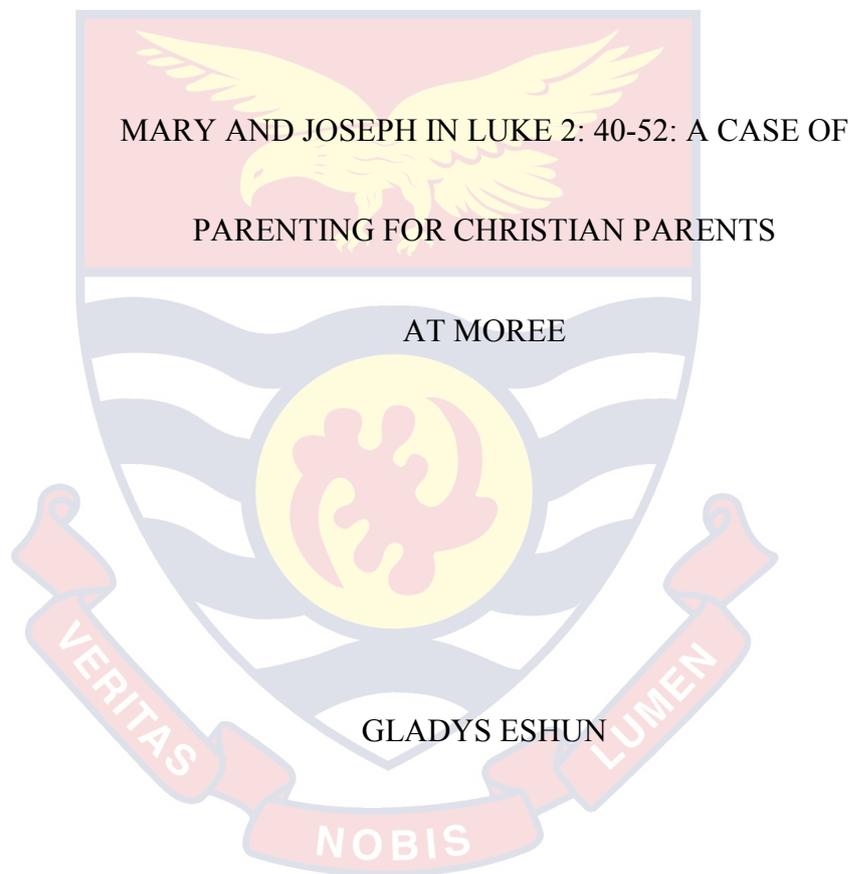


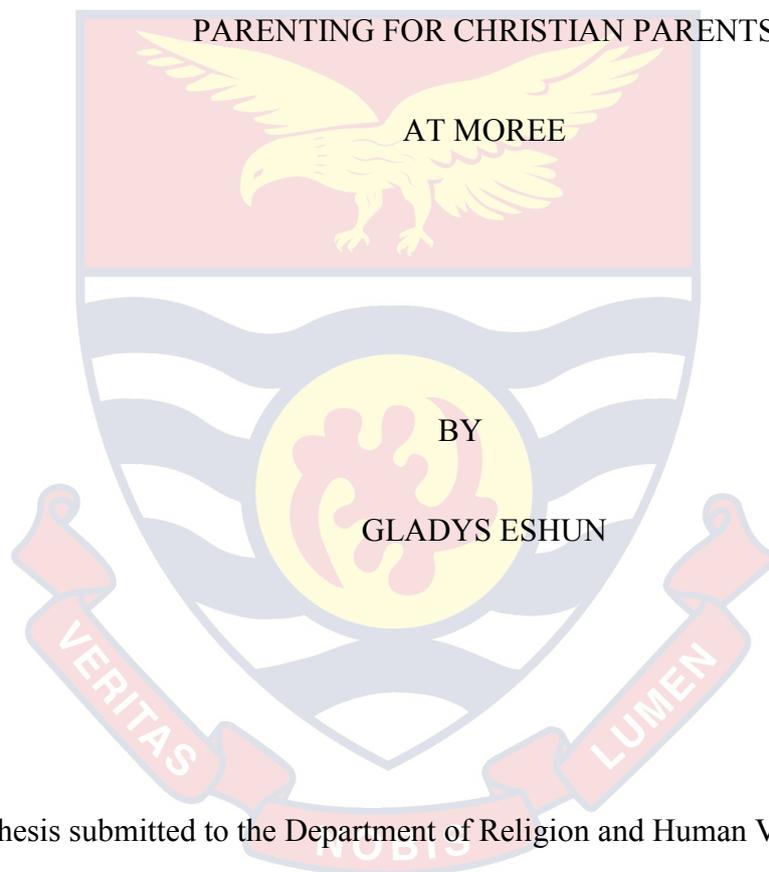
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MARY AND JOSEPH IN LUKE 2: 40-52: A CASE OF



This thesis submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Values, Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy in Religious Studies.

JULY 2019

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature Date.....

Name: Gladys Eshun

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Dr. Augustine. M. Mensah

Co- Supervisor's

Signature..... Date.....

Name: Rev. Fr. Dr. Appiah-Sekyere

ABSTRACT

This study looked at parental responsibility of Mary and Joseph from the gospel of Luke 2:40-52 in relationship with the Christian understanding of parenting in Moree community. The study also examined the rights of the child pertaining to children within the constitutionally enacted laws of Ghana and its relationship towards the total welfare of the child. The hermeneutical design employed to examine the text in Luke 2:40-52 was the text-centred narrative criticism approach. Through a facilitated rigorous close reading with objectivity, the text established the theme of parenting by Mary and Joseph. The text demonstrated how Mary and Joseph played their role as responsible parents. They provided the basic necessities their child depended on for growth and development like; feeding, clothing, shelter and medical care as seen from how Jesus grew from childhood to adolescent hood. In addition, Mary and Joseph inculcated spiritual and moral disciplines in Jesus with their Jewish religious faith and practices for attaining wisdom and favour towards intellectual and moral growth dimensions to ensure holistic developmental growth for their child. The text climaxed with how Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus with compassion when he got missing during a pilgrim advent in Jerusalem. The study was then pointed to parental perversion in Moree community where unacceptable traditions entrenched in cultural values infiltrate against conventional standards on child care delivery and practices is deliberated. Thus the study recommended the parental model of Mary and Joseph to the Christian parents at Moree for adoption and practice. The study then summoned the Christian community to embrace parenting as part of religious requirement in obedience to God and contribution to nation building and development.

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DEDICATION

To the loving memory of my late father,

Mr. Jerome Emmanuel Eshun for his fatherly loving care,

advice and protection.

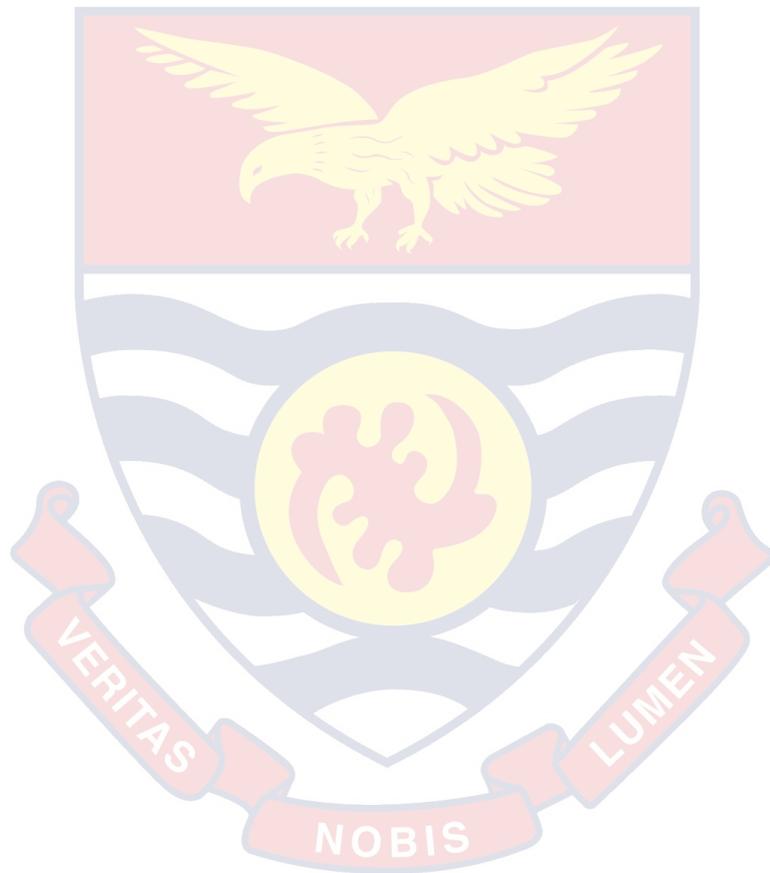


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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The family constitutes the basic social institution of the society. Children who belong to the family union also form an integral part of the society. Basically, society grows with children from the family. However, children as members of the society is secondary and purposely for social conventions. Thus, children have the prerogative to remain dependents on their families up to the time they would be fully integrated into the society as independent adults.

Assimeng (2006, p. 27) noted that “it is axiomatic for recognizing the family as the earliest phase of social evolution human beings lived for all purposes and needs, thus; making family the only constituted social framework-coterminous to society.” Most significantly, the attribution of human beings are the children within the family set up. And also to some greater extent, synonymous to the primary human resource assets of the society. For this purpose, the family continues to take full responsibility of children as they grow through the process of nurturing for preparation in anticipation of becoming well developed and responsible independent adults.

Draper and Draper (1979, p. 17) have observed that “The most favourable environment for growing children is in a family setting with enlightened parents and family members.” The Drapers’ assertion implied that, family set up does not guarantee effective child up-bringing if not dispensed with knowledge and ethics binding parental practices. That is to say that, part of the problem with juvenile delinquency tendencies such as; sexual promiscuity, school drop outs, street children, drug addiction among others

could be attributed to negative attitude of parents who demonstrate poor understanding of parental management.

A recent survey on Children and Youth, Central Region Development Commission [CEDECOM] (2018) on national statistics record established that, children from 3-18 years and youths between 18-35 years were found in the target group susceptible to juvenile vulnerability. The statistics analysis recorded was reported to indicate that Central Region scored 6-27%, with 6th position on street children, and 4th position on child and human trafficking. The report given signaled a wakeup call. The primacy of the family and the role of children in nation building is the need to strengthen and safeguard its toll on the society. The outcome points to basic social structures and policies on parenting and conventional claims on the right of the child by most cultures and civilized societies.

A common social feature in particular is the UN charter of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of the Children's Act (1998). The premise manifestly supports concern for children's needs as fundamental human right for their total sustenance and development. The premise of the Act with religious traits holds implications for child-upbringing which transcends from international legislation for reflections in giving meaning to one's religious beliefs and practices. Its basis is consistent with civic responsibility supporting Christian parenting in this study.

The Jewish religion (Judaism) bequeathed parental responsibility as tenets of religious cultural heritage for Christian practice. The purpose was to celebrate and appreciate children with value and dignity for their maintenance in spite of their weaknesses for social order and cosmic harmony. The belief is

that parenting should be recognized and celebrated in obedience to God and greatest contribution towards national development.

My work as a professional social worker (teacher and pastor) provides opportunity to meet children who become victims of parental irresponsibility. The encounter is the motivation and passion for raising advocacy on parental responsibility. This study relates to my previous work on: *An Enquiry into Impact of Effective Children Sunday School on Child Development* (2008).

Background to the Study

A basic social feature identified in most fishing communities in Ghana is the glaring sight of population growth where children constitutes simple majority. Observation made from suburbs like; Anafo, Amissah Ekyir, Idan, Amanful and Brofoyedur, are notable urban communities in close proximity to the gulf with sub-standard economic fishing practices showcase such social characteristic within the Cape Coast metropolis of the central region.

Usually characteristic with the fishing industry is also the fact that, sections of large number of juvenile folks may be members of visiting crew who migrate from one fishing community to another. Nevertheless, the presence of many children and its concomitant social menace should be well examined. In most cases, children are found roaming or clustered into groups doing their own thing with no apparent parental oversight mechanism. The influx is likely to breed peer pressure succumbing to negative social practices such as smoking, fighting, gambling, streetism or sexual promiscuity among other social vices. The outcome could take the toll of human resource capital leading to waste of talents and potentials that would have been tapped for developing socio-economic agenda for the society.

In a recent public awareness on Street Children, The Ghana Police Service [GPS] (2018) cautioned parents against carelessness in child care practices with attribution to fishing communities in close proximity to Cape Coast metropolis. The awareness called for support groups from global organizations, government agencies, charitable foundations and sundry to join campaign against the menace.

A social feature alongside similar situation and central to this study is the glaring sight of children of school going-age in shabby appearance found roaming on the street of Moree community during official school hours. One way of compromising parenting is when parents allow their children to roam about. Children allowed to roam about is a social feature identified with Moree community. This situation reflects on the quest for parental responsibility.

This brings into bear similar parent-child experience in the Bible captured from the gospel of Luke 2:40-52. The event took place when Jesus at the age of 12 years traveled with his parents to Jerusalem during pilgrim advent of the Jewish Passover festival. When the family was returning from the festival the boy Jesus got detached from his parents but when the parents realized how unsafe it is for their child to be found wandering on the street, they searched for Jesus till he was found.

The role played by Mary and Joseph demonstrates parental model for Christian parents at Moree in response to poor parental practices with reference to why Mary and Joseph did not allow their child to roam on the street. The gospel passage throws theological spotlight on parental responsibility from Christian perspective. Thus, the text would be used to speak into parental

responsibility as a religious obligation by Christian parents and a clarion call to civic responsibility.

Statement of the Problem

The presence of many children of school going-age found unruly in shabby appearance and roaming during official school hours in Moree community pose a social challenge. The sight of children in awkward appearance found roaming about when they could have been enrolled in school raises provocation against child abuse and fundamental human right and dignity for children. It is quite pathetic and equally indicting as parents or family members show no concern of whereabouts of their children. Parents who sacrifice the well-being of their children demonstrate poor understanding of parental responsibility. Adverse effects of improper child care cast reflections of low standard of living on communal members. Hence, the main problem identified with this social menace is attributed to lack of parental responsibility.

Information solicited revealed the following key factors notably: cultural tradition and economic advantage. With that, previous measures administered by the local health and social welfare authorities rather tended to focus on short term interventions. In the case of the local health service, what they offered was adolescent education on sexual reproduction and family planning on birth control against population increase. Then also, intervention from Department of Social Welfare; (Department of Social Development) now under Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) did not reflect any form of social protection like giving the children access to education, rehabilitation or any form of monitoring services.

Based on assessment and evaluation of the previous research carried out was the indication that, nature of intervention administered only described routine measures, especially with the local health post from Ghana Health Service (GHS). Notwithstanding, measures provided were not adequately comprehensive enough to deal with entrenched socio-cultural value system at hand. Consequently, this study proposed for adequate comprehensive strategy with long term pragmatic measures worth recommendable.

The study approached the problem of parenting from religious and social perspectives through the reading of Luke 2:40-52 with the Christian community. The probability is that some of the children on the street may have Christian parents who are ignorant of parental exemplary account of Mary and Joseph in Luke's gospel. Hence, the need of reading Luke 2:40-52 with the Christian community. And reason for choosing Luke 2:40-52 as the biblical text for the problem in this study is the efficacy it holds to investigate why children of school going-age in awkward appearance should not roam about in their community during official school hours. The usefulness of this design was motivated by religious injunction supported with social obligation binding Christian parents to discharge their responsibilities from their religious faith and practices.

Purpose of the Study

The single purpose of this study was set to look at what the pericope of Luke 2:40-52 says about parental responsibility and its relevance towards total development of the child. It also looked at ontological injunctions pertaining to child care related issues on physical development, education, health, protection and general welfare of the child.

Objective of the Study

The main focus of the study was intended to achieve the following objectives.

1. To examine what the text in Luke 2:40-52 says about parenting from Christian perspective by reading the text with the Christian community.
2. To examine the rights of the child pertaining to children through legislation instruments of Ghana and parenting in Moree community.
3. To examine parenting in Moree community in relationship with Christian understanding of parenting from the gospel of Luke 2:40-52.
4. To assess the effects of child neglect on human value and national development measured with religious and general education of the child.
5. To mount campaign and sensitization education on parenting as social responsibility for practice through the medium of child advocacy, appeal to government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Research Questions

This study aimed to address the following research questions.

1. What does Luke 2:40-52 say about Christian Parenting?
2. What are the rights of the Ghanaian Child with reference to Ghana's legislative instruments?
3. What is the relationship between Parenting in Moree Community and Luke 2:40-52?
4. What are the effects of child neglect on human value and national development?
5. What steps can be taken to ensure campaigns, sensitization education and advocacy on child neglect in Ghana?

Significance of the Study

The results from this study will help corporate society in the following ways;

1. It will add to the stock of academic research and contribution to knowledge, particularly to the body of literature relating to parenting and child care practices.
2. It will create awareness for pastors and church leaders to mobilize effort for strengthening the parental responsibilities in Moree community through preaching, counselling and children's Sunday school programs.
3. It will provide guidance on good parental practices, especially to Christian parents in Moree community by organizing seminars for them.
4. It will create opportunity for parents to reflect on their parental responsibilities and seek for appropriate parenting methods to promote child dignity through communal durbar by government agencies.
5. The study could be used to create Child Endowment Fund on Education in the local churches and the community at large.
6. The chief fisherman and the local council in agreement could use part of dividends from local premix fuel as scholarship package to support brilliant but needy children within the community.
7. The study may be found useful by government agencies in formulation of policies with particular references to;
 - a. The Ministry of Education (GES).
 - b. Ministry of Health (MOH).
 - c. Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP).
 - d. Commission on Human Rights and Administration Justice (CHRAJ).

- e. Stakeholders of Moree community (chiefs, queen mothers, assembly members, asafo company leaders).
- f. Others include NGOs; parachurch organizations, social groups, local associations of teacher unions such as; GNAT, CCT and GNAGRAT, drivers, hairdressers, dressmakers, unions, etc. auxiliaries of local churches (Men, Women and Youth Movements) and philanthropists.

Delimitation of the Study

The focus of the study was localized in Moree community as the research area identified with the problem. The study investigated into incidence of child abuse and its effects on the lives of children in Moree as parents are neglecting their responsibilities of parenting. The situation was motivated by an enquiry into parental responsibility concerning Christian parents by the Christian community. The delimitation was administered based on its own merit considering the population of the Christian community (about 34 churches) with their attendant members.

Since the study is a qualitative research, the delimitation was carefully structured to elude the problem of the adventure into other research communities as this is likely to widen the scope beyond measure and may be blown out of proportion making the thesis too broad to handle and manage effectively. Thus, the delimitation administered was greatly influenced by ability to achieve measurable objectives, concentration on specified focus group and to work within stipulated time frame intended for the research.

Other reasons underlining the selection were motivated by socio-economic and cultural factors contingent on social context of the research community. As a fishing community densely populated with children, the vantage proximity of Moree to Cape Coast being a renown urban community historically branded as ‘citadel of education’ provided educational opportunities for readily access. Children in Moree would benefit from resourced educational facilities from first class secondary education and university education from University of Cape Coast (UCC) and Cape Coast Technical University(CCTU) respectively.

The proximity factor gives basis for raising awareness on access and participation to education through responsible parenting. This was done to sensitize communal members on educational opportunities available to them in order to change their attitudes and mind set on parenting for better socio-economic transformation of their community. Economic opportunities available to be tapped included; fish farming, exporting fish and imports of goods, operating fishing cold store, skilled entrepreneurship, founding private schools, bureaucracy, skilled labour force, among others. The delimitation was made to determine and define the geographical confines of where the study was concentrated as a single research.

Consequently, findings, interpretations with its implications drawn and evaluated, enacted into policies, bye laws and regulations were adapted to Moree community. In effect, the delimitation was administered to produce a well-developed comprehensive report on communal peculiarities and value systems on parenting and child care in Moree community. Availability of this report may be found useful for filling gaps in replica research.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the gospel account in Luke 2:40-52 about Mary and Joseph being the parents of Jesus. My choice for the Bible passage was motivated by quest for parental responsibility and child care from biblical point of view. Research design used was hermeneutical approach based on text-centred narrative criticism. The study was also supported with social theory on legislative instruments binding the rights of the child.

The validity of measuring parental responsibility from hermeneutical approach based on text-centred narrative criticism was supported with primary information through observation and interviews granted on parental responsibility and general welfare of the child from the research community. The findings filtered from the research study were brought to bear and narrowed to enhance and measure validity. Hence, intended generalization of outcome from findings were limited to how parenting is conceived and practiced. Thus, the theme of parenting with its social dimension and findings raised were internalized through the methodology of the study.

Review of Related Literature

This section of the study was set to review literature on parental responsibilities on various sub-themes. The review discussion was divided into three main sections: theoretical framework and conceptual base, social and religious perspectives. The review preamble established theoretical framework and conceptual base and reviewed social theories on parenting from social structures, educational institutions and legal framework. Thematic discussions under social perspective also reviewed literature on parental responsibility from works cited by authorities on (a) Meaning of a Parent and (b) Parental

Responsibility. The section under religious perspective examined literature on (c) Parenting in the Old Testament, (d) Parenting in the Church Era and (e) Luke's Gospel and the text in Luke 2:40-52. These various sections formed the discussion on related literature review.

Theoretical Framework and Concepts

The reviewed literature on theoretical framework considered the foundation and conceptual implications underlining universal construction of parenting and legislative instruments binding its practices. The concept of parenting essentially illicit universal provisional theory in any organized society. Based on the assumption that parenting is socially constructed and internalized within socio-cultural setting cannot be disputed. And where the implication of social practice of parenting means "The process of caring for your child or children." (Oxford *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). This explanation comes with assertion that child care is a designated responsibility. With that, the designated responsibility of caring for children is also strongly supported with social consensus from ontological imperatives binding social structures and systems regulating social norms on child up-bringing.

Thus, the social location which provides framework through which the concept of parenting becomes operational is found with the family setting. Assimeng, (p. 31) had submitted that the family is "An essential, basic, and universal social institution." An indication that points to universal concept of parenting as a social phenomenon that transcends into all cultures and societies irrespective of religion, social or racial boundaries. It is upon this premise that sociologists tie the thriving of the society to the primacy of the family. As children are identified with the family, the mutual interdependency between

society and family makes the latter an indispensable social institution. It is out from this conceptual point of view that makes parenting conceivably an apparent a basic social responsibility. In essence, the family provides social structure where parenting is adopted and practiced as part of societal norms.

As much as societies may differ in their understanding, custom and practices on how children are raised and best cared for, the universal concept of parenting set precedence for innovative mechanisms for child care practices becoming peculiar from diverse cultures. In the case with developed economies like United States of America (USA) for instance, government invests in child security structures and facilities that enhance child rearing practices. State interventions are established purposely in caring for children particularly, with pre-school educational facilities.

Brisbane (1985, p. 232-234) had cited “Day Care Centers, Nursery Schools, Licensed Home Care, Montessori School, Parent Cooperatives Play Groups, Head Start, Baby Sitters, and Latch-Key Children.” These are examples of well-structured child care educational facilities which denote theories of parenting practices in educational framework. Educational facilities, by all standards, are provided for children in meeting their needs of learning towards intellectual development. Educational need of the child is a long term process and worthwhile exercise. Although some educational facilities may sound more sophisticated and quite distant from that of similar educational facilities in the Ghanaian context, the goal is fundamental to intellectual capacity development.

In addition, and most fundamental is the need of continual recognition of how to treat children with value and dignity in the event of their caring. The question of fundamental human rights promulgated into state laws for protection

and preservation against vulnerability of the child was the outcome of legislative instruments and social regulations. The Constitution is worth considering for reference in support of the family's role on parenting.

The Constitution and Children's Act

The constitution of Ghana is the supreme law of the republic of Ghana. It is an embodiment of statuses and fundamental political principles which defines the procedures and duties of government legislations and judiciary that spells out rights and duties of citizens [CONSTITUTION] (1992). The provision of the constitution becomes the measure of standard in civil matters that guarantees administration of equal rights and justice for all in maintaining rule and order. In matters on Human Rights and Freedoms; The Constitution makes provision for fundamental human rights and freedoms for all manner of person including children (5: p.159). The Rights, extensively covered the rights and privileges for children relating to parental responsibility; right and protection for women and children, and also, including the general welfare of the family. This section of the review isolated child's rights and parenting from the constitution for attention in this study.

The social policy regulating parenting and child priority in the constitution is made under the provision of Children's Act of 1998 (Act 560) of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana. The Act is informed by international human rights, [UNDHR] (1948) declaration by the UN Charter on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC), also in cognizance with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), adopted by UN member states of African Union in 1989 [UNICEF]. Ghana was the first country to ratify the charter which was passed by parliament in June 1998. The main

international agent for the Convention is the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF). In effect, the Children's Act is a legal framework in support of parenting.

Parenting and Rights of the Child

The Children's Charter constitutes international conventions on human rights legislation instrument that defines the universal principles and norms for the status of the child. The legal framework defines the concept and practice of parenting about social construction of the child and how it provides welfare and well-being as their right by parents. The Act defines the child as 'a human person below the age of 18 years' (Act 560) (1998). This definition is in compliance with international Convention on the Rights of the Child and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. This definition will be used to refer to children in this study except that, age will be limited from 3-15 years as is the case with the children situated within Moree community.

Thus, all the children defined by the Act would be attributed to the children who are always found roaming about in Moree community during school hours. A child in this definition is owned either through biological or by means of adoption. Children in this context also means inclusiveness, that is, every child including adopted children are also entitled to all the rights, privileges and benefits just like biological children.

A parent in this context refers to a biological parent or an adopter, a guardian or staff worker of a rehabilitation home bound by the regulating laws of the child. The Act mandates parents to provide basic needs for children as their right. They include; right to food, shelter, clothing, access to good health, proper nourishment and right to name and country. Children's Act (1998). In

customary settings, children from the external family can be integrated into the nuclear family in case of death, abandonment or insanity of their parents or guardians.

On the 8th right, particularly included for this discussion was captioned; *Right to education and well-being*, (1) “No person shall deprive a child access to education, immunization, adequate diet, clothing, shelter, medical attention or any other thing required for his development” (Act 560). A social worker and child’s right advocate Koomson (2016), in affirmation with close examination had observed that, children’s needs could be classified into the following way as, “Provision, Protection, and Participation from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination including the right for safe children’s environment and a constructive child rearing behaviour”. Considering their vulnerability, children must be provided with what to eat, what to wear and place to sleep and should be protected from abuse by keeping security checks on them.

The main security checks on children in Ghana is intended to rehabilitate them at school and home settings as standard places of enculturation required for their total up-bringing. Children enrolled in school get opportunity to develop their intellectual abilities through development of skills and talents for nation building. Koomson reiterated that, “The idea that children have special needs has now given way to the conviction that children have the same spectrum of rights just as their grown counterparts; civil and political right, social, cultural and economic rights”. Provision in the Act makes room for every child irrespective of social or natural circumstances the right to enjoy a fair share of human right and freedom. Thus, the law ensures fair and equal rights and justice for all. As such, the concept of child’s right and parental duties as enshrined in

the Children's Act supports the practice of parenting as a social mandate. The premise of the Children's Act entails parental social commitments which creates awareness for parental responsibilities within the society irrespective of one's religious inclinations.

Measured by global standards, one realizes that, children found roaming about in Moree community lack the privileges and benefits of the expected standard parental responsibilities as stipulated in the Children's Charter. As far as the children were being denied of opportunity to be enrolled in school to develop their intellectual abilities as required. This is affront to human rights and apparent injustice against children. Parents who allow their children to roam on the street endanger their lives for becoming susceptible to social vices.

The Charter protects children from injustice such as; starvation and malnutrition, negligence and insecurity, denial of access to education, child trafficking, kidnapping and bad influence from peers. By offering permissible alternative solutions to child abuse cases, again, the Charter mandates state agencies like Ghana Education Service, Health Service, Gender ministry and their analogues as helplines and intermediaries of social interventions for children.

Social Perspectives of Parenting

Meaning of a Parent

The meaning of who a parent is sets the tone for understanding who the child is within the laws pertaining to the right of the child in Ghana. Draper and Draper (1983, p. 15) had explained parents to mean "Persons who conceive or give birth to a child as biological parents." I would ascribe the simplistic definition of parents in reference to 'persons' as given by the Drapers to mean

‘natural custodians’ of the child to express the same meaning. However, the concept of parents from traditional worldview and social psychologists’ perspectives extend it beyond direct biological relationships of a mother and a father and or of one’s conjugal position as husband or wife. As such, the Drapers continued to elaborate on various types of parents to also include other people who happen to play the role of parents when necessary. Among such people considered to be parents in this way are people who become legal parents through legal adoption of a child. Other category of parents also included step parents or foster parents who take care of children whose biological parents remarry and make the new wife or husband a step parent of the child.

Another type of parents described in this context are immediate and distant family members including grandparents and kinsmen who also take up the responsibility of raising children given in their custody when necessary. Professional social workers who wish to work in rehabilitation centres, orphanage homes, and child care centres also become custodians of children put in their care. Social workers considered in this category as parents are required to receive professional skills on parenting as a policy. Social psychologists Draper and Draper (1979, p. 302) have observed that “A child care worker’s influence can last a lifetime.” The demand on professional ethics and values which can have long term impact in meeting needs of children was a major concern in the criteria for selecting social child workers. Considering the nature of the work as one taking the place of and playing the role of a parent, the qualities expected from a child care worker if not carefully considered could take the place of irresponsible parent. There is therefore the need to look for

one's eligibility for parental virtues such as; compassion, love, patience and all other virtues that parents share from bonding with the child.

The meaning of who a parent is should also take into consideration realities and absence of parents by death, parents on business trip for a long time, disability, divorce, separation, insanity, among others. Thus, the definition underlining meaning of a parent is not limited only to a father and a mother or 'natural custodians' but embraces all the significant others on the basis of the child's parent' considered as, "the one who provides regular daily care and guidance and who accepts the role of a parent in a family setting," Draper and Draper (p. 15). This principle is applied to all categories of parents. By describing types of parents in categories help readers to identify social construction of parents and its reflections and dynamisms in existence.

In spite of the various types of parents described, one is likely to subscribe to biological parents as the ideal type. However, the description of other 'types' of parents could be of great help particularly to people who have value and dignity for humanity. In a traditional community where the outlook of family network relationship describes a homogenous structure like that of Moree community; one would speculate that the structure and type of parent (s) described in this context in one way or the other is already in existence such as; biological parents, extended family members or guardians, foster or step parents and grandparents.

It should be recognized that the social construct for the categories of parents given, were conferred attributions of social recognition subject to social expectation and accountability in child up-bringing. As the family setting within which the meaning of a parent is located revolves round corporate society.

Parental Responsibility

Our quest for parental responsibility could be gleaned from what a parent does or what parents do. Responsibility is defined as “A state of being, that for which someone is responsible for, or accountable to.” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*). When ‘someone’ is replaced with parent, it means accountability of parental duties. Also, *The Complete Christian Dictionary* explained responsible as; “Liable to be called to account for; to be blamed if things go wrong.” Invariably, the responsibility gleaned from what parents do would mean accountability, in response to entrusted position of child care. To be responsible means to take charge of duty, for which one could be blamed in event of failure. The element of ‘being in charge’ and ‘to be blamed’ alike indicate that, assigned roles was accorded with certain degree of expectations or requirements. Thus, one can excel or fail in the practice of parenting.

Draper & Draper (1983, p.14) defined parenting as “Providing support, care, and love in a way that leads to the total development of the child while strengthening the parent-child relationship.” These terms need to be explained. Dictionary explanation defined the various terms in this way; *support* “To provide everything, especially money so that somebody or something can live or exist.” *care*, “The process of caring for somebody or something and providing what they need for their health or protection” *love*, “A strong feeling of deep affection for something or somebody, especially a member of your family or friend” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*).

The explanation of *support* as used in parenting practice means to spend money on feeding, clothing, health care, among other needs of the child. *Care* as rendered also cater for health and protection. *Love* provides emotional

assurance and bonding meant to develop the psychological make-up of the child. Expositions given on parenting, as defined by the psychologists and responsibility from the dictionary in actual sense, shares similar view. All of them establish that, being *responsible* means to account for something (roles) or responsibilities, while *parenting* also means performing roles assigned. Thus, parenting means to be responsible for one's roles or duties as given. The roles had been identified as *supporting*, *caring*, and *loving*. The psychologists further explained that, the given definition is governed by three key factors namely; *responsibility*, *guidance* and *nurturing*, identified to “represent the three major dimensions of parenting.” In effect, parenting is driven and determined by *responsibility*, *guidance* and *nurturing* as governing principles. These are recognized standards behind the concept of parenting. Any parent who is able to achieve all the three major dimensions is credited as most caring parent.

Whereas parental responsibility is motivated by *responsibility*, *guidance* and *nurturing*, operating on the roles of *support*, *care*, and *love*, are expected to bring significant changes of growth in children in many ways to help them with their feeding, shelter, clothing, good health and education. Significant changes of growth in children can be classified into three stages.

Thus, the process of parenting identified with three roles, also facilitate growth development of the child into three compartments. These growth levels are; physical, intellectual and social developments of the child. Thus, the process of executing parental responsibility is consistent with the Drapers' three dimension foci to mean that the process encompasses three-fold developmental areas for the child.

In most cases the total growth and development of the child identified according to the pattern of the three dimensions described is taken for granted by parents. A practical example is that of children found roaming on the street of Moree community. How can anyone measure the amount of motivation driving parental responsibility for *support*, *care* and *love* these children need for growth and development? The implication reiterates the constitution's claims on the rights of the child. The three-stage developmental growths of the child as recognized in physical, intellectual and social developmental needs of the child is worth considering for discussion.

Physical Development

Physical development is attributed to growth in physical body and good appearance with healthy habits and medical routines. Factors of growth basically includes provision of food and health care. Feeding plays a key role in rapid physical growth for children. However, adequate health care routine support enhances longevity and life expectancy of children. Physical needs of children practically must be supported with visible contribution parents make in meeting actual physical needs.

Considering their natural characteristics Schuller (1993, p. 75) had noted that "Children are not little adults." This means, children are naturally weak and as such cannot work to raise money in taking care of themselves. The understanding behind the relevance of parental *support* is then to 'provide everything' by spending money on feeding, health care, clothing and shelter for children to survive. This aspect of responsibility forms one part of the three dimensional roles of parenting, and also superintends all three dimensional roles. It is the core responsibility in parenting.

Feeding Children

Children primarily depend on food for increase in size of the body and height. Feeding is the key factor responsible for the rapid growth in children especially during the formative years of their life. Scholars highlights on benefits of nutritious food and its impact on growth of children to mean that, growth and development in children depend on specific food containing adequate nutritional requirement in right proportions as crucial to the health of children. The Drapers (p.1112) recommended that parents “Provide meals that are nutritionally balanced.” Nutritionally balanced meal is found to contain food nutrients such as; proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates and minerals in the food are needed for physical development of the body such as; body cells, formation of bones and teeth, and other parts of body organs and cell tissues.

Sources of food with nutrients include animal foods like meat, fish, eggs, milk and beans. Nutritionists’ advice parents to consider these factors in order to prepare menu for their children by ensuring that breakfast, lunch and supper contain all the nutrients required. And to facilitate consistency in growth, eating must be done at regular time intervals. However, meals with poor nutritional value will have adverse effects on children’s growth and health such as, low body weight, learning difficulties and infectious diseases like malaria and anemia. Malnutrition claim lives of children every year in Ghana although some of the causes may be genetically attributed. A report from the Maternal and Child Care Unit (Moree Health Post) recorded children who suffered from hunger and poor nutrition. The foreknowledge is that, effective growth in children could be achieved when parents spend money in providing food relevant for promoting physical growth of their children.

Supporting children to grow physically means a responsibility in which parents provide feeding for their children as their fundamental rights and privilege for human survival and livelihood. The contribution and role of proper dieting towards growth and development of children is naturally, an underlining role, central to the shaping and development of the human body right from its fetal stage. The indication is the continuation of growth after birth which continues throughout the lifetime of the child. To ensure consistent and progressive body growth, expert encourage parents to monitor growth patterns of their children in order to maintain standard in growth and good health.

Health Care for Children

Healthy children are great asset to any family and community. Provision of basic health care for children is recommended as one of the characteristics sign of a caring parent. Pediatric specialists, Draper and Draper (1979, p. 150) had observed that, “Healthy children are active, alert, and interested in new experiences.” That is to say that, there are ways of identifying healthy children as healthy children like to play, explore and play around space given them. Active signs identified may be helpful for detecting any cause of inactiveness likely to result from sickness.

Parents are therefore advised to observe everyday health care protocols by keeping children in “clean, safe surroundings, with nourishing foods, plenty of fresh air, exercise, rest, proper clothing, and support from adults and positive relationship with other children” (p. 150). Parents are advised to monitor their children’s health through regular health checkups. These are measures taken to reinforce and maintain health care for children as good practices that if parents observe would lay good foundation for developing health care habits.

Taking children through regular health checkups at the health post gives children protection with immunization made available for them against early preventable childhood killer diseases including, “Whooping cough (pertussis), Tetanus, Polio (infantile paralysis), Diphtheria and Measles.” (p. 151). Specialists suggested that immunizations against certain diseases begins immediately from first 4-6 weeks after the child’s birth. Parents are advised to send their children to hospital when they fall sick as soon as possible including all emergency cases such as poisoning, drowning or fire injuries. Children may be hospitalized depending on type of ailment diagnosed but in all cases, parents are advised to give support to children during their time of sickness. Parents are to realize that, health care issues are sensitive as it demands technical attention and professional expertise. It is advisable that all health issues are reported to the hospital for proper medical attention. As such, parents should make health insurance cover for children for readily access to medical facilities.

Routine Checkups

Maintaining routine checkups are measures taken to track down history behind a child’s sickness for study over period of time. Some sickness and health disorders in children may require examination and screening tests mostly done during routine checkups. Screening tests are conducted with the aim of detecting clues to health disorder present for diagnoses and treatment. Common ‘respiratory diseases like pneumonia and bronchitis’ could be treated after going through routine checkups. Screening usually conducted on children during routine checks include vision, hearing, blood pressure, body temperature, body measurements (weight and height), and respiratory signs. Screening may also include urine and blood tests.

Apart from the official routine health checkup, parents are also advised to adopt preventive measures on daily home basis to keep children healthy by taking action before illness or accidents occurs. Parents are advised to carry a daily home health checkup on children. Draper and Draper (1979) stated that:

Dirty hands and face, sore throat, redness, or itching of the mouth and throat area, discharge from eyes, ears and nose. Rash on face, neck, chest or stomach. Dirty hair and scalp (lice are prevalent in some areas where children are not kept clean). Sneezing and coughing. Drowsiness when the child is usually wide awake. Watery or glassy eyes. Fever, flushed face, and hot dry skin or exceptional paleness and coldness. Unexpected profuse perspiring. Hoarse voice and swollen glands. Pain in ear, head, chest, stomach, abdomen, or joints. Stiff back or neck. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. (p. 153).

Daily home health checkup on children provides opportunity for parents to administer home care medication and also to report any emergency to the hospital when necessary.

Clothing Children

Parental responsibility also demands that parents provide clothing for their children as part of their duty. Brisbane (1985, p. 306) submitted that, “Clothes should be chosen for comfort.” She observed that children whose parents take pride in their appearance help them to learn how to develop interest in neatness as habits. It also implies that parents who show interest in their children’s dressing also teach them how to dress properly and appear neat. The purpose of clothing children also included the duty of washing children’s clothes. It is better to discard worn out clothing of children rather than allowing them to appear in shabby clothing. Even though there is a popular notion among Ghanaians that one’s dressing depicts cultural or occupational identity lies in

the altruism behind the reason that dressing is not meant to be used to cover nakedness alone. Typical characteristics is the occupational dress code of professions like nurses, police, army, fire service, immigration service and other professionals. The same with traditional cultural outfit such as; *kente*, *bonwire*, and smock usually identified with chiefs and queens from southern and northern Ghana respectively.

Generally, dress code, whether for identification, cultural, occupation or reason behind weather conditions, ceremonial, occasional or casual are worn with various meanings. They either express distinction and recognition, beauty and dignity, royalty and authority, personal pleasure or for therapeutic reasons. Apart from school uniform dress code purposely classified as such, other dressing of children mostly represent their parents' interest observed over time. Especially in shabby appearance reflect family background more than anything else as is the case with children found roaming in Moree community.

Shelter for Children

One of the basic responsibilities of parenting is the provision of shelter and a safe environment for children. Providing shelter for children is to give them place for sleeping and living in order to secure accommodation as their right. Brisbane (p.316) recommended "Separate sleeping rooms for boys and girls to be provided with individual beds for children as they start growing from 3rd year." Although this is not possible in the home of average Ghanaian due to financial constraints, parents can still plan and provide relatively living place for their children. As improper sheltering could expose children to bad weather conditions like cold, rains and sunshine may cause infections such as pneumonia and high body temperature that may even lead to death.

Safety Environment

Safety environment for children is associated with living environment of the child. Parents are to ensure that, environment where children live is a place safe and free from all possible dangers that may pose threat to the security of the child. When children become active and move about freely, they need safe surroundings for playing and protection. Parents ensure safety practices by being alert, safety conscious and also teach their children to develop a sense of identifying safety signs and dangers relating to their living environment. It is their responsibility to ensure that, children's playing yard is checked daily and kept free from broken glasses, nails, sharp sticks and other harmful materials.

They should also help children to know type of environment they live in by showing them dangers associated within that environment. For instance, children must be taught that even though it is safe to jump, skip or run, it is not safe to run across the street. Children should be carefully guided through supervision to become aware of dangers that they need to avoid as they play to become aware of what they can do as well as what they cannot do.

Caring parents should make conscious effort by preventing accidental poisoning in keeping drugs out of reach of children. Bottled drinks and poisons like DDT, should be labeled, and kept away from children. Spilled floors must be mopped as soon as possible to prevent fall. Materials like matches, candle, lighters and other flammable items should be kept under locks from children's sight. A safe outdoor area with a fenced wall should be a basic requirement for preventing accidents. Basically parents are being advised to ensure that the place where children sleep as their living room is safe and free from danger.

Parental Role of Caring and Loving

Caring and loving in addition to parental support towards physical growth and development is the focus of holistic attainment of growth for children. Physical growth and development would not be complete without the roles of care and love given as motivation to augment the well-being of children. Lack of motivation leads to negative attitudes and hostilities children encounter from abuse, trafficking, neglect, starvation and injustice. Parent who accept responsibility for physical needs of children must also create a climate of care, love and attention and encouragement for building up child's self-esteem.

Children receive acceptance and identity as full members of the family from their location of belongingness when parental attachment is demonstrated to them from their childhood. The impact boosts their ego and confidence which contributes to emotional development for shaping their psychological and social make up as they grow. That is how children internalize emotional concepts as virtues for shaping and guidance. However, children left on their own and often found roaming on the street are denied of care and love they needed to boost their morale from their parents or guardians. Through the ministry of gender and social protection and Ghana education service, government had provided social interventions to children who are abandoned by parents and relatives.

Parental Guidance

Parental guidance is defined by Draper and Draper (1983, pp. 136-139) as the "The process of encouraging, teaching, directing and reinforcing behavior in a way that helps children to control their own behavior." The psychologists, described guidance as a learning process through which children learn how to build individual character, personality and self-esteem. The implication is that,

children by nature are immature and less experience, so the relevance and recognition of parental support required for developing the psychological framework of the child is paramount for comprehensive growth. The sub-theme draws cognate knowledge from educational theory and practice in a cross-discipline for dialogue and common interest. Developing and practicing of good habits like skills in eating, studying, observation, dressing and confidence towards character formation, personality and self-esteem.

The pedagogy envisaged to be administered for the learning process would be child-centred activity process supported with parental emotional sensitiveness and role modeling. Although the pedagogy required may differ from one child to another based on individual differences and peculiarities the goal of parental guidance is basically meant to develop self-esteem. The Drapers' explanation on parental guidance based on parent-child relationship addresses; encouragement, teaching, direction and reinforcement of behaviour. I will relate the Drapers' explanation to behavioural theorist approach by Feldman who used the principles from operant conditioning in learning theory to discuss shaping as a process for building on human behaviour.

Feldman (2005, p. 205) explained that complex behaviours do not naturally happen "as part of anyone's spontaneous behaviour" unless reinforced. And that, such reinforcement comes through shaping, as "shaping refers to a process of teaching a complex behaviour . . . closer approximations of the desired behavior." The implication is that teaching the child self-esteem may be a new concept which may not be learned easily without the parent's reinforcing measures of first input. Until the desired behaviour is acquired several teachings are conducted as means of shaping or correction through

encouragement for attaining the goal. The principles from behaviourist's theory helps parent to shape their children's behaviour to develop moral competencies, strong intellectual base and interpersonal skills for development. A parent's reinforcement is stimulated by encouragement and motivation.

A child's behaviour is greatly influenced by what parents give through encouragement and motivation. Encouragement is a reinforcing act that gives children a sense of hope and self-confidence. Children need encouragement when faced with new or difficult tasks during their developing years. Parents are expected to teach their children encouragement to develop confidence and positive self- image. Children who are encouraged feel good to continue again with what they are trying to do when they do not even succeed at performing a particular task. A child who is ignored or treated harshly would likely pull back, not feeling secure and confident. Children with such traits need emotional support through role modeling and constant appeal of words of encouragement by their parents. Parental encouragement functions like inner driving force which comes to motivate the child to work toward a particular goal.

Educational psychologists describe motivation as rewards for a task performed on merit. Motivation could be tangible or non-verbal and verbal or intangible in learning for reinforcing performance. Tangible motivation comes in a form of concrete rewards such as gift, money, certificates, and other items, given to students for performing a successful learning task. Intangible motivation on the other hand, consists of verbal words of self- enhancements worth in appreciation or recognition towards a good performance of an accomplished task. They include words such as praise, excellent, very good, keep it up and others. When the home is turned into a class room situation for

children the parent becomes the child's first teacher for guidance and parents become most effective teachers their children will ever have. It is through this learning process that the wrong behaviour of the child is corrected and the right behaviour is rewarded. Parental encouragement and motivation is measured by sound assessment and judgment based on good observation of children's behaviour to reflect and merit actual state of events. Children reflect many attitudes, values, abilities and frustrations of their parents and in the process, learn from them as they see their parents as authorities and people whose lifestyle should be imitated. Thus, parental encouragement, motivation and reinforcement are means through which children receive guidance shaping them for intellectual, psychological and moral development.

Parental Nurturing

Children have emotional needs in addition to physical and psychological needs. This aspect of need comes in a quest for love and human security children crave from parents as part of their rights and privileges. Nurturing comes with special love or natural bond which stirs up love, attention and encouragement for children not to give up in their struggling moment of crisis in growing. Nurturing takes over natural tendencies in helping children to overcome fears, failures and disappointments. Building trust and self-confidence in the formative years of children help to deepen bond of love between them and their parents. Parents must respond to the needs of their children to be addressed when attention is drawn to them. Emotional needs manifest themselves as seen in growing desires, yearnings and cravings, for acceptance, attention, recognition, pampering and comfort from their parents. Parental bond and relationship existing between them and children could be harnessed through

better attitudinal and behavioural patterns carefully followed to embrace love for meeting emotional needs of children.

Emotional needs of children are met by attending and monitoring to welfare related issues as duty of parents done out of affection and love for their children. Parents demonstrate by many ways of how feelings are expressed to children through touching, hugging, caressing cuddling, playing with them and any concern shown by attaching value to children like a treasure. Parents must express and demonstrate their sense of care and love by identifying needs of children and responding to them with understanding as often as practicable. To a greater extent, the amount of care and love parents provide stimulates a sense of deep connection needed for establishing parent-child bond in strengthening family ties for a sustained relationship in the family. Child nurturing in disregard for care and love is tantamount to social distortion as children learn to give love as they receive love as gift of comfort and hope. That is how children internalize emotional concepts as virtues for shaping and guidance. Nurturing could imply helping a child to grow up in becoming an acceptable member of the community

Conclusion

The main discussion on literature reviewed focused on responsibilities of parents as a central theme to this study. The quest for parental responsibilities was becoming elusive in a community where children are neglected with the evidence of children always found in the street during school hours in awkward appearance. The reviewed exposition established responsibility as duty of a biological parents and guardians. Specifically, the literature established roles of parental responsibility to means providing *support, care and love* as factors that bring growth and development in children. They also determine standards for

measuring effective and successful parenting through delivery of *responsibility*, *guidance* and *nurturing*. The literature demonstrated that parental responsibility is consistence with the child's susceptibility to vulnerability. And so children's dependency on parents is a fundamental human right supported with the right of the child by international legislation as provided in The Children's Act.

Again, the review established social theories and framework operating on the concepts of parenting. The family, legislation instruments and educational institutions were social features identified with injunctions from ontological context on parenting. The review established parenting as a social responsibility of social value and norm for practice in raising children on behalf of the society.

Based on the literature reviewed came with the conclusion that, stakeholders of any constituted society have the mandate to exercise their authority to reinforce bye-laws and regulations for preserving societal values and norms on fundamental social issue like parenting. The reason is that; parents should take responsibility of children they have given birth into the society.

Religious Perspectives of Parenting

A study into quest for Christian parenting would not be complete without tracing the paradigms of parental practices in retrospect. The basis for exploration through the timeline is to build evidence for consistency to validate Christian parental responsibility or parental responsibility at all. The section under religious perspective of the study reviewed literature on Parenting from Old Testament time, Church Era, Luke's gospel and the text in Luke 2:40-52.

Parenting in the Old Testament

The subject of parenting in the Old Testament is foundational to the cultic worship of the Israelites. The book of Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 gives import to elements of parenting on this note:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gate.”

The passage begins with the famous prayer of Judaism - the *Shema*. Dunn and Rogerson (2003) explained that it was “so named because of the Hebrew imperative *shema*; meaning to ‘hear!’ The writers further continued that,

The rigorous adherence and institution of the *Shema* by tradition on when a person lies down and rises up and also to place them on their hands, foreheads and doorposts gave rise to the *Shema* prayer to be recited twice daily; morning and evening by observant Jews in Judaism. The injunction to recite “these words I command” led to the wearing of phylacteries at times of prayer and the placing *mezuzot* on doorways had been in practice continued to the present time. (p. 157).

Burkitt (as cited in Dunn and Rogerson, 2003) have explained that,” Phylacteries were leather covered boxes with Scripture passages inside which were strapped to the forehead and arm during prayer.” (p. 1049). A reference to Matthew’s gospel alludes to wearing of broad phylacteries and long fringes in pretense of religious piety (Matthew 23:5). This rendering comes into

agreement with the traditional custom position for using phylacteries in the 1st CE. By the time of the Greco- Roman world phylacteries were used as amulets mystified to possess powers to invoke holiness in Judaism. The onset of the *Shema* is recognized with some reflections of Deuteronomic commandments on parenting contingent on family life and nation building. The injunction given to develop one's personal devotion in serving God and also tasked to inculcate same to children is a religion rooted in consanguinity. A religion described in consanguineous sense is embedded in parenting. The passage described a religious community with emphasis on the centrality of the family which in effect is the child.

The passage situated in an Israelite home depicts a social location where parents teach their children as part of their religious responsibility. The urgency of the divine commandment measured in the substance of “these words” covenanted in its exactness and obedience is the pedagogy reflecting the Old Testament parenting by giving children access to religious education. Probably, part of the ‘Teaching and Learning Materials’ (TLMs) would include phylacteries and writings on doorposts. Parenting from Old Testament in this exposition resonates with giving children the right to have access to education.

Another passage which reflects Old Testament parenting is the story of Hannah during the pre-monarchy period. This story is familiar to many Christians and non- Christians alike. In the book of 1 Samuel 2:19 we are told that, “Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.” Hannah had taken care of her child till he was weaned. She then dedicated him to God in the custody

of Eli the high priest for priestly apprenticeship according to the vow she made to God.

Although Samuel was in the custody of a priest, his mother provided in addition whenever she had the opportunity. The mother took the precedence in the provision not because the father did not care, but because she was the home maker. The fact that the husband went with her shows that both of them realized their corporate responsibility in the upkeep of their child. However, in most cultures, and as with the Jewish culture, the responsibility of child care usually becomes the sole responsibility of the mother.

The story of Eli and his children also support parenting in the Old Testament. The account could be used to establish parenting as central to spiritual welfare and national economy. Eli was the same high priest Hannah brought her son to live with him at Shiloh. Through Eli's weak parental practice, (1Samuel 3:11-14) God's retribution came upon him and his children and the whole nation (1Samuel 4:10 -22). The argument that, parenting is to be seen as effective social institution that could be used to evaluate ethics and measure morality is a pointer to the 'Parent factor.' The demise story of Eli and his family continued with taking over from him by Samuel. Interestingly, Samuel repeated similar blunders (1 Samuel 8:1-5) when his sons were accused of not 'being like him' hence, the national agitation for monarchical governance instead.

The theme of parenting from the Old Testament perspectives dilated more on religious education as part of parenting. It should be called from the discussion in this section that, the premise of parenting began with covenants and commandments God had with the Israelites based on single devotion of worship and preservation of their religious heritage through the families. The

discussion reiterates the position of giving children access to education to develop their mind to enforce moral discipline. The content of education from the premise of the *Shema* is not only to be taught but also to be instilled and enforced by parents. The case of Eli and Samuel demonstrated that forensic parenting is recommended in all circumstances when commanded as such. Therefore, parenting in this case was established with strong religious agenda focused on moral up-bringing for national moral awareness.

The non-Israelites Children

In an exclusive Jewish community entrenched in consanguineous enculturation with inward-looking religious tradition, one would think about the fate of non-Israelites children in their community. Anyone would assume that parenting is provided by only Jewish parents for Jewish children. Thus, within a fashioned pluralistic communal outlook, how would non-Israelite children be integrated into the mainstream culture? The answer to the paradox is rather more exploratory and didactic. Although there is limited literature about this, we can still infer from their covenant relation with God and socio-cultural religious life. The people's covenant with God from (Exodus 19:6) gives them mandates as missionaries, which means that they were to integrate other people into the Jewish faith and cultural life. In that context the people of Israel were called to serve as 'priests' to other nations. This means that they can integrate non-Israelites into their culture as seen in proselytization. Probably, this may sound quite distance from the subject of parenting.

Nevertheless, the story of Rahab (Joshua 2:12-14; 6:22-25) has import of relevance. We can situate the story of Rahab to explore the view that, parental responsibility was extended to children without Israelite descent and identity.

Since she and the entire household of her parents and siblings would possibly have children, and in this case, would not have been accepted into Israelite community without learning their way of life. And in as much as Rahab and her household were saved from the Jericho holocaust based on her faith (2:11b) in the God of the Israelites. As indicated that Rahab and her father's family experienced generosity from the Israelites, they would also be made to observe the *Shema* as part of their integration into cultural life of the Israelites.

The repeated command to demonstrate benevolence to the fatherless (Deuteronomy 24:19-21) add overtones for developing generosity towards orphans in particular to the subject of parenting in this study. Similarly, the Christian community can adopt wandering children and integrate them into their families and the church community so that the less privileged receives the experience of proper child care and parental love. Based on the analysis given, the review established parenting from the Old Testament religious perspective as part of civil responsibility for national integration and global outreach.

Child Care in the Church Age

The dispensation of the Church Age presents huge data that stretched to cover an expanse of over 1500 years CE. Materials from postbiblical texts for the reviewed discussion is only succinct to the historical data provided about parenting within the era. Nevertheless, available studies published by Evangelical Christians and Christian religious educators demonstrated extensive survey and researched based work. The materials indicated how the Church played a central role on parenting in the ministry of children beginning from the 3rd-18th centuries. Garland (1994) had reported the following to the credit of the Church:

The early Church was well known in Roman society for rescuing infants and children who otherwise would perish. If the catholic father did not 'lift up' a new born baby when placed ceremoniously at his feet, the baby would be 'exposed' to death on the garbage heaps of the city. Christians sought out these infants and took them into their own homes. When the church gained voice in the society, that voice was used to stop the practice of child abandonment (p. 373).

The history of how the Church saved children is conceived in its moral theology against infanticide. Through their religious custom and belief systems, all the children brought to the sacred tutelage of the Church were saved from dying through their intervention. The contribution made by the Church during the Church Age is a living legacy to the contemporary Christian community. The Church with support from the Bible should rally behind the constitution and speak against all forms and appearances of child abuse related issues and bad parental practices.

Available records indicated that, corporate effort of the Church in showing concern of caring for growing number of children abandoned on the street was carefully planned and executed. Garland (1994) again reported that, the Church at a Council of Nicaea in 325 agreed that schools be established in every Christian village to care for the sick, poor and abandoned children. The report further indicated that, a 4th Century Church manual urged childless couples to adopt orphans and commanded bishops to provide full support for the children till they reach adulthood. The record given portrayed interventions from both ecumenical circles and families for helpless children. Schools established by the Church in the villages were used to teach Christian education among other disciplines towards intellectual development of the child.

The Church struggled through the centuries to respond to the overwhelming needs of children. The chronicled record about her mission for children is overwhelming as compared to what we are witnessing today. Martin Luther shared similar religious perspective which commands child care from Christian faith and practice. As a Christian educator and a theologian, Luther, on the '95 Theses' of October 31st 1517 in Wittenberg, did not only protested for reformation in religious piety. In his advocacy on the primacy of Christian education in parenting, Luther (cited in Davis 1963) remarked on the '*Docendi Sunt Christiani*' (Christians are to be taught) the protestant reformer proposed for a kind of Christian education to be provided by Christian parents for their children.

And also in his 'Sermon on the Estate of Marriage' Luther again stated that "Parents must know that they please God, Christendom, the entire world, themselves and their children in no better way than by educating their children." Luther (quoted in Towns, 1975). By this statement, Luther was advocating for childhood education by parents as key in their role of parenting. It is to be understood as already established in this study that childhood education is part of parental responsibility.

Minuchin and Elizur (1990) had also reported of an increasing rate of how children who were in need were protected by the Church prior to the invention of *la turre*, in the 18th centuries. The *la turre*, was a turntable device on which infants were placed and passed into the foundling home. The process started with 312 children who were sheltered in the home of the order of St. Vincent DePaul in France. The anonymity in which the invention of the simple device offered greatly increased the number of children that parents brought to

the Church order for care. The number went up further when the device was installed in the home with the following record of figures; 2,150 children in 1740; 40,000 in 1784; and 131,000 received in 1833. The records indicated an overwhelming impact made about child abandonment over the past centuries.

By calculation, a total number of 173,462 children would have been abandoned, abused, neglected, died or would have become drug addicts, school dropouts, armed robbers, prostitutes, and so forth. The fate of children who were sent to the home of St. Vincent DePaul in France would have been different if they had not been cared for by the Church. Thousands of neglected children could be saved in the same way to minimize spate of child abuse, neglect and its effects on our communities if the Christian Church would realize the need and plight of children in our society today. Especially in reference to Moree community

In his lament over the ambivalence of the church's role, in the offering and practice of biblical parenting as central and relief to the society, MacArthur (2000, p. 12) have observed that, "Unfortunately, the impact of widespread worldliness and compromise in the church is taking a toll on Christian families." If the Church in that dispensation did not lose sight of child abuses but made impact with significant contribution, the harmless precedence is worth emulating for contemporary ecumenism discourse. The apostle Paul was of the same opinion when in his epistle to Timothy, commended Timothy's mother and grandmother for their Christian home training offered to Timothy in his childhood (2Timothy 1:5). The need and urgency for perpetuating child care and parenting as modelled by the Church in retrospect is more eminent.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed parenting from the Old Testament religious tradition and the early Church practice of child care in ministry. All of them pointed to centrality of the child's welfare as given by God's commandments. The Old Testament practice by the family was to develop intellectual and moral abilities of the child alongside physical development seen from the *Shema* and Hannah's example. The role of parenting from the early Church demonstrated communistic collaboration that saved thousands of children who would have been wayward. The Church should be used to raise voice on parenting by helping wayward children to be integrated into families and mission schools.

The religious contribution of parenting as recognized from Old Testament religious tradition and the Christian community provided basis for social policy and regulations for child care practices. They also give reminiscence to fundamental human rights and implications about Children's Act for reflections and expediency for meeting basic human needs of children. Our next review telescoped into the text on parenting for this study.

Review on Luke's Gospel

This section reviewed literature on the passage in Luke 2:40-52 about Mary and Joseph for this study. However, the review covered Luke's Gospel in the Synoptic Gospels as well. The gospel of Luke belongs to gospel component of the four Gospels notably; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John of the New Testament canon. It is the 3rd gospel and the longest of the gospel compendium. Critical scholarship relied on construed conjectures from internal evidence and few external guideposts established Luke's identity as the real author of the literary work, Freedman (1997). Tradition's reference to the title name; 'Gospel

of Luke's supported with epistles (Philemon 24) and (2 Timothy 4:11). External data support his authorship position with the Moratorium Canon (AD 170-180); earliest copy of the Gospel (Bodmer Papyrus XIV: 175-225) and sources of patristic writers like; Irenaeus (late 2nd century); Tertullian (207-208); Origen (254); Jerome (303).

The recipient of Luke's work was designated-Theophilus of his literary writing (Luke 1:3). Theophilus identified as the same recipient (Acts 1:1) of Luke's work was the view of patristic support of internal references to the "we passage" from the book of Acts where the narrator shifted from the third person plural, ('they') to the first person plural, ('we') narration as an eye witness in his encounter (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20: 5-15; 21:8-18; 27:1-28; 28:1-16). These passages suggest that Luke was Apostle Paul's missionary companion in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Judea, on the Mediterranean, and in Rome. It is conjectured from (Acts 16:10) that he became a Jewish proselyte as a Christian convert in Antioch through the ministry of Paul.

Luke is credited with two-volume literary works; the book of Acts as a direct dependent on the gospel literature. The literary genre of Luke-Acts is found to overlap with biography and novel usually characteristics of Roman cultural writing. Balch (in Dunn and Rogerson) observed that, "Roman cultural ideology outlined by the historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus influenced both Josephus and Luke." (p.1140.). Thus, the way of following the literary pattern in historiography; history of ancestors, their founders, such as Romulus, (Romans); Moses (Jews) and the founders' successors (kings or emperors). Likewise, Luke's voluminous writing contained three epochs; a) the ancestors

(Abraham, Isaac and Jacob); b) Jesus-the central figure of history (the Gospel), and c) successors and ecclesiology (Acts).

As such, Luke's intention of giving his literary composition from the gospel dimension and historic perspective of the early church was basically a composition of one coherent story account about Jesus Christ and the development of the early Church, Freedman (1997). The place of composition is speculated to be in Antioch in Syria-the third largest province of the Roman empire at the time. Mensah (2018, p. 93) posited that "The Gospel or the two-volume work of Luke-Acts, is usually dated around 85-90 CE." The date sets within the first century was an era of Greco-Roman presence which had already asserted its influence over the Jewish nation and swept across the entire Mediterranean community.

According to Thompson (1972) the two books were listed separately by the Moratorium Canon of the tradition in AD 180. Critics opined for each literary text as a separate unit based on its own merit of literary approach, theology, context and analysis in spite of its composite nature and literary truncation. Also, many Bible commentaries written on each separate volume are already in circulation. Therefore, readers may not compromise with an emerging composite single unit work as Luke-Act with ease no matter how popular it seems to be.

With this understanding, I limited Luke's work on Acts to its authorship section since the gospel dimension remains the main focus of this study. As it is through the event of such enquiries that the overall purpose and theme of Luke's gospel could be gleaned on its own merit.

Purpose and Themes

Luke's contribution of providing a gospel literature equally outlines the overall purpose and themes of his gospel. The purpose was stated in the prologue of his work, (Luke 1:4). The main purpose as indicated was to establish the truth about things that his beloved recipient (Theophilus) has heard, "to know the certainty" *asphaleia* of the things that have been taught. Luke's *asphaleia* is probably supported by his dependency on Markan's priority. The kind of knowledge *epiginōskō* Luke desired was for his readers to recognize the truth built on facts concerning the biography of Jesus who is at the centre of the gospel message they have come to believe in. Thus, he wrote to affirm not only about the certainty of the exact truth based on a clear understanding of the evidence but it also involved firm assurance that such truth has personal significance for the reader.

The account of Luke's gospel does not also narrow its purpose to *asphaleia* and *epiginōskō* but rather contains thematic issues which have theological implications and social responsibilities for the first readers of the first century who shared similar plight with Theophilus. The purpose of Luke's account outline has been put into various themes. The main theme of his Gospel is the nature of Jesus' Messiah ship and mission. Related themes under the broad scope discusses themes of salvation, prayer, women and children, poverty and wealth among others. These themes were meant to throw highlights through Luke's gospel to show religious and social environment during Jesus' time.

Luke in the Synoptic Gospels

A study into the gospel of Luke would not be comprehensible enough without linking it to the harmonization and the homogeny pertaining to the

gospel bloc and its synoptic relationship within the context of the New Testament canon. The word “Gospel” is usually associated with the literary works of the four books of the New Testament identified with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John bearing the title. A study into Synoptic Gospels would be adequately understood with the meaning of “gospel” and “synoptic” in their usage. The word “Gospel” is mostly understood by ordinary Christians to mean “good news.” However, critical studies in Greek points that Greek equivalent for “good news” is misnomer and a quest for semantics. Tuckett (in Dunn and Rogerson 2003) submitted that, “The word *euangelion*, or ‘good news,’ is unusual and rare in Greek. Its somewhat specialized use by Christians may owe a lot to the use of the cognate verb ‘evangelize’ (Gk. *euangelizomai*, meaning to ‘bring good news’). A claim on the verb was brought to the fore to explicate that the gospel message is mission oriented adventure. That the word “Gospel” as explained meant, ‘bring good news’ and not ‘good news, is in support with form criticism. That the gospel was given in the form of oral tradition and so, it was to bring message of God’s redemption and hope to depraved humanity.

The literary texts of the four gospels generally tell the story about life of Jesus and thus were recognized as gospel genre with claims on their uniqueness and particularity of stories told about Jesus. Moreover, the term “synoptic” is used to identify the other gospels apart from John’s gospel. Greek etymology is ‘*syn*’ meaning “with” and ‘*optic*’ looking together, (p. 993). Thus, the synoptic gospels so named used to describe similarity characteristics in structure and content that the three gospels share together. The outcome of the hypothesis found in the literary relationship in the Synoptic Gospels gave rise to the “Two Source Theory.” (Markan Priority and Q). Craig (Dunn and Rogerson 2003)

had explained that “Q” is the shortened form of the German word “Quelle” which means source.

The theory analyzed literary similarities found to indicate that, Matthew and Luke have all the stories in Mark according to order of events and wording. And where Matthew and Luke disagree, either one of them agrees with Mark (Markan Priority). Thus suggesting that Matthew and Luke used Mark’s gospel as their source. Mark is believed to be the same person who was also called John Mark (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37) whose mother owned the house where the early believers used to meet for fellowship. Early traditions have also recorded that Mark was Peter’s interpreter (Papias AD70-130). Tarrant (1983, p. 1) have pointed that, “Mark was able to gather information through the meetings in his mother’s house.” So he became a close associate of Peter from whom he received the traditions of the things that Jesus did and said through Peter’s preaching when he (Peter) was addressing the needs of the early Christian communities.

However, Matthew and Luke also have materials that agree to each other but not found in Mark to suggest that, Matthew and Luke had an additional source to Mark, (The Q Source). There are some other materials in the synoptic gospels peculiar to Matthew alone, (M Source) or Luke alone, (L Source) as attribution peculiar to Luke and Matthew not found in Mark. The other sources of (M and L) had been classified as disparate materials. They either give reflections of Jewish conservative traditions or rather the work of theological reflections and redaction by the gospel writers. In the (L) of the synoptic gospels Luke alone tells the parables of the Good Samaritan, (10:30-37), Mary and Martha, (10:38-42), Rich Fool (12:13-21), The lost coin (15:8-10), The

Prodigal Son (15:11-32), The Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) and the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10).

Mary and Joseph in Luke 2:40-52

The story of Mary and Joseph in the synoptic gospel is a story of betrothal which ultimately led to marriage (Luke 1:27; 2:4-5). The family background of both Mary and Joseph were from Jewish lineage. The story of Joseph and Mary in the Bible is told by many Christians during Christmas when the occasion is commemorated. So Joseph and Mary are identified with the birth of Jesus as their parents is a popular story often told to Sunday school children and preached in Christian communities.

In the synoptic gospels, the role of Mary and Joseph as parents is identified with the birth and infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. This account was not reported in Mark's Gospel. The evidence may be alluded to Mark's lack of knowledge about Jesus' birth from Peter who was his source of information. Tarrant (p. 2) has opined that, Mark's "Gospel begins at the point where Peter became a disciple, and gives no account of Jesus' birth." This assertion is consistent with Q source hypothesis underlining (L Source) and reconciled with conjectures and internal references. However, the infancy narratives within the synoptic context by Matthew and Luke is a case of parallelism. Luke's storyline raises questions on Jewish traditions indictment on Matthew whose background is more Semitic than Luke. In comparison Luke's report followed a systematic order.

The outlook of Luke's account depicts orderly account in a "sustained and sequential" *kathexes* or narrative (Luke 1:3), with an intent to furnish his reader with the certainty about the past events. The order in which Luke

presented his gospel account determined the perspective and circumstances under which each particular event occurred in order to appreciate the background and purpose of content, theology and practical ethics behind his gospel writing.

The Text Story in Luke 2:40-52

The content in the story shows the main Characters-Jesus, (protagonist) and Mary and Joseph, (his parents). Other features display; plotline, sequence of events, syntax, semantics and coherence. The content of the passage describes its literary organization, major narrative elements and their coordinating relationship in making the story to reflect its outlook and intended meaning. It is a story characteristic of a pericope block. Corrine (2009, p. 34) a pericope, to indicate “section of the text.” Which means a unit of independent block of narrative text with a complete coherence thought. A pericope is a story with a definite opening and closing like; a parable, birth narrative, or folk story. Thus, the passage in Luke 2:40-52 is a pericope composition and Luke’s pericope is bound by two summary statements (40 and 52) forming an *enclusio*.

The pericope portrays a truncation of texts designated as infancy narratives in Luke 1:5-2:52 but was delineated as an independent unit within the book context of Luke’s gospel in view of the pericope literary characteristics. Luke is credited for giving this text chapter 2:40-52 as the only account in the synoptic gospel canon which tells about the adolescent life of Jesus with no interpolation or extrapolation text. The text in Luke 2:40-52 was basically framed around a family set up. It gives an account about Jesus in his adolescent transition at 12 years with his parents. The narrative depicts a prose account with a narrator describing the growth transition of Jesus from his childhood into

adolescent hood till 12 years when the parents travelled with him to Jerusalem for the annual Passover. Something remarkable happened as the family was returning from the recess. Jesus got missing unknowingly by his parents. The parents realized his absence and went in search for hm. Adventure of this nature would not be an easy task especially on the occasion of pilgrimage when the holy city was filed with thousands of Jews.

Nevertheless, Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus and found him after three days studying in the temple with teachers of the law. Mary, the mother questioned his youthful disobedience and rebuked him for his conduct. After that he went back with his parents to Nazareth and became obedient to them. Luke concluded the text with how Jesus grew in wisdom, favour with God and men. The main discourse for this theme is intended to highlight on the relationship between Christian parents and how they should care for their children.

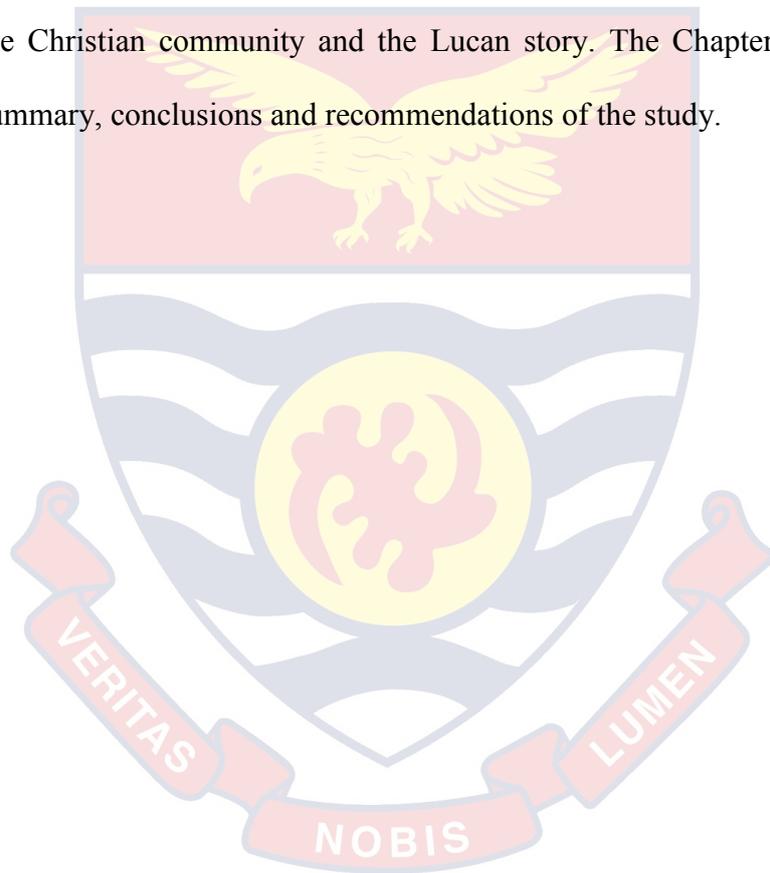
Organization of the Study

This work is divided into 5 main chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introductory aspects of the study which begins with General Introduction of the Study. This section is made up of various levels of sub-headings. The first one is Background to the study. The rest of the chapter work is found in sub-headings such as; statement of the problem, purpose of the study and objective of the study.

The rest included the research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study. Within the same chapter is also found in details the review of related literature under the following discussions; theoretical framework and conceptual base, the constitution and children's act,

rights of the child and parental duty, social and religious perspectives of parenting, parental responsibility, review on Luke's gospel and the biblical text of Luke 2:40-52.

The chapter 2 of the study looked at methods of biblical interpretation and the method designed for the study and its usefulness. The chapter 3 of the work examined the exegesis of Luke 2:40-52 with the text-centred narrative criticism method of reading. The 4th chapter looked at the relationship between the Christian community and the Lucan story. The Chapter 5 discussed the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

METHODS OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

The ultimate aim of reading a biblical story is to get full meaning and understanding from the text. One has to employ biblical methods and skills of interpretation in order to derive meaning from text. However, an exegete's choice of selecting a particular method of interpretation as 'most appropriate' had been greatly motivated and influenced by epochs of scholarly critique in preference on one type of method of interpretation over and against the other based on their own merits. This part of the study dealt with availability of biblical methods of interpretations including the method deemed as most appropriate for interpreting the text in Luke 2:40-52 for this study.

Several methods of biblical interpretation in literary scholarship exist in many forms. Keegan (1985, p. 24) submitted that "These methods can, for the most part, be basically classified as either diachronic or synchronic." They were theories that generally thrived in biblical interpretation over the years. They were used to give picture in the process of how the world is viewed and understood. Tyson (1999, p.3) puts it more profoundly that, "In fact, one of the most important things theory can show us is that methodologies are ways of seeing the world, whether we're talking about physics or sociology, literature, or medicine." For that reason, he explained that any methodology chosen must be grounded in its own language and key concepts in gaining dominance.

Diachronic Methodologies

Diachronic method is used to describe principles of interpretation based on the historical analysis of the text. Keegan (p. 24) explained that, "Diachronic

analysis involves viewing things as having been constituted by or as deriving their meaning from an historical progression.” The method depends on historical facts underlining the text and for this reason also called historical criticism method. Its composite nature gave rise to various forms such as; textual criticism, form criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, and tradition-historical criticism. They were traditional methods of biblical criticism oriented in historical scholarship. McKenzie and Haynes (1999, p. 6) agreed that, it “emphasized the historical, archaeological, or literary backgrounds or roots of a text and the development of the text through time.” McKenzie and Haynes further explained that, historical oriented biblical critics rather focus on author’s intention as key to unveil meaning from what the text meant originally and what it means now. Mensah (2016, p. 35) observed that, interpretation under ‘critical analysis’ by “paying close attention to details and problems” of the biblical text and its social contexts underlined its premise of application.

The historical criticism method was recognized as the then modern biblical criticism borne out of socio-cultural antecedents with the onset of ‘European Enlightenment’ which began during the 17th and 18th centuries. A nationalism quest for absolute objectivity in scientific empiricism had its toll on biblical scholarship. The Quest for Historic Jesus into the studies of the New Testament propounded by David Strauss, though the quest failed, most significantly was studies into empirical exegetical methods using historical critical approach. The method was found most powerful and useful tool that remained in practice in the life of the Church and thrived for several years (150 years). They were found as useful tools for the reconstruction of preexisting traditions in the books of the Bible. Notably among them were the four source

-theory behind the Pentateuch and two source -theory for explaining the gospels. They were found relevant in analyzing texts by going back through time (behind the text in history) for investigations to predetermine the depths of events.

Despite its usefulness however, the historical criticism method came under attack on the basis that authorial intention behind a text is likely to generate “intentional fallacy” and “which are always dubious” McKenzie and Haynes (p. 6). That the various methods have limitations, Keegan affirmed “They can indeed uncover a great deal about the genetic sequence preceding a text but they do not yield great deal of insight about the text itself” (p.30). The main limitation of the historical criticism was that methods were not able to bring new things into the text, and so this led into newer methodologies.

Synchronic Methodologies

The presence of newer methodologies later developed in the 1940s took on the form of synchronic characteristics. “Synchronic analysis involves viewing things in and of themselves apart from the historical progression of which they are a part” Keegan (p. 24). The method operates on the concept of considering all aspects of narrative events discernable by current situation relating to circumstances that could be adapted to similar event or occurrence at any time. Synchronic methods included; structural criticism, narrative criticism, reader-response criticism, and poststructuralist criticism. They were methods which tend to focus on the text itself and interaction between text and readers.

Of the newer methodologies, the claim on the position of the reader-response criticism as the ideal ‘innovative’ method also dominated the frontiers of biblical scholarship. Consequently, it became prolific as reliable instrument in interpretation. It was to contend with the author’s intentionality of the

historical approach to give way to the reader's subjective view of the text. Proponents of the reader-response criticism approached biblical text as works of literature with universal conventions that could be interpreted from the readers' own interaction through reading. Some proponents of the reader-response criticism, according to Osborne (1991) included, Normand Holland, David Bleich, Stanly Fish, Terrence Keegan, Shimon Bar-Efrat and Elizabeth Freund. The reader-response criticism came into literary conflict with New Criticism, another emerging method which came to replace the reader-response approach.

Exum and Clines (1993, p. 15) explained that "New Criticism stands for an attitude to texts that sees them as works of art in their own right, rather than as representations of the sensibilities of their authors." The method proposes for interpretation in which autonomy is given to the text as 'coherent intelligible whole and independent of the author.' Tyson (1999, p. 119) explained it this way,

Although the author's intention or the reader's response is also mentioned in the process of New Critical reading of the text, that is not the focus of analysis. What to be pursued in a text to determine whether it represents the author's intention or reader's interpretation is to carefully examine, or to have a 'close reading, with all the evidence provided by the language of the text itself; its images, symbols, metaphors, rhyme, meter, point of view, setting, characterization, plot and so forth. These are called *formal elements* in a literary work because they form and shape the literary work.

He continued that, critics attribute the literary work to timeless, autonomous verbal object on the basis that, readers and readings may change but the literary work remains the same. That is to say that, meaning of a text could be derived

from the shaping of its literary construction outlook such that, “its meaning is objective as its physical existence.” (p. 120). Tyson’s assertion in essence objectively critiques linguistic structures and communication skills used in composition of social events such as; marriage, family, kinsmen, as given by literary work. And as it stands, such that it is not manipulated by the perceptions of the reader. In this way, the text holds a literal entity occupied by its own world created by the community it was addressed and draws distinctions such as, real world, the narrative world and narrative message. It means all the elements in the text will work together to bring the actual meaning which will not depend on outside factors, since the literary text forms a composite narrative working together to create a harmonious whole.

Thus, the approach to the literary meaning is “The text itself.” The concept behind the New Criticism method of biblical interpretation is the text-centred criticism which relies on rigorous objectivity for interpretation. The method is a variant form of reader-response criticism. Therefore, New Criticism is now referred as text-centred criticism. Critics of text-centred method had supported the claims made by the proponents of previous historical criticism that a biblical text is a literary work, and now contend for rigorous objectivity from the literary characteristics of the text as prerequisite for making meaning. Critics pointed that, “To allow anything that happens to the reader to enter into the understanding of the text is to distort the objective meaning of the text” Keegan, (p.76). It is a method popularly known for its emphasis on the autonomy of the text, that is to mean that, the method allows the text to speak for itself. In contrast, critics of reader-response method contend that meaning “are supplied by the reader.” (p. 80). Proponents of New Criticism According

to Osborne (1991) included Wolfgang Iser, Allan Culpepper, Fowler and Rosseguié.

In view of the growing rise of interpretational disparities culminating from various methods in succession at every advent of epoch in literary scholarship, scholars have agreed that there is no absolute method for interpretation. McKenzie and Haynes (1999, p. 201) have claimed that, “...no system of reading can ever guarantee the ‘correct’ interpretation, of a story, no matter how highly trained and ‘competent’ readers may become.” However, Alter (1981) had earlier reiterated the same argument rather in a more cautious tone thus,

I do not presume to judge whether a literary text may have thought to have an absolute, fixed meaning, but I certainly reject the contemporary agnosticism about all literary meaning. The most primary concern here is that, all of us should come much closer to the range of intended meanings-theological, psychological, moral, or whatever of the biblical tale by understanding precisely how it is told p. 179.

In spite of these observations, a preference for text-centred criticism was widely accepted as exegetic innovation from recent discovery by scholars in literary college. It seeks to develop verifiable methods for drawing rigorous conclusions, Keegan (p.76). It was a method with an advantage over the old historical method, which “by its very nature, does not generate conclusions that challenge the contemporary lifestyle of Christian communities.” Keegan (p. 23). Thus, the narrative discourse and narrative message has the capacity to interact with members of the faith community through conviction from the narrative. In consensus, Mensah (2016, p.37) had also submitted that the “... biblical text, in its final form, as a ‘book’ exist in its own right as an artifact with a theme and

a message.” The point given about this is that the narrative composition seeks to create the reality between physical world and the world of the narrative discourse which allows meaning to be derived on its own merit.

My preference for text-centred criticism lies in broad application of its literary base which influences interpretation by following ‘close reading’ using techniques of literary art that plays the role for shaping the biblical narrative. Alter described it as “...dialogue, in a whole network of ramified interconnections in the text.” (p. 3). It has the advantage of grounding the text to focus on the expected and relevant theological, psychological and moral implications for its implied world. As a newer method, it is synchronic by nature and can generate conclusions meaningfully to challenge the status quo in dealing with challenges of the present times. Thus, the choice of interpretation fashioned will depend on its suitability and relevance to the selection of the biblical text of the study and its implications for the study area.

Weaknesses of Text-Centred Criticism

Usually characteristics of all methods, the text-centred criticism also has its limitations found in the application of extreme rigorous objectivity. To some extent, the objective motive of a narrative from Old Testament religious practices and remises of Greco-Roman traditions of early Church from the New Testament may not be practical in focus towards God’s progressive plan of redemption for humanity. For instance, observing Jewish custom and rituals such as; circumcision as requirement for salvation, food laws, agricultural laws, Sabbath laws, among others. Again, it may not be relevant for contemporary legal systems of government, advent of technology and communication structures of 21st century enlightenment. For instance, outmoded cultural

practices from Old Testament times such as, polygamy, Abraham's human sacrifice, gender insensitivity and slave trade. Also, when the contextualization analysis is not well negotiated by a resourceful and expert exegete, the narrative message could be used to enforce adherents to continue holding on to outmoded religious practices imposed on faith readers as doctrines or dogmas for their denominations.

Conclusion

In spite of its weaknesses usually characteristics of all methods, my preference for text-centred criticism was related to the wide acceptance as exegetic innovation by scholars in literary college including biblical scholars. Using text-centred criticism for interpretation in this study has many advantages. It helped to derive meaning from text as intended following 'close literary reading' which directed the narrative discourse. Thus, the method designated for Luke 2:40-52, was a literary autonomous with apparent possible and permissible traits of parental responsibilities found complete in itself.

The reading was facilitated and explored with the objective of the study based on relevance of parental responsibility for children. Interpretation formed served as data ready for use as a case study report of the research area. However, the reader -response criticism in contrast which rather stresses on the reader as the one who makes full meaning of the text will seek to endanger the objectivity of the study for its permissible use of reconstruction of the literary text.

CHAPTER THREE

A READING EXEGESIS OF LUKE 2:40-52

Reading by Scholars

The story of Jesus and his parents in Luke 2:40-52 is an account well-known in the Bible by many Christians and Bible scholars. There is a popular theological assertion held by both biblical scholars and Bible readers concerning this story account in (Luke 2:40- 52). Many scholars have attributed a common theological theme to this text to imply Christology of Jesus. Some of the works cited have included; ‘The Child Jesus at Jerusalem’ Godet (1887, p.145); ‘The Passover Visit of Jesus to the Temple’ Marshall (1986, p.125); ‘Jesus takes Part in the Passover at Twelve’ Dickson (1988, p. 47); ‘Jesus’ Revelation of His Self-Understanding’ Bock (1994, p. 259). The main exegetical verse identified with the theme on the Christology had been referred to (v. 49) where the adolescent Jesus retorted to his mother with the intention of declaring his divine identity with God as his father.

The interpretation, usually skewed to Christology may tend to overshadow or disapprove other legitimate theme gleaned from the text. Considering the whole text and following closely from its literary stylistic features, plotline and sequence of events and coherence show that the theme of Christology is not consistent with it. Again, the relationship between its theology and literary pericope organization outlook does not reflect intended meaning given to Christology. As a matter of fact, one scarcely hears of theme of parental responsibility related to the text in Luke 2:40-52. However, the study gleaned the theme of parenting from the passage and highlighted key thematic issues on; (a) Parental Responsibility in Jesus’ Growth (Luke 2:41; 52), (b) Parental Influence of Religious Faith and

Practice (Luke 2:41-42), (c) Search for missing Child, (Luke 2:43-46) and (d) Parental Control at Home (Luke 2:51a).

The method used for reading was text-centred criticism approach as indicated already carefully selected for its efficacy and justification of interpretation in solving the problem of this study. Theological conclusion drawn from the interpretation was used as a standard for determining the ethical guidelines on parental responsibility against the concept behind cultural practice of parenting in Moree community. Other lessons and implications established were used to define the main theological and ethical themes underlining Christian parenting. The work was concluded with theological and social ethics binding parenting for Christian parents as their duty to God and society. The reading exercise was set to uncover two basic facts; first meaning of text to the first readers in the 1st century era (historical antecedents) then relevance of meaning also to the 21st century reader.

Setting the Scene

The narrative began with a summary statement (v.40) also complemented with a similar concluding statement (v.52). The two statements highlighted Jesus' transitional growth from childhood to adolescent hood describing the transitional span within the narrative frame. The description of adolescent transition given in the text is also consistent with the concept of adolescent transitional growth for children in the Ghanaian social context. The transition emphasized Jesus' physical development including other attributes of growth in wisdom, favour with God and favour with men. The narrative unfolds to describe how the transitional growth was shaped and supervised with keen parental interest.

The opening statement in the narrative set the scene of Jesus' childhood and how it graduated into adolescent hood. Jesus' childhood was marked with "continued growing" or "was growing" rendered in the Greek as *ἠϋξανεν* (*ēuxanen*). The *ἠϋξανεν* is an imperfect tense in Greek used to indicate a repeated action in the past being referred in the present at the time of reporting. The ambiguity that *ἠϋξανεν* poses for the English is the result of the past perfect 'grew' as given by the translation in the RSV Bible.

The tense was introduced with a proper noun *παιδίον* (*paidion*) 'little boy' (v.40). Thus, *Τὸ δὲ παιδίον ἠϋξανεν* 'The little boy was growing' or as given in 'The child grew' (RSV) suggests Luke's report from Jesus' childhood, closed the narrative with adolescent transition of 'stature' *ἡλικία* (*helikia*) that is, physical growth. Stature rendered 'physical growth' in the Greek (same word used for Zacchaeus - Luke 19: 3), is in contrast with childhood characteristics of 'little boy' (v.40) brings Jesus' growth into full picture of adolescent transition.

The verse structure in (40 and 52) were construed to explicate the terminal level of the physical development at 12 years being described in the text to indicate adolescent period. In this case, the effect from childhood to adolescent transition was achieved with the two summary words *παιδίον* and *ἡλικία*. The meaning of 'physical growth' is not literal in meaning as childhood is also a physical growth. Meaning of 'physical growth' according to Reiling and Swellengrebel (1971 p. 155) also implies 'age', or bodily stature' in Greek. This understanding alludes to size in growth corresponding to age clearly draws the difference between a child and adolescent.

Jesus' Growth: factor of Parental Responsibility (Luke 2:40; 52)

Physical growth and development take place in children as natural cause. However, to achieve balance and proper developmental growth is initiated with proper feeding, sheltering, clothing and access to health care. It is already established in this study that feeding forms part of basic necessities parents provide for their children. The parental responsibility of Mary and Joseph is seen from the growing attributes of Jesus. The physical growth of Jesus was supported with provision of basic necessities by his parents.

Even though not explicitly stated in the narrative, the nature of the text structure describing Jesus' growth from childhood to adolescent on its own merit justify for the theme of good parental traits. The evidence lies implicitly in the text that the parents of Jesus took good care of him with feeding to stimulate growth in the body with reference to 'The child grew.' Thus, Jesus grew as a child with increase in the towards physical development like all children. In addition to growth in physical development, Jesus also grew with increase in wisdom.

Growth in Wisdom and Favour

The physical growth of Jesus was identified with wisdom and favour. Godet (1887, p.151) noted that, "σοφία, *wisdom*, refers to intellectual and moral development." He related 'favour with God and men' as attributes which complete wisdom and morality and wisdom is the intellectual ability of understanding about things pertaining to the cosmos. Intellectual ability is attributed to growth in mental development, rational reasoning, analytical, very careful and knowledgeable. While moral development depends on ability to discern good from evil which ultimately flowed from spiritual relationship Jesus had in obedience to the commandments of God.

Thus, the outcome of spiritual relationship with God is the moral growth through right relationship with man as well. Jesus also might have exhibited good human relationship within the community where he was brought up. For the precedence of *σοφία* and *χάριτι* were evidently deeply rooted in his growth. The growth development took gradual process. This was supported with *ἐκραταιοῦτο* (ekratauto) ‘getting mighty’ and *πληρούμενον* (plunromenon) ‘being filled’. Thus, the text demonstrates that as Jesus was growing in his physical body, he developed certain abilities, or qualities, or competencies, which gave him the enablement for insight, skills and experiences of growth attributes he needed to make life complete.

The closing of the narrative is connected to the personality characteristics of Jesus with emphasis on his spiritual and moral relationship with God and man. Jesus’ growth in wisdom and morals was not automatic as a child born into a typical Jewish home. His parents would have monitored his mental and spiritual growth by shaping and guiding him with the Torah. As in Jewish cosmology parents are expected to teach their children as part of their responsibility required in the *Shema*. A Jewish child at 6 years is expected to learn and memorize the Decalogue and obey the principles as required by Jewish religion. (c.f. Luke: 18-21).

Based on this principle is the fact that, Jesus’ growth of remarkable intellectual ability, acquired knowledge and virtues were greatly influenced and supervised by his pious parents through gradual process. The family setting within the time frame from childhood to adolescent age at 12 years at the time of Luke’s report provided considerable long gaps in the narrative enough for

conjectures to be made into daily life activities of a Jewish home in the first century Jewish religious practice.

A Quest for Parental Home of the Jews: Question of Gaps in the Text.

The opening statement of the narration with growth from childhood (v.40) with similar concluding statement with adolescent accent (v.52), set the precedence for child care and parental responsibility. The text does not report on everything that took place within the time frame of childhood to adolescent. This gives indication of long gaps in the story left for scrutiny. A thorough attention should be given with rigorous interpretation in bringing out the objectivity left lying implicitly in the text. The connection between (40 and 52) about the growth process described was continuous and progressive. It was a physical growth attributed with complimentary growth developments with *σοφία* and *χάρις* ‘wisdom’ and ‘favour’ of God and with man. As such, what went on during this period is worth considering and relevant for this study.

The concept of parenting in Ghanaian set up also implies the process of taking care or supporting a child from birth to adolescent involved in physical development, emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. If parenting is limited to taking care of children from birth to adolescent, then the concept helps to understand Luke’s purpose of reporting about Jesus from his childhood to adolescent. In that sense, the study is justified on the theme of parenting from the text’s construction.

However, such judgement should be supported with concept of parenting and reference of terminal point from the traditions and customs to unfold major family events and responsibility associated with what happened in a typical Jewish home among the Jews. A basic activity peculiar in a Jewish

home is the teaching of instructions or the law as we have said already from the *Shema* covenant under the Old Testament parenting. The family was central to propagating of the Jewish faith from its injunction on the *Shema*. The concept of Israelite community begins with the family as children learn Jewish culture and traditions from their parents.

In her discussion on social contexts of Proverbs, Dell (2006, p. 30) contends for the role of parents as teachers where “education was primarily done in the family setting.” In her thesis, she gave scholarship on why Proverbs chapter 1-9 were considered as oral collections of “my son” instructions on family setting which featured predominantly in the post exilic. She pointed to Proverbs 1:8: ‘Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and reject not your mother’s teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck’ as evidence about the role of parents at home. Other scholars, Lang (1979), Steiert (1990) and Fox (1996) in affirmation had established Proverbs 1-9 as a section that belongs to the wisdom writings given to the family to inculcate the ‘fear of Yahweh’ in children. These are wise sayings catalogued for teaching varied lessons for life.

Whybray (1990, p.99) described it as “educational literature in its form and vocabulary” expressing ‘my son’ (*beni*), as address by a father or teacher. Thus, parents address their children with wisdom instructions on how to live, fear God and live with their neighbours. Murphy (1981, p.53) had noted that, “The message can be summarized: Wisdom brings life.” The centrality of the wise sayings was for acquiring wisdom and moral skills for life on issues which address moral and social situations to prepare the youth for life.

Parental responsibility demands that parents engage their children with teachings to expand and broaden their faculties on moral and spiritual things about life. Contents outline from wisdom instruction from Proverbs chapter 1-9 was structured to provide caution against rejection to wisdom by young men as folly. The instructions admonish children to be adherents to parental instruction which speaks against evil companion (Prov. 1:8-19), to avoid the path of temptation, (Prov. 2:1-22), to pursue wisdom and piety, (Prov. 3:1-12), to develop discipline for living with one's neighbour, (Prov. 3:21-35), wisdom to resist foolishness of sexual infidelity (Prov.5:1-12), warning concerning personal responsibility, (Prov. 6:1-19) and others. The contents of the home education served as portraits of moral lessons for building faith in God and also to maintain social relationship. One would expect the parents, Mary and Joseph to educate their child Jesus alongside these virtues.

In addition to these may include learning and practice of Jewish rituals associated with their faith such as; recitation of the Decalogue, the *Shema*, ceremonial rituals on: Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles (Sukkoth), extra biblical festivals like feast of Dedication, (Hanukkah), New Year, (Rosh Hashanah), Day of Atonement, (Yom Kippur), Lots, (Purim). Towns (1975) had observed that, "The education of the Jewish boy took place, first of all, in the home." (cf. Deut. 6:6-9). The observation was made to buttress expositions on the theme of religious educational drills as activities that took place in a Jewish home setting.

Thus, the gap between the infancy and adolescent period could be filled with the scenes of religious activities that characterized a typical Jewish home. The teachings of Jewish faith and practices by parents of Jesus would also

reflect the family's piety as observed within the community. This led to the clues of parental responsibility that lies implicitly behind the text.

The Piety of Mary and Joseph (2:41-42)

The text here reveals narrative world of Jewish traditions and customs. Mary and Joseph were identified as devout Jews who kept the Passover as religious institution stipulated in the Torah (cf. Exod. 12:1-32). By making a pilgrim journey to Jerusalem constituted one of the basic religious responsibility required from all Jews. The Passover is one of the cardinal feasts of the Israelites. It was an occasion used to foster national unity and identity through forgiveness, restoration, thanksgiving and covenant renewal with God. Observing the Passover is the main tenet of the Jewish religion. It was a feast which commemorated the nation's deliverance from death on the eve of their evacuation from Egypt. God had commanded Moses to tell the Israelites that everyone should kill a lamb and use the blood to paint the doorpost as guarantee from death as the angel of the Lord will pass through the land to kill all firstborn of the Egyptians.

The festival demands all Jews in diaspora to make a pilgrim journey to Jerusalem to observe the national gathering at Jerusalem their capital city where the Temple is located. The feast demands families to make sacrifice of either a lamb or goat on the 'Day of Preparation' to be followed by a communal feast. Mary and Joseph used to make pilgrimage journey to Jerusalem every year as part of their religious obligation. The emphasis on *κατ' ἔτος* 'each year' shows strict adherence to Jewish traditions. Traveling from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the purpose of Passover feast every year shows that the parents of Jesus were devout worshippers who observed religious practices accordingly. The occasion

also has a pedagogy value for children (cf. Exod. 12:26-27) as they join their parents in the ceremony. Parents were assigned with the responsibility to explain the concept behind the religious activities of the Passover traditions to their children.

However, the narrative emphasized that when Jesus reached the age of 12 years they went with him. The purpose of ἐγένετο ἑτῶν δώδεκα ‘and when he was twelve years’ is discovered from traditions behind customs for 12-year-old boys in Jewish culture. The highlight was purposely given to indicate a special role worth considering by custom for adolescent Jews of 12 years. Marshall (1978, p. 146) posited that a Jewish boy of 12 years “began to be responsible for legal observances, and to receive religious instructions” as legal requirement which qualifies him to be accorded with the title “son of the Law” or, “*Bar Mitzvah*” (Fitzmyer, cited in Bock, 1994). The boy begins to learn a trade and wear phylacteries Learney (1966). The meaning of the custom suggests that, a Jewish boy at the age of 12 twelve years is recognized by the Jewish community as a matured member with a social status.

The Piety of Mary and Joseph provided traits of parental responsibility from all indications. If Jewish custom demanded boys at 12 years to participate in the religious festival of the faith community, it also implied that Jewish parents are tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the moral and spiritual growth of their children. What informs parenting in this text is identified with the piety of Mary and Joseph on how they conducted and demonstrated their religious life as parents. The text reflects parenting for the fact that, Mary and Joseph went to the feast and also stayed throughout the feast till end portrayed their response and attitudes towards religious faith and practices. By attending

the feast with their child Jesus again showed that they were responsible for the spiritual and moral development of their child. Bock (p.264) submitted that “The parents’ taking the 12-year-old Jesus on the Passover journey is, once again, a picture of faithful parents instructing their child in the faith on a very important holy day.” Bock’s submission echoes on the piety of Mary and Joseph on the theme of parental responsibility narrowed to family’s pilgrim to Jerusalem as required in obedience to the Torah for faith, example and practice.

Search for Jesus (2:43-45)

At the end of the Passover celebration as the family was returning to Nazareth, Jesus stayed back without the knowledge of his parents. Some scholars attribute this to parental negligence, but the text did not indicate that or the narrator attempting to explain to the reader why the parents were not aware (Marshall, in Bock 1994). It is speculated that Jesus willingly stayed back in view of his intention revealed later in his reply to his mother. However, the main text underlining the theme of parenting is derived from (43-45).

According to traditions, the Passover celebration lasted for seven days throughout the sacred period. So Jesus was with the family till the end of the feast when he decided to remain behind because he did not join the pilgrim band when the family was returning to Nazareth at the end of the festival. However, when the parents realized that, their son is neither in the company of their relatives nor acquaintances they set off in search of him although they had already travelled for a day’s journey. The pilgrim journey might have been a conventional adventure with full of excitement for the convenience use of *συνοδία*, (*sunodia*) and *συγγενεῶσιν* (*sunggenusin*) ‘company’ and ‘relatives’. The situation looked like, Mary and Joseph searched among other significant

folks whom they assumed to know the whereabouts of their child. A day's journey from Jerusalem, reported by Marshall (1978, p. 127) took "about 20-25 miles" by caravan. Even though scholars differ in their estimation of a day's journey mileage, to be more than 20-25 miles, Reiling and Swellengrebel (1971, p. 148) agreed on 15-20 miles as convenient for caravan in a day as pilgrims go through long journey of three transits from north to the south.

Rasmussen (1989, p. 172) speculated the missing of Jesus was realized by Mary and Joseph "probably near el-Lubban (Lebonah), a region near Jerusalem" where many pilgrims are expected to make their first transit after recession of the feast for the first day journey from Jerusalem. In calculation, if the day's journey covered about 25 miles from Jerusalem, (when Jesus was found lost), then going back to Jerusalem, (in search of Jesus) adding up to another 25 miles then, searching for the boy Jesus in Jerusalem city was really a stressful adventure.

The Case of ἀναζητοῦντες

The narrative depicts how Mary and Joseph reacted upon realizing the absence of their child after the day's journey. They went back to the city looking for Jesus. A reference to ἀναζητοῦντες (anasetontes) 'searching' is a present participle describing the anxiety Mary and Joseph went through in looking for Jesus on the streets of Jerusalem as the festival was in recession. What moved Mary and Joseph into action was derived from the verb ἀνεζήτουν "were seeking up" and ἀναζητοῦντες "searching." The initial search was marked by ἀνεζήτουν as in 'hunt' during "were seeking up" adventure. Thinking that Jesus was among kinsfolk, the parents looked for him based on where they could find him.

However, the futile result from the initial search conducted, informed them to intensify diligent search for the boy Jesus. The effect of ἀναζητοῦντες was demonstrated by the parents' continued eagerness of their search. The example of Mary and Joseph given here was that, they never gave up looking for Jesus till he was found. The stress on ἀναζητοῦντες meaning diligent search also connotes, well focused, intensive, careful, hardworking, describing the intensity of their conduct in the search for Jesus.

The case of ἀναζητοῦντες is also connected to Mary's expression in *εγω ὀδυνώμενοι ἐζητοῦμέν* ('I being pained we are seeking you') "I have been looking for you anxiously." Mary expressed experiencing pain for a missing son. The effort made by Mary and Joseph in search for their missing child was consistent with love, compassion and care showing parental responsibility. The verse speaks directly to parents in Moree who allow their children to roam about without any passion in search for them.

Jesus was Obedient to his Parents (2:51)

The concluding verse sets the narrative tempo on low ebb in summarizing the pilgrim journey of the family after Mary and Joseph had demonstrated parental responsibility in search for Jesus. Mary and Joseph took their son home because they did not allow their child to remain on the street of Jerusalem. Godly parents do not allow their children to remain as streets children. They keep them at home and train them through nurturing and caring. The fact that Jesus became obedient to his parents also shows parent-child subordination that, the boy Jesus returned with his parents to Nazareth and was obedient to them.

As required from Jewish law that children should honour their parents, so was the case at home of Mary and Joseph. The subordinate clauses of ‘and he went down with them’; and came to Nazareth’; ‘and he continued subject to them’ provided genitive case which described how Jesus willingly became obedient to his parents. His mother ‘kept all these sayings in her heart’ *‘πάντα τὰ ῥήματα’* Mary’s inability to comprehend his son’s explanation for his divine aspiration and mission for his life left her with no option than to reflect on them. As Mary the mother did, “she ... carefully kept all these things in her heart.” Mary reflects a model parent keeping what her child does in her heart for deeper understanding and probably for future reference.

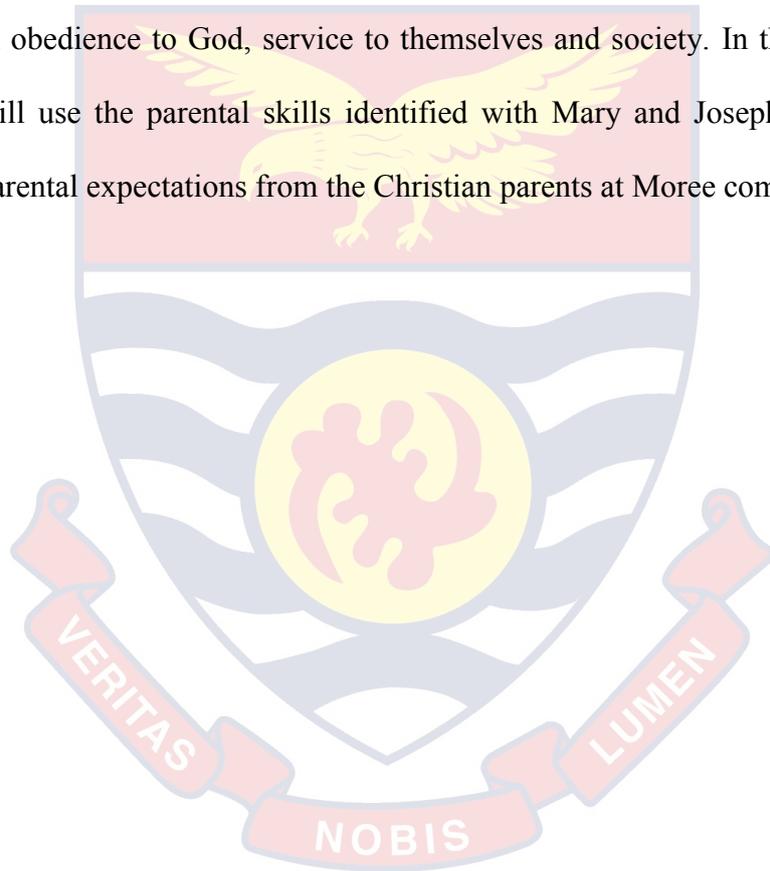
The last verse re-echoes a concluding verse forming the *inclusio*. The report ended with Jesus’ adolescent life showing how he grew during these years and where he remained (51a) in the ensuing years of his upbringing before his baptism and public ministry at the age of 30 years.

Conclusion

The theme of parenting was established from different perspectives in this interpretation in reference to Mary and Joseph as model parents. The text demonstrates Mary and Joseph playing a parental role as established in the text for their responsibility in support of physical growth and development of their child Jesus. They also supervised the instruction of their child’s intellectual and spiritual development in moral education from their religious faith. Mary and Joseph were able to model their parenting by demonstrating passion and love in searching for their child Jesus when he got missing.

Ethics behind the theme of parenting in this text entreats Christian parents to recognize diversity in child care practice and ensure that they

discharge their responsibility to embrace all aspects of growth for attaining comprehensive development of growth in children. It could be established from this interpretation that, one's religious faith, love and devotion could be used as deciding factors for effective parenting. It also implied that parents who are resourceful with knowledge and skills on parenting have better chance of demonstrating good parental practices. Parents with strong religious beliefs and practices recognize parenting as a religious responsibility and an act of worship in obedience to God, service to themselves and society. In the next chapter I will use the parental skills identified with Mary and Joseph to measure the parental expectations from the Christian parents at Moree community.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE MOREE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND LUCAN STORY

The previous chapter was used for the reading exegesis of Luke 2:40-52. The story established the theme of parental responsibility by Mary and Joseph as expressed from their religious faith and practice as practitioners of Jewish religion. This section of the study related the theme of parenting from Luke's story and significance of its reflections on the religious beliefs and practices of the Christian community in Moree. The aspect also considered alongside, social characteristics of Moree community in general and how the Lukan story fits into its social outlook.

Sociological Perspectives of Moree Community

Social theorists are of the view that, every community is an identifiable social organization of people with their own cultural peculiarities. With process of time, feasible traits of cultural traditions observed through a set of repeated patterns, conventions, values or philosophical ideals could be used to describe and define the community's worldview concerning a particular socio-cultural phenomenon. This realization lies in the fact that any cultural tendencies developed from human behaviours and relationships is contingent on descriptions of experiences derived from its immediate environment.

I seek to assess Moree community in terms of its socio-political characteristics and its cultural understanding and practices binding their mode of child care regulation. A social enquiry into cultural practices regarding social construction of child care practices pertaining to parenting need explanation from their social context of practice. This discussion basically, seeks to trace the social and cultural environment of Moree community and how its

descriptive characteristics of communal particularities defines their cultural identity and how this contributes to national development and social welfare for children on one hand, and how the Christian community are expected to demonstrate parenting as religious virtue from ontological imperative and social mandate in serving their community.

Historical Traits, Population and Occupation

The purpose of giving a historical and geographical characteristics traits and nature of the community informing the background of this thesis is to provide data on (a) historical background contributing to the social make-up of the people in Moree, and (b) guiding the reader to gain simple and fair knowledge about the community's social construction and identity. Moree community is 10 km radius off Cape Coast-Accra highway from Cape Coast towards Yamoransa just after the toll booth. The 1km distance in-drive from the junction lies the community on flat stretched land dispersed with mountainous vegetation bounded in the south by the Gulf.

The community forms part of Abura Asebu Kwamankese (AAK) district in the central region of Ghana having Abura Dunkwa as the district capital. The AAK district is made up of three distinctive Fante traditional communities merged into three-in-one traditional sovereignty as Abura Asebu Kwamankese traditional area. Moree belongs to Asebuman sovereignty with Asebu as their paramount traditional seat. The history of Moree community in close proximity to Cape Coast is partly tied to fortunes of the then Gold Coast of Ghana from antiquities. It is a typical indigenous traditional community rooted in traditions. The community also has a cultural affinity with the Fantes from the Akan descent.

The Fante affinity naturally codifies the social life of the community with Fante distinctiveness with particular reference to conventional practices of matrimonial system of inheritance and belongingness among the Fantes. This particular practice of inheritance is worth mentioning with regards to the traditional understanding of matrimonial system of inheritance and its implications among the Fantes in this study. Its contribution underscores the premise for establishing reasons why children who mostly belong to matrimonial divide of inheritance, typically among the Fantes are not properly catered for by their fathers especially with those living in the central region of Ghana.

Moree is a densely populated community with children forming the highest majority. The cause of high population growth in children is closely related to track record of teenage mothers. These are young girls who mostly become school drop outs due to high rate of teenage pregnancy. They pride in having children at early age as priority in conformity to communal values on procreation. Hence, it is common to find an average young girl who has given birth to at least one child or middle aged lady of 30 years who has given birth to 6 children.

In view of the community's direct strategic access to the sea, main occupation identified with Moree community is traditional fishing. Thus, members are provided with basic skills in fishing as the community is also the only fishing community of the AAK district. Bumper harvest usually occurs between the months of August and September as the annual fishing season. The nature and source of labour for their fishing occupation mostly depends on the labour force by adolescent male teenagers who exhibit some level of high expertise of skills in fishing.

As a result, one can find various groups of young boys between the ages of 10-17 years identified with a particular fishing crew either in apprenticeship or making a living with skills and experience acquired for fishing. As the men bring the fish from sea, the women also preserve and process them into smoking or frying for sale. The women folk smoke the fish and usually supply them to non-fishing communities in other regions of big cities, towns and remote villages. This compels them to spend several weeks on trek to the disadvantage of their children and family members.

Economic activity is very active during bumper harvest season which also attracts people from other communities trooping in with intention to engage in other trading activities or to provide services for members of the community. Other community members also own shops and stalls for retail trading in groceries, drugs, personal belongings, stationery and food vending. As basic income is not regular, majority of fishing folks travel during lean season to other fishing communities of sophisticated fishing facilities for financial support. The economic activities favour adolescent boys who partner with their adults' counterpart to support themselves.

Political and Religious Life

Politically, the traditional community is made up of land custodians, family heads, clan heads, factional leaders and opinion leaders. The opinion leaders are known for their role as custodians and preservatives of cultural heritage and traditions. They include chiefs and queen mothers, chief fisherman and representatives of assembly members. The political community is identified with traditional warriors known as Asafo companies divided into three traditional groups of Inkum, Alata and Dentse bound with geographical

identities. Leaders of Asafo companies form part of the opinion leaders of the local council membership for making decision on socio-cultural issues of developments of the community.

The religious life of the community is in affiliation with the three main universal religions of African Tradition, Islam and Christianity. However, the sight of several cultic centres by traditional religion relatively compared to church buildings and mosques portrays the religious outlook as a typical traditional community. Nevertheless, the presence of Christian community with respect to the number of church buildings (34 churches) including Methodist, Catholic, Pentecost, Assemblies of God, and other spiritual and charismatic churches is encouraging.

Educational and Health Care Facilities

The social context of Moree community is also identified with education, health and security facilities. There are number of schools comprising both public and private ones provided to the basic level. They include primary and junior high schools and community day secondary school. In all, there are eleven schools apart from the only community day secondary school. Out of the ten pre-senior high schools, four of them are public schools. And three out of the four are mission schools including the only one Islamic mission school.

Accessibility to public educational facility provided is free under the policy of Education Act 2008. The policy makes public education mandatory and universally accessible for every Ghanaian child who has attained the status of school going age for the basic level. The policy dubbed as FCUBE-(free and compulsory universal basic education), has in its mandate certain degree of

parental responsibility regulated with sanctions that (a) a child of school going age whose parents fail to enroll him or her in school shall be made to appear before the social welfare committee of the District Assembly in the first instance for appropriate action, (b) that a parent who fails to comply with the appropriate action agreed on with the social welfare committee commits an offence liable on conviction by a District Court, (c) that a first offence in this case would attract a fine not exceeding five penalty units, (d) for a continuing offence to a fine of one penalty unit in respect of each day during which the offence continues, or in lieu of the payment of the fine, to community service as determined by the court in consultation with the social welfare committee, and (e) where a parent cannot genuinely afford to educate the child, the District Assembly may provide the support necessary for the education of the child.

What is expected in this regulation is that every child should be given an opportunity to be enrolled in school no matter how poor the parents might be. In spite of these available opportunities children are found roaming about aimlessly when their youthful talents and potentials could be harnessed through proper education and direction from responsible parenting. In addition to education facilities is health care post which also provides primary health care, adolescent reproduction health including antenatal services under the management of Ministry of Health (MOH). There is also a security post by the Ghana Police Service (GPS). What actually describes a community's ethnography is also characterized by human activities which enforce formation of social groups instituted for human security. The survey could be subjected to social critique on the bases of social interactions and trends that calls for interpretation from sociological perspectives.

Constructing Community Identity

Sociologists define community according to its roles and dynamisms, political structures that encompass its basic structure and correlated relationship it has with the family. Eitzen and Zinn (1993, p. 33-34) defined social group as “organization created through enduring and patterned interaction. It consists of people who have a common identity, share a common culture, and define themselves as a distinct social unit.” This definition implies that social structure of a given community could be determined by their beliefs, (allegiance); shares common cultural identity, (language, basic attitudes, etc.) people who enjoy protection bound by their living location of interest (political interest). Assimeng summarized this as “social structure relating to human associations in which the individual thinks, feels, or acts,” (pp.5-6). It also means individuals draw emotional inspiration from one another. In description, the social structure as described above could be influenced by human tendencies from cultural relativism.

It becomes an inescapable fact that these social relationships are what normally describes the day-to-day social activities which also in turn have the tendency of reflecting social activities of the wider community they live in. Where human interactions and social relationships of sub-groups are viewed as social actions considered subjective in meaning by the actors and behaviour of others oriented in its course, it is granted from the premise that sub-cultures are not necessarily reflections of ultimate culture. Although it also lies in the basic assumption that such sub-cultures also describe social behaviours and ideas or notions that are carried by social margins of communal life in as much as their

social network revolves round the common interest represented by the interest of the particular interest group.

In view of such eventualities there may be several deviant sub-cultures holding on to their own conceptions that may exist in various forms which has already characterized the social frame-up of the community. Consequently, the need for political structure(s) within the community to regulate social behaviours that could generate the common interest of a particular interest group to the disadvantage of social sanctity and its total benefit of the entire community. Other appropriate and radical social measures could also be deployed to reinforce the ultimate culture for shaping and directing the role expectation of members in the community.

Social Structural Identities

What basically characterizes social structure of a community is factored by the centrality of human activity paramount in the given cultural environment. A synopsis of human activity and its relevance in the formation of social groups and how they function contribute to the basic understanding of how various relationships exist within the social network of the community. It also reflects how these social networks direct and shape the contours of social behaviours in the community. There could be no doubt that it is through human activity that brings together social linkages and connections that provides the community with brisk and vigorous life through which social institutions are set up. Identifiable social groups may include conventional ones such as; kinsmen or family relations, friendship relations, career group relations, and religious groups. These social groups are outgrowths of social cultures found within dominant culture of the community.

Sociologists hold that these groups are recognized as ‘collections of social network’ that exist to influence the social framework of the community from their associations they owe their emotional allegiance and loyalty and express their thinking, feelings and actions. The expression ‘collection of social network’ suggests interrelationship which has the greatest tendency of influencing one another. Thus, various social groups in Moree such as, Asafo companies, churches, schools, families, trade unions, and associations like; mothers or fathers or parents’ associations, professional associations, drivers’ union, political authorities, among many others, could form a coalition to pursue a common good for the progress of the community. Description for identifying social groups could also be attributed to ethnic groups, race or nation other than social groups in isolated case.

In his vivid description, Sprott (1958) described these social groups as ‘human groups’ who interacts with one another within their context more conveniently than anyone elsewhere. If this assertion of Sprott was triggered from social psychological perspective, then the emphasis on ‘human group’ instead of ‘social group’ seems to suggest a “rationally intentionally oriented course of human activity designated in anticipation towards a perpetuated purpose of meeting human good.” What my personal assertion seeks to establish is that, if human groups are inevitable function of communal life, their purpose of being must be directed to develop the cause of human life in the community.

The urge and need for social attachment and man’s need of belongingness to one another finds its expression in Braude’s words that, “Man is born into and lives out his life in groups” Braude, (1974). He maintained that the human being is born helpless as a child and remains in this state for some

time and therefore needs the support of others till he or she becomes independent. The family then becomes the first point of social unit and primary source of social attachment to the individual child. The main thrust of sociologists' point of interest in the given assertions lies in the undeniable fact that in spite of the basic homogenous makeup that characterizes a community, there are social groups or sub-groups whose relationship with one another is inevitable. It is within this perspective that proponents of humanities share the view that the main purpose for creating sub-groups and their sub-cultures ought to be directed in order to work and support the dominant or prevailing society and its dominant culture, Assimeng (p.23).

On the other hand, the reality may happen if the expectations of the sub-cultures fail to fulfill societal needs and aspirations. This usually happens when situation continues to be accommodated for longer period of time and likely turn to misrepresent the dominant culture of the community. As such, cultural relativism could take toll of dominant culture when the latter has already lost its cultural fronts. As a result, the community may lose its mandated cultural identity. However, to conceptualize parental responsibility from the analysis of this social world view may sound probably quite fanatical instead of the true scientific reflection of assessing the concept from indigenous characterization.

Social Scientific Theories

The social theory guiding this study on parenting is a social entity expressed in religious structure. The deconstruction of the text in Luke 2:40-52 speaks into social norms on parenting as a social institution. Parenting is a universal social institution irrespective of religion, race, creed, or locality. Thus, a study on parenting in this study is a dialogue of social concern. A

sociological approach into studies in biblical scholarship had gained grounds in recent studies. Social scientific concepts are conceived as social process which deals with concepts or theories for investigative analysis on social phenomena. They also refer to cross-cultural or inter disciplinary studies imported to explicate ideas on social related issues.

The relevance of employing sociological enquiry approach is intended to conceptualize and organize patterns of social behaviours as reflections of their social interaction in order to evaluate their social values devoid of anthropological infiltrations. Again, study on parenting as a social institution becomes relevant for purpose of sociological approach rather than anthropological interface. Thus, an attempt to construct the social and cultural identity of Moree community is not set to uncover its anthropological realities of entities. As much as the study of anthropology is more intrinsically ethnographic in essence and form which may tend to pose unsolicited cultural biases against conventional social values of promoting the goal of quality life and human dignity for all.

One of the basic instruments used in social science for investigation is a model. Models play a key role in social-scientific analysis. Riley (1963, p.7) explained “conceptual model as the researcher’s image of the phenomena in the real world that he wants to study.” She described it as certain aspects of behaviour of human beings in collectivities. Conceptual models are a major subset of homomorphic models which social science is most concerned. Homomorphic models by nature are measured in abstract terms for their gross outcome usually determined by selecting similar parts from its original form of

abstraction, such as social system, a bureaucratic form of government or a kin group.

Conceptual models in sociological research are used to select and apply certain theories for investigation and interpretation of social phenomena. The emphasis on ‘collectivities’ (sub-cultures) cast spotlights on human behaviours that may echo on deviant influence as an aspect of the whole community. Therefore, the foregoing discussions on social influences emanating from dominant culture and sub-cultures provide good resource base for identifying particular social behaviours that pose social challenges on parenting in the research community of Moree.

Being an insider of the social phenomenon under review, I adopted simple sociological approach through personal observation, interviews and interactions and solicited communal worldview regarding parenting in addition to my personal experience. As such, the data generated from interviewees as results were not influenced by internal biases for validating findings. Thus, the source of research data was limited to primary stage not subjected to scrutiny for quantitative analysis in this study.

Parenting in Moree Community

The view that the social welfare and child priority about children living within the social confines of Moree community falls short of expectation seems to suggest a deficient understanding of knowledge in delivery of child care practices being observed as part of their cultural life. One may readily attribute this social phenomenon of parenting as the expression of the community’s perception based on the analogy that this is how parenting is to be practiced in

this community in the likely event of any cultural and social causes to be identified as factors.

Thus, to conceptualize how parenting is practiced in Moree community is a matter of social enquiry into human behaviours of social causes, meanings and functions of how parenting is perceived, practiced and internalized. To test for communal concept of parenting in Moree community, is to enquire into why parents leave their children on the streets during official school hours. Whether such normative behaviour should be attributed to a cultural reflection from the dominant culture or sub-cultures is not a guarantee in this case. It was intended therefore, in this enquiry to conduct a cross-section interview with opinion leaders, members of the local council and general members of the community on simple personal approach and interaction. The reason for soliciting information from such people was based on the fact that, they represent the wider scope of the community's traditions and cultural values since the social outlook of the community is more homogenous in structure.

In view of this, I solicited information based on the following, (a) whether the children roaming on the street live with their parents and whether there are some communal bye-laws meted against parents who allow their children in this way, (b) whether children found roaming on the street have parents perceived as Christians in the community, (c) whether they have heard about the story of Mary and Joseph in Luke's gospel. (d) whether the communal members are aware of rights of the Child to Education and Education Act 2008 which mandates every child of school going-age to gain access to free compulsory basic education, (e) whether there is communal awareness of District Assembly's sanctions against parents who fail to enroll their children in

school, (f) whether there are laws enforcing family planning practices or any alternative cultural practices on birth control or punitive regulations and sanctions against teenage parenting or, (g) whether orientation on gender advocacy could be appreciated as alternative solution to teenage parenting, (h) whether steps like campaigns, sensitization education and advocacy on child neglect could be taken to ensure conventional standards on parenting for child care practices.

Issues to be derived as outcome raised from cultural filtrations and established from foregoing 'communal values and norms' regarding problem of the study would serve the purpose of communal data on parenting. The primary data would be used to draw implications to assess effects of child neglect on human value and national development, also to be used to enact policies and social interventions for disseminations. It would also serve the purpose of informing the Christian community to examine parenting in Moree community in relationship with Christian understanding of parenting from their religious faith and practices.

Issues Derived

The experience I had from interaction revealed the following, (a) that children found roaming on the streets are not lost. They rather live with their parents in the community. And that, parents are not bound by any bye-laws for abandoning their children on the street, (b) that parents of these children are mostly adolescent teenagers who in turn also live with their parents, (c) that the traditional community cherishes and respect members who delight in raising large number of children. This is measured as sign of success and one's generous contribution towards population growth in the community, (d) with

that, many families and individuals take pride in raising large number of children irrespective of age, marital status or parental commitments, (e) that, such traditional world view is the cause of high rate of teenage pregnancy and multiple marriages, (f) that several health interventions and measures adopted by the community's health post in curbing high birth rate failed due to the above entrenched traditional values, (g) that, there are no bye-laws, regulations or awareness of District Assembly's sanctions against parents who fail to enroll their children in school. As most of the adolescent boys get occupied in trade with traditional fishing as early as 14 years.

In an attempt to confirm the high rate of child birth and teenage pregnancy a request was made from the local health post (GHS). The statistic track record verified from Adolescent Reproduction and Health Care Unit under Maternal and Child Birth Department indicated outrageous annual increase of high rate of teenage pregnancy from school drop outs. This report from the community's health post supports the entrenched cultural position of indiscriminate child birth in Moree community. Issues established from the interactions and observations made have religious and socio-economic implications for the Christian community in particular and the traditional community at large.

Religious Implications

The exercise draws implications that could be used for creating platform in religious discussions relating to issues on parenting. As such, the situation implies dynamics of various negative attitudes by Christian parents and the Christian community in the following ways:

1. That, Christian parents whose children are found roaming on the street have lost sight of the scriptural authority to parents from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6: 6-9) and the New Testament about childhood education and parental responsibilities of Mary and Joseph in Luke's story respectively. It shows their lack of religious understanding governing their claim of religious parenting and practices. Consequently, these parents fail in their adherence to God's word in their parenting.
2. That, Christian parents who allow their children to roam on streets have not read of how Mary and Joseph searched for their child who got detached from them and therefore show no sympathy for children's welfare. Thus, their source of religious authority and parental accountability need to be questioned and revisited.
3. Christian parents who allow their children to roam on the street deny their children the right to education and intellectual development of the human capital. This act is against Christian practice of parenting and educational policy of the Education Act of 2008.
4. Failure in Christian parenting is a reflection of failure by the local church in her religious duty towards social development. By conventional standards, the church is a voice to the voiceless and vulnerable in the society.
5. Christian parents who show lack in understanding of Christian parenting and its contribution to human value and national development only exhibits their ignorance and negligence which amounts to mere religion. And when the local church expresses no concern for the plight of

abandoned children whose parents are members of the church, the authorities of the local church ought to be questioned.

6. As the cause of increase in children is mostly linked with adolescent teenagers implied that the local church has done little or need to intensify religious education against sexual promiscuity and organize counselling and training workshops to empower the youths in striving for holistic education as means for attaining scholarship and entrepreneurship as rewarded quality life.

7. The Christian community in Moree would lose sight for not raising common front as their religious contribution for influencing the community in advocacy against children found on the streets.

The implications enumerated above could be averted through religious education carefully designed towards transformation of parental responsibility through the ministry of the local churches and ecumenism dialogue.

Socio-Economic Implications

In a social context where parents give birth for the purpose of being recognized by the society, parental responsibility becomes illusive and loses its proper place of social place and function. What this means is that, if the worldview of a society on child raising is derived from indiscriminate behaviour of being honoured for becoming a 'parent' and acknowledged for contributing by adding to the numerical composition of the community, it tends to pose varied degrees of socio-economic challenges for the following reasons;

1. Such cultural worldviews provide premise for determining and predicting negative patterns of cultural practices based on current manifestations of social tendencies likely to be used for branding the

community. Such negative social characteristics do not attract business investors towards progressive future development of the community.

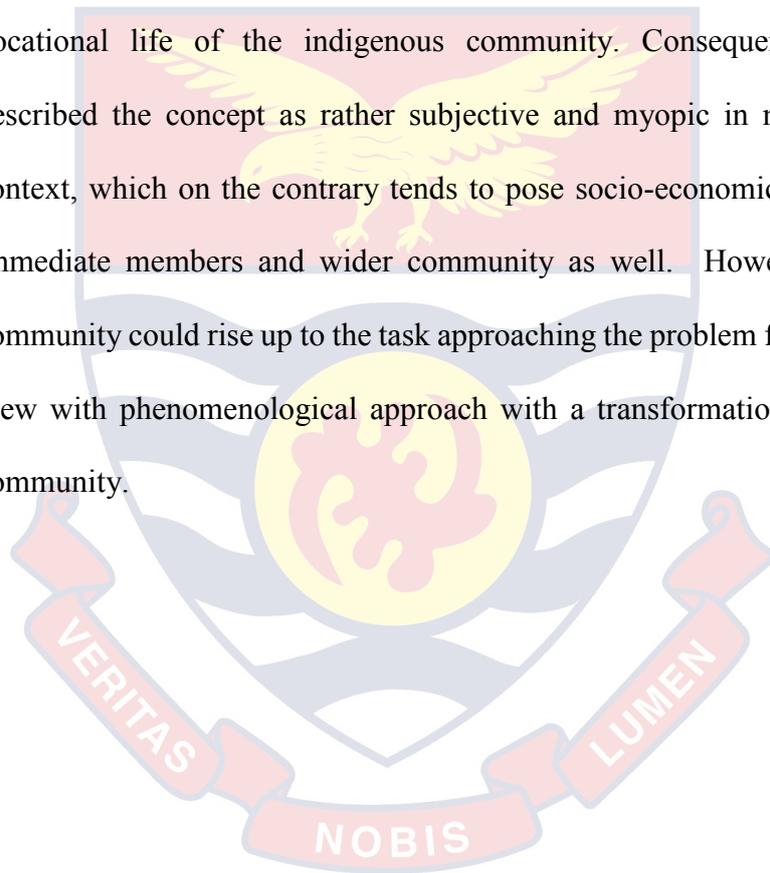
2. Since the communal values on child giving put less restraint on its practices people readily use it as license especially in reference to adolescent parent who is naturally not well equipped for taking up the role of parental responsibility. When parenting is taken for granted, children are virtually denied of benefits and privileges they enjoy as their rights. Consequently, children become victims of situations of negligence and abuse.
3. Issues of child care taken for granted is an affront to human dignity and infringement of human right against children according to standards of conventional practice in child care practices as provided in the UN Charter of Convention on Child's Rights and Children's Act of 1998 of the Republican Constitution of Ghana.
4. Socially, children with no parental responsibility grow up with no parental support, care, love and proper enculturation of societal norms and values as part of their upbringing. Such children are usually not law abiding as they often become social deviants.
5. When children eventually lose values that would have made them responsible social members, they end up becoming street children and vagabonds which tends to pose social nuisance to human value and threats to national security. The Christian community can integrate such children into their churches and mission schools according to the model of the Church era between 1300 and 1800 CE.

6. As the situation makes life difficult for teenage parents whose physiological make up are not well developed, they struggle emotionally to manage and cope with adolescent maladjustment and social crisis. Thus, any reconstitution measures or correction put in place may take long time before taking shape again. The process mitigates against productivity and development and may even lead to short life expectancy. This also affects their children indirectly as they become objects of victims.
7. Ultimately, this condition leads to unskilled labour force and reflects low standard of living since teenage parents are not well equipped for life.
8. The situation is frustrating when children become victims and stand the risk of dropping out from school when their teenage parents travel and leave them in custody of their grandparents especially with grandmothers. Government agencies especially the ministries, (MOGCSP) and the (GES) must provide support systems and social interventions for their rehabilitation.
9. Economically, the situation puts limitation on human resource capacity base when large sections of children and teenagers alike are not well equipped academically through education in preparation for life. Eventually, this affects other developmental agenda of the community and may lead into vicious cycle.
10. Absence or undue prolonged delay of any form of social intervention or corporate measures pragmatically oriented to militate the current challenges may lead to perpetual vicious cycle.

Conclusion

This section concluded that, the concept of parenting as internalized and practiced within the social context of traditional fishing community of Moree, revealed deficient understanding with causes deeply rooted in traditions and cultural values of the community.

Thus, parenting is subjective although autonomous was occasioned by world view culminated from circumstances contingent on the socio-cultural and vocational life of the indigenous community. Consequently, the research described the concept as rather subjective and myopic in nature to its social context, which on the contrary tends to pose socio-economic challenges for its immediate members and wider community as well. However, the Christian community could rise up to the task approaching the problem from social point of view with phenomenological approach with a transformational agenda for the community.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provided an overview covering the final section of the study. The chapter encompassed three key areas notably; summary, conclusions and recommendations with each section designated according to its own merit. The summary section covered part of the introductory and overall purpose of the study. It also covered type of research method used, how it was administered and its relevance to the study. The hermeneutical design established the theme of parental responsibility with the text in Luke 2:40-52 as demonstrated by Mary and Joseph. The parenting practice as modeled by Mary and Joseph was recommended for the contemporary faith community in Moree.

The hermeneutical design was tested with social texts constructed regarding parenting within the research community. The study identified parental perversions on account of children's right to education, children allowed to roam on the street and inappropriate child care practices filtered from unconventional traditional values. The section also addressed effects of inappropriate ways of caring for children on the family, the community and the nation at large.

The section under conclusions examined key findings as results provided from the research community carefully evaluated and considered whether in consistent, or deemed appropriate with social policies and good practices on the theme of parenting for the study. The section under recommendations outlined proposals made in passionate appeal to specific policy regulators and law enactment agencies for consideration and

implementation. The chapter finally ended with suggestions for further readings and area to be considered as breaking grounds for further research on parenting and child care delivery in Ghana. Thus, the last chapter provided recap overview about the whole study from the beginning to the completed stage.

SUMMARY

The study was guided by set of developed objectives as guiding principles outlined previously as:

1. To examine what the text in Luke 2:40-52 says about parenting from the Christian perspective by reading the text with the Christian community.
2. To examine parenting in Moree community in relationship with Christian understanding of parenting from the gospel of Luke 2:40-52.
3. To examine the rights of the child pertaining to children through legislation instrument of Ghana and parenting in Moree community.
4. To assess effects of child neglect on human value and national development measured with religious and general education of the child.
6. To mount campaign and sensitization education on parental responsibilities as social responsibility for practice through the medium of child care advocacy and appeal to government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

As part of the introductory section aspects related to delimitation, limitation, related literature and organization of the work were discussed. Following the introductory discussion, chapter 2 of the thesis considered various methods of interpretations available, the particular method designed for the study and its usefulness. The thesis in chapter 3 examined parenting in Luke 2:40-52, using a reading methodology of text-centred criticism approach. The theme of

parental responsibility in the text was aimed at guiding what parents should do. The hermeneutic component established the theme of parental responsibility by Mary and Joseph being the parents of Jesus in the following ways:

1. The study showed that Mary and Joseph as parents monitored the physical growth of their child Jesus with basic provisions for development.
2. The piety of Mary and Joseph were reflections of parental exemplary life of moral and spiritual virtues inculcated in Jesus as part of their responsibility in shaping him to attain holistic developmental growth.
3. Mary and Joseph did not leave their child on the street when he got missing even through his own disobedience. They rather searched for him and rebuked him for his misconduct and brought him to their home.
4. Parental responsibility of Mary and Joseph reflected in Jesus' personality development as he grew up with evidence of good appearance by increase in body stature, wisdom, favour with God by living in obedience to God and good relationship with men.
5. The study showed that parents should monitor the physical growth as well as the moral and spiritual developments of their children.

The 4th chapter examined parenting in Moree community in relationship with the Christian perspective of parenting. In this chapter, values and attitudes established from the practice of parenting was translated from the world of narrative discourse into the physical world. In this regard, the insight and good practices identified in the first century Judaism from the text related in Luke 2:40-52 were imported as a case for the Christian community in Moree. By

convicting members of contemporary faith community with the narrative message on parental responsibility.

Thus, the Lukan story was translated into Moree community as the real world of research where the hermeneutical design was used to test the social texts constructions attributed to parenting. As such, the research study examined socio-cultural collectivities of the research community with the aim of; (a) measuring standard child care practices, (b) assessing effects of child neglect on human value and national development, and (c) raising a voice on parental responsibilities through child care advocacy from support groups (Government agencies and NGOs). Based on personal observations and interview interactions with stake holders including some of the victims in the community, the study critiqued the concept of how parenting is socially constructed and internalized for interpretation and analysis. Major causes included traditional customs on how parenting is understood and practiced.

The research also addressed challenging issues of child abuse, right to education, street children and effects of inappropriate ways of caring for children on the family, community and the nation at large. The interaction revealed profound limited knowledge and understanding of good parental practices on one hand, its infringements on child's right, and its implications of adverse effects on the community at large. The following revealed key findings as summarized below:

1. Number of children found roaming on streets have recognized parents, but they do not care much about them as most of these parents are teenagers struggling to make ends meet.

2. The major cause of high population rate of children is motivated by communal traditions that members who raise large number of children for the community are applauded.
3. In spite of government's policy on free basic education with sanctions, children of school going-age are denied access to education.
4. The reality of the situation is the outcome of most adolescent boys between ages of 11-15 years with the traditional fishing crew with no formal education.

CONCLUSION

The research revealed that, parental responsibilities as established from the text in Luke 2:40-52 by Mary and Joseph from religious perspective makes a case for Christian community in Moree for faith and practice in obedience to God. The practice further provided implication for human development for children as critical prerequisite for pursuing socio-economic development agenda of the community and the nation at large. Parental responsibility of Mary and Joseph as reflected in Jesus' personality development contributed to his messianic mission for humanity in the milieu of Jewish Greco-Roman antecedents. A position that has supported comprehensive growth for total development of the individual personality.

Despite permissible position of cultural advantage and its hold on concept of parenting, the study found parental responsibility most consistent with civil laws binding universal conventional regulations regarding vulnerability of children. Thus, the study also found that religious practice of parenting also holds social implications for the traditional community of Moree to mean that, cultural practices and philosophies on child abuse, right to

education and street children against fundamental human rights and freedom of children should be condemned.

Other researchers, Antwi, pp. 203-206; Asanful, pp. 59-60; Okyere, p. 68; (as cited in Ammah, Gatti, and Ossom-Batsa, 2018) on the “development of the community” have given expositions on significance of education as tool for social transformation on the individual and the nation. These contributions highlighted on the theme of parental responsibility on giving children access to education. Thus their contributions also debunk traditional practice of denying children their right to education as seen in Moree community. The contributions also support both religious and social perspectives of parenting as propounded in this study and found consistent within conventional theories and practice of parenting and child care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study as revealed from the research community, carefully evaluated and considered under religious and social policies governing practices of parental responsibilities deemed appropriate. I suggest the following recommendations as convenient and possible means for consideration as some solutions to be taken for minimizing irresponsible parenting in Moree community:

1. That, all opinion leaders in the community (chief of Moree, paramount chief of Asebuman traditional area, (Dr. Okatakya Amanfi IV), assembly men and women, heads of asafu companies, chief fisherman, and head of families and clans) must advocate educational priority for children not enrolled in school by enforcing government’s policies on free education.

2. The district director of education in collaboration with the local GNAT CCT and GNAGRAT should mount educational campaign on ‘send your child to school.’
3. The Christian community in Moree should use their pulpit in continuous teaching and preaching on good parenting for their church members.
4. Authorities of the local church should raise a common front as their religious contribution for influencing the community in advocacy against children found on the streets.
5. Local churches in Moree should have a coalition of Christian Mothers and Fathers Association to offer counselling services on parenting to the significant others of non-Christian parents and members of the community as a new paradigm in child care practice.
6. The churches should create educational endowment fund for the less privileged in the church who may pursue further education.
7. The local government to partner with pastors and church leaders to mobilize effort to strengthen parental responsibilities in the community.
8. Local churches to use Mother’s and Father’s Day celebration as opportunity to award deserving parents as role models in the church.
9. Stake holders mentioned in (1) above should make an appeal to government agencies like:
 - a. Ministry of social protection, (MGCSP) to factor Moree in the national budget and as a matter of priority, the ministry to consider Children’s Recreational Centre aimed at co-curricular educational transformational agenda for the community
 - b. Social Welfare to intensify monitoring responsibility over the place.

- c. That the Commission on Human Rights and Administration Justice, (CHRAJ) should enforce Child's Rights issues and parental responsibility measures through education and legislative measures.
- d. The traditional authorities to work with the local health post (MOH) to provide continuous adolescent reproductive health education and counselling services to members of the community.
- e. Appeal could be made to NGOs, like, Plan Ghana, World Vision, Compassion Ghana, etc., for grants and donations to support and rehabilitate affected children and victims of parental irresponsibilities.
- f. Appeal to some generous philanthropists and individuals through the local churches, Driver's union, bankers, educators including natives in diaspora. Individuals or married couples who wish to venture into child adoption may be encouraged to add up.

Suggestions for Further Research

A recommendation on the study for further research relating to social issues includes; education, housing and sanitation, occupation and core values could be considered from other related biblical sources to improve the system of child care delivery in other communities of Ghana.

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