



Christian Parenting: An Empirical Assessment by ECWA Ibadan District Church Council Members, Oyo State, Nigeria

OLATUNDUN A. ODERINDE

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria

SAMUEL SUNDAY ALAMU

ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Kwara State, Nigeria

Abstract. Parenting is a herculean task for parents, church and society. The challenge arises from the fact that people always compromise on one aspect of parenting or the other. Whereas the Bible stipulates the standard for proper child upbringing, most Christian parents today raise their children in a way contrary to the biblical standard and this has negative consequences on the church and the society generally. This is evidenced in social vices exhibited by children in the contemporary world. It is from this perspective that this study empirically investigated Christian parenting with a view to espousing the biblical standard of parenting for societal development. The study adopted a descriptive design of a survey type. The data gathered from the questionnaire were quantitatively analyzed using simple percentage while data from the interviews were qualitatively analyzed. Findings revealed that only 26.64% of respondents had proper understanding of Christian parenting. It was also found that the non-compliance with the parenting principles by 74.8% of respondents has resulted into children's lack of commitment to society's values. Some social vices were identified as problems resulting from this non-compliance. Some of the recommendations are: ECWA Church members to develop informed teaching on parenting to serve as basis for instructing Christians generally. Seminars and workshops should be organized for parents on the need to bring this to bear on their children. Parents must not commit the entire responsibility of parenting into the hands of the church, the school or any house help, etc.

Keywords: Christian Parenting, Discipline, Child, Yoruba, ECWA Ibadan District Church Council, African society.

1. Introduction

The issue of parenting is as important to the overall development of any society just as a solid foundation is crucial to the construction of a durable building. Thus, every society trains her young ones for the purpose of nation building. However, in the responsibility of parenting, one will come to admit that there is not a particular pattern of child upbringing, rather there seems to be different characteristics of parenting according to the different ages that have ever existed. The goal of parenting is to instill discipline and high moral values in children. Despite the fact that this goal has not changed over the years, these tasks noticeably have taken different dimensions. In African traditional society, parents were the major influence and authority in the lives of their children. This is why Luther, as quoted by Strohl (2001:134) regarded the work of mothers and fathers as a most holy calling and obligation. Discipline was given high regard in the African society and this explained reason for an orderly society in the African traditional society. On any issue, parents' words were final and binding. Children respected and obeyed their parents without complaint. They were selfless, obedient, loving and hardworking. Their parents' styles produced obedient and selfless children. But, today, there is strong emphasis on child's independence and individuality. Children are sometimes overprotected and pampered in the names of love, freedom and civilization. More importantly, there has been a remarkable paradigm shift from what parenting used to be and what it is now. Indiscipline, over-pampering and abuse have replaced parenting with love and discipline. In Africa, the introduction of Child Right Acts also seems to have paved way for the less influence of parents on their children. Therefore, moral training must begin from home because, home environment of a child plays important role in the way a child perceives

himself or herself in terms of his or her personality, ability and ambition. Hence, one of the global concerns is the decline in quality of moral life of the young ones. This is why issues relating to child training have become major concern of many scholars today. For Instance, there is an increasing interest in child training in the fields of education, philosophy and religion. Other disciplines, particularly, law as well as sociology, have also challenged scholars to think about the roles of schools, religious organizations, communities and the state toward African child. Different religious groups, political and non-governmental organizations are also focusing more attention on a number of issues, including child health and safety, child education, child abuse, child trafficking, child moral upbringing and juvenile crime. Since parenting is considered to be the most important phase in life that determines the quality of health, well-being, learning and behaviour across the lifespan, it is therefore important that the tenets of Christian religion and what the Bible teaches be imparted in the life of every child for an all-round development. Children remain the hope of the humanity but sometimes, they signal despair. They are great asset to their parents in time of peace and can also serve as weapon for parents in combating evil forces. In African culture, children constitute sources of joy and comfort to their parents and the entire society especially when they are morally decent. According to Ogunsola (2022:149), When a child is well brought up, parents and society will enjoy peace, and the child will become helpful to him or herself, his parents and the community. This is because one of the greatest causes of the stability of marriage tie is the existence of children.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Christian Education arm of ECWA Ibadan District Church Council has highly developed teachings on various issues that concern men, women, and youths, but the same church has not offered sustained reflection on the obligations of parents towards the children. Also, children who will eventually become youth and consequently leaders of the church and the society most of the time remain neglected. The implication of this neglect is that the youths that the church is training have no foundation and these children may eventually grow up in a way contrary to the biblical standard. A large number of parents do not attach importance to the implications of this negligence. Already, the contemporary time has become so challenging that young people of school age are becoming a severe threat to society (Ogunsola 2022:148), and in most cases, church teachings simply admonish the parents to indoctrinate their children in the Church dogmas. The absence of well-developed,

historically and biblically informed teachings about parenting in contemporary studies forms the basis why many ECWA churches still struggle to create and to sustain strong programme in religious education and child upbringing. Quite often, most ECWA clergymen and children teachers depend on materials from other churches or church related organizations. It is against this background occasioned by lack of proper parenting that this research seeks to examine the need for parents to provide adequate home training for children in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council since they are their (children's) first teachers.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The work will help parents and scholars who may come across the findings to understand biblical principles on parenting. It will also help parents discover their children's talents which could be used in developing the nation. The research work will go a long way in helping the government to perform in an enabling environment where there is peace that guarantees stable governance and sustainable development. Not only this, the study could also serve as a manual for religious leaders, child advocates, practitioners, and other stakeholders that address the needs of children in ECWA, Nigeria and Africa at large. Furthermore, the study encourages collaboration among scholars from different disciplines which may lead to the development of interdisciplinary childhood studies, programmes or centres. No doubt, the work will serve as a resourceful document for theologians within the Christian traditions, who want to articulate theological views on children as well as responsibility to them that are both biblically sound and in relation to contemporary issues and concerns. Finally, the study will definitely add to the body of literature available on parenting and child training and serve as a springboard from where other researchers could take off.

1.3 Research Questions

The study addresses the following pertinent questions:

- What is the level of understanding of ECWA parents of the principles of Christian parenting?
- What is the level of compliance by parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council on the principles of Christian Parenting?
- What are the challenges facing parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council in the task of parenting?

2. The Concept of Parenting

Parenting is a herculean task and “one of the most critical things in society” (Ogunsola 2022: 130) which God given to every parent. This responsibility is not man’s idea but an initiative of God. Right from the beginning in the book of Genesis, the care and nurture God gave to Adam and Eve could be regarded as an act of parenting. Thus, at the beginning, God blessed Adam and Eve and commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:28). This implies a herculean responsibility upon these parents. In Genesis 18:19, God also expressed confidence in Abraham that Abraham would not fail to train his children and his household after him in the way of the Lord. As parent, God provided necessary and adequate care, nurture and enabling environment. This is what God meant when He said “...and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself,” (Ex. 19:4). Through the ages, there has not been a particular style of parenting. According to Shodipo, (2014:24), “to look at what parenting was like in years past particularly between the 1970’s and early 2000’s, is to consider how family life, relationships, culture, demography and other factors were viewed and defined as at that time.” The task of parenting has been a deep concern of human beings from time immemorial (Fafunwa, 1990:15).

Although the goal of parenting, which is to inculcate good character and moral virtues in children, has not changed over the years, the whole process has taken new dimension. A noticeable paradigm shift exists between what used to be parenting with love, care and discipline to over-pampering and abuse. Thus, Shodipo (2014:25) observed: In the past, children grew up in a society that clearly defines what was right and what was wrong. Parents were recognized as the primary authority figure in their children’s lives. They were more concerned in raising who were listeners, obedient and not self-centred. But today there is strong emphasis on the child’s independence, self-esteem and individuality. Parent simply means “mother or father of a person or an animal” (Gillard, 2003:901). Parents refer to those who provide significant care for children, including grandparents, other relatives or adults that are not biologically related to the child. Although, “parents simply mean one’s father and mother, in the African traditional concept, the understanding goes beyond the father or mother but includes all the members of the nuclear family, the extended family, neighbours and every other person who in one way or the other are involved in the upbringing of the child (Okpako, 2004:227). Ayantayo (2011:24) sees parents as the trustees of their children whose physical and mental capacities are to be

developed, and failure on the part of parents to appropriate this trust properly entails dismissal from trusteeship.

The task of parenting in the African context is a herculean task and parents are the original source of moral guidance. According to Babatunde (2004:219), in African society, “It takes a village to raise a child” (Gbogbo abule nii bani t’omo). The society often puts pressure on the parents, sometimes relatives and the rest of society (Simon and Edim 2013: 65). Thus, parenthood includes the biological parents (father and mother) in the nuclear family, grandparents, uncles, aunts and other senior members of the extended family who combined their efforts to train and to develop their children. This concept informs the traditional idea of the Africans particularly among the Yoruba people of south west Nigeria that *oju merin ni o nbimo, igba oju ni o nbaa wo*. This simply means it takes many people to train a child. Even with the assistance given by others in training a child, Okpako (2004:277) observes that the heaviest burden is borne by the father and mother. This is why Oderinde (2014:56) submitted that in the Yoruba context, *eko ile kii se ise obi omo nikan, ise gbogbo molebi ni, sugbon eleru ni I gbe e nibi ti o gbe wuwo*. (The training of the child is not just the duty of the parents but a joint effort of the entire family, however, much is still expected from the parents). It is also said that, *itiju ati egan ni fun obi omo ti a bi ti a ko to*. *Sugbon lara omo ti a ko ti ko gba ni abuku wa* (shame and reproach is the portion of the parents who did not train their child, but rejection is the lot of a child who did not accept training). There is *a bi i ko* (untrained child) and *a ko o gba* (a child who refused to accept training). Even among children, there is ‘a bi i ko’ (untrained child). A child of notorious anti-social behaviour is often referred to as *Abiiko* (a child that is born but not trained). The Yoruba people have a popular saying that *abimo ma ko, ba oro olomo je*, meaning the one who gives birth but refuses to train the child is a shame to parenthood, (Babatunde, 1992:23). There is also ‘a ko o gba’ (a trained but compromising child). It is part of the Yoruba culture that parents must train their children to be *omoluabi* (a well-mannered person). According to Ademiluka, (2011:106), “African folklore also reflects the expectation placed on parents to inculcate good character in their children, and a way of taunting parents who fail in this regard.” Similarly, parents also receive immediate and highest praise for a cultured and well-mannered child. Most of the times, they may be blamed for the failure of their children.

In Nigerian Society today, a lot of parents are lamenting almost on daily basis over what is becoming of their children because their hopes and expectations are not being fulfilled. Quite a number of these children are sources of sorrow and disgrace to their

parents and the society in general. Most parents are helpless; they do not know what to do. As a result of this, many parents' resorts to prayers and deliverance while others just grow a thick skin and pretend as if all is well. Although, prayer is needed and deliverance for children is equally useful, but these alone cannot make these children what they are supposed to be. Rather, principles of parenting and rearing children must be followed in order to bring up these children so as to be useful to God, to themselves and the society at large. No doubt, the task of parenting is extremely challenging. It is not just once at a time duty, but rather it is the process which takes some time. It could be regarded as the process of functioning as parents. As a process, the whole exercise passes through many and different stages which must be handled with care because "it is a delegated work from God," Adewale (2009:13). Parenting is sometimes conceived to be bringing up of children and all the responsibilities and activities that are involved in it. It is the process of raising a child aside from the biological relationship. Parenting is usually done by the biological parents of the child in question, although governments and society take a role as well. In many cases, orphaned or abandoned children receive parental care from non-parent blood relations. Others may be adopted, raised in foster care, or placed in an orphanage. Parenting which could be positive or negative, is the process of training and bringing up a child by the parents and/or by the extended family or neighbour. Parenting generally in Africa begins as soon as the child is born and goes beyond the period of his/her marriage. The future life of a child can be badly affected for the rest of his/her life if this vital life act is not well handled. There is no doubt that it is universally acknowledged that a legitimate child is a joy to the family and that there is hardly any culture in which children do not occupy a special position. Negative parenting can also result into one or more of five problematic categories such as low school achievement, drop outs, gay and lesbian; single teenage mother, and runaways. It has been observed that the current sharp increase in the proportion of unsocialized children is due primarily to over burned, incompetent or sociopathic parenting which are well orchestrated by the unstable world of working parents in contrast to the traditional role of fathering and mothering, high divorce rates, accessible illicit substance, high peer pressure, hi-tech internet services, and most importantly, the overriding effects of western culture over every other culture that it has or develops contact with, (Nwazuoke, Bamgbose, and Moronkila, 2004:300). Although, the importance of children in African tradition is not equaled by wealth, and a family unit without children may be labelled as moribund, this can only be meaningful if it goes along with positive and fruitful training in which childhood

stage plays significant role at achieving. Often times, parents put more emphasis on the ability to give birth to children rather than the ability to rear and nurture them," (Nwazuoke, et al, 2004:275). Parenting refers to all the activities, actions and inactions of parents geared toward the upbringing of a child. The idea of parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. "Parenting" according to Otoikhila (2011:7), "is an act of caring, providing and protecting the affairs of the child." He pointed out by citing a case of an African situation that parenting starts from infancy and extends beyond the period of marriage of the children. He solicited an effective parenting of children because poor may bring shame and disgrace to the family and a big threat to other community members near or far. Okpako (2004:278) describes parenting as the upbringing or training of a child by the parents. The role of the parents in bringing up a child cannot be overemphasized. However, any lapses in the vital life acts may carry serious consequences which may be very difficult to reverse. Parenting is an intentional activity of the parents. This is because "Owu ti Iya gbon, ni omo o ran, (meaning, a child follows the footsteps of his/her mother)," (Akintunde 2008:27). In other words, like mother like children. She highlighted a number of factors responsible for the waywardness/bad behaviours among the children. The total sum of these factors is lack of good Christian parenting which is a social problem present in the society. At the broadest level, parenting encompasses the provision of care directed at children's physical, emotional and social needs. Thus, the two key tasks of parenting are nurturance and socialization. It could therefore be summed up that parenting is all the activities of the fathers and mothers that are directed toward the development and upbringing of their children to be morally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally independent. In the context of Africa, parenting activities are not limited to the biological parents alone, but neighbours and other relations are as well involved.

3. Methodology

Method of investigation used in the study is hereby presented.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive design of a survey type. This is considered suitable because it helps to provide a fair and plausible description of an event, or phenomenon such as the attitude of Christian parenting.

3.2 Target Population

The population consists of parents of children between ages 1 to 17 in Ibadan District Church Council (Ibadan DCC) of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA). Ibadan District Church Council comprises all ECWA churches in Ogun state, Osun state also and Oyo state, Nigeria. The district is divided into Seven Local Church Councils (LCCs), namely, Abeokuta, Bodija, Challenge, Ijebu-Remo, Ode-Oolo, Olode and Osogbo. The seven LCCs are predominantly Yoruba ethnic groups with few English and Hausa speaking worshippers. For the purpose of this study, these Yoruba, Hausa, and English-speaking worshippers are the specific target population. The sample is drawn from the target population.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique:

A total of 2,100 participants constituted the sample for the study using the purposive sampling technique. The 2,100 participants comprised 300 participants from each of the seven Local Church Councils (LCCs). Each LCC has at least seven local churches (worship assemblies). The LCCs are Abeokuta, Ijebu-Remo (Ogun state); Osogbo, Olode (Osun state); and Bodija, Challenge, Ode Oolo (Oyo state). In the above LCCs, 42 pastors (14 from each of the senior, intermediate, and junior categories). In order to ensure equal number of gender participation in the study, copies of the questionnaire were administered equally on the same number of males and females of the target population that is, 42 pastors, 1008 male members, and 1050 female members. All the participants were married with children. Out of the 2,100 copies of the questionnaire designed, 600 copies were distributed in Ogun state with 2 LCCs; 600 copies in Osun state with 2 LCCs; and 900 copies in Oyo state with 3 LCCs. Through this technique, two thousand one hundred respondents comprising ECWA church leaders, married men and women were used for the study. Sex, age, level of education, marital status, occupation, states where the Local Church Assemblies of the respondents are situated and Local Government of the respondents, were part of the demographic section of the instrument employed. In order to ensure easy administration of the questionnaire as well as getting quality information from the respondents, the churches were categorized on the basis of States. In the same manner, one thousand and fifty children were also purposively selected from the study area at the rate of 300 children each from Ogun and Osun State while 450 children were selected from Oyo State. This was aimed at validating the responses of the parents. Furthermore, through a purposive sampling technique, the researcher selected 40 parents who by virtue of

their roles in the church or in the community or due to the nature of their jobs, or by virtue of their marital status for the purpose of interview. In this category are clergymen, men leaders, women leaders of notable fellowship organizations, civil servants, and community leaders et cetera who were interviewed in order to obtain more data. The responses obtained were qualitatively analysed and discussed in the study.

3.4 Instrumentation

The instruments used for data were two sets of questionnaire and structured interview. The first set of the questionnaire was entitled, "Practice of Christian Parenting among ECWA Members Questionnaire" (PCPAEMQ) and designed for married ECWA members in Ibadan District Church Council. The second set of the questionnaire was designed for ECWA children between ages 12-17 in Ibadan District Church Council. Items for children were structured in accordance with the information required in each column based on the 'yes or no' response format. The purpose of this is to elicit the opinion of ECWA children in Ibadan District Church Council and to validate the information obtained from the parents on the one hand, and also to determine if the attitude of the children population reflect the biblical principles of Christian parenting on the other hand.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

The study was carried out in the seven (7) Local Church Councils across Ogun, Osun, and Oyo states, South West Nigeria in two phases. On the administration of the questionnaire, two thousand one hundred (2,100) parent participants and 1050 children participants were purposively selected as samples from across the three states. Permission was sought for and obtained from the leadership of the church before the exercise was carried out during the church's morning services on Sundays. The researcher was assisted by six research assistants (two per state) who were trained on the objectives of this study, how to administer and retrieve the questionnaire in a friendly manner. Furthermore, the researcher also conducted structured interview sessions which focused on Christian parenting with some selected church leaders and members in a friendly conversational approach.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The tools for analyzing the data collected were statistical model of frequency and simple percentage. Data were analyzed using both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. While the data generated from the questionnaire were quantitatively

analyzed using percentage, the data from the oral interview method were qualitatively analyzed and discussed.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of Data on Parents

Research Question One: What is the level of understanding of ECWA parents of the principles of Christian parenting?

Table One: Level of understanding of ECWA parents of the principles of Christian parenting

SN	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Children parenting is a religious obligation of Christian parents	283 (14.2 %)	229 (11.5%)	732 (36.7%)	753 (37.7%)
2.	Parents are under obligation to sustain the family financially, morally, and spiritually	235 (11.8%)	329 (16.5%)	235 (33.7%)	761 (38.1%)
3.	Discipline with rod is an essential instrument for Christian parenting	222 (11.1%)	251 (12.6%)	772 (38.7%)	752 (37.7%)
4.	Role modelling constitutes essential tool in Christian parenting	240 (12.0%)	125 (6.3%)	861 (43.1%)	771 (38.6%)
5.	Fathers have more responsibilities over children than the mothers	453 (22.7%)	529 (26.5%)	532 (26.6%)	483 (24.2%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in table one above show that 732 which represent 36.7% of the respondents disagreed and 753 which also represent 37.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed that Children parenting is a religious obligation of Christian parents, while only 283 which represent 14.2% and 229 which represent 11.5% strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the statement. It, therefore, means that ECWA parents did not see Children parenting as a religious obligation of Christian parents. Again, 672 representing 33.7% of the respondents disagreed and 761 representing 38.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that Christian parents are under obligation to upkeep the family financially, morally and spiritually while 235 representing 11.8% of the respondents and 329 representing 16.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This implies that majority of Christian parents in the study area did not agree that they were under obligation to upkeep the family financially, morally and spiritually. Seven hundred and seventy-two (772) which represent 38.7% respondents and 752 which also represent 37.7% disagreed and strongly disagreed that discipline with rod is an essential instrument for Christian parenting while only 222 representing 11.1% strongly agreed and 251 representing 12.6% agreed. This implies that rod was not sanctioned as an essential rod for discipline. In the same vein, 861 representing 43.1% of the respondents disagreed and 771 representing 38.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that role modelling constitutes essential tool in Christian parenting while only 240 representing 12.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and 125 representing 6.3% agreed.

The implication of this is that role modelling becomes an essential tool in Christian parenting. The results in the table above further reveals that 532 (226.6%) of the respondents disagreed and 483 which represent 24.2% strongly disagreed that fathers have more responsibilities over children than the mothers while 453 (22.7%) strongly agreed and 529 (26.50%) agreed with the statement. This means that majority of parents in the study area did not believe that fathers have more responsibilities over the children than the mothers. Similarly, 475 which represent 22.9% of the respondents and 449 which represent 22.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that mothers have more responsibilities over children than the fathers, while 553 which represent 27.7% and 538 representing 26.9% of the respondents supported the view. It indicates that those who supported are more than those who did not.

Research Question Two: What is the level of compliance by parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council on the principles of Christian Parenting?

Table Two: Level of compliance by parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council on the principles of Christian Parenting

SN	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I serve as a role model for my children to become well-mannered persons (omoluabi)	902 (45.2%)	964 (48.3%)	50 (2.5%)	81 (4.1%)
2	I use rod as an essential instrument to discipline my children at appropriate time	393 (19.7%)	276 (13.8%)	617 (30.9%)	711 (35.6%)
3	I show affection and love to my children all the time.	749 (37.5%)	663 (33.2%)	354 (17.7%)	231 (11.6%)
4	I provide my children with adequate food, clothing and shelter.	294 (14.7%)	212 (10.6%)	768 (38.5%)	723 (36.2%)
5	I am seriously concern about the kinds of friends that my children keep	767 (38.4%)	735 (36.8%)	245 (12.3%)	250 (12.5%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in the above table reveal that 1866 respondents which represent (93.4%) claimed that they served as role models for their children to become well-mannered persons (omoluabi), however, only 131 which represent (6.6%) did not claim so. It means that majority of the respondents are in support of the statement. In the same vein, 393 (19.7%) strongly agreed and 276 (13.8%) that they used rod as an essential instrument to discipline their children at appropriate time, however, 617 (30.9%) disagreed and 711 (35.6%) strongly disagreed with this statement. It therefore means that majority of the parents in the study area do not apply rod as an instrument for discipline. The results of the findings also indicated that 749 (37.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they showed affection and love to their children all the time and 663 which represent 33.2% agreed with the statement. However, only 354 which represent 17.7% and 231 which represent 11.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This implies that majority of the parents in the study area showed affection and love to their children. Furthermore, 294 which represent 14.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and 212 which represent 10.6% agreed that they provide their children with adequate food, clothing and shelter. However, 768 representing 38.5% of the respondents disagreed and 723 which represent 36.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. This implies that majority of the parents in the study area do not provide basic necessities of life for their children. Perhaps, they could not afford the costs. Further to this, 767 representing 38.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and 735 representing 36.8% agreed that they are seriously concern about the kinds of friends that their children keep. Only 245 respondents which represent 12.3% disagreed and 250 respondents which also represent 12.5% strongly disagreed. This gives an indication that majority of the parents showed concerns about the kinds of friends that their children keep.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges facing parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council in the task of parenting?

Table Three: Challenges facing parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council in the task of parenting

SN	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Broken home poses threats to Christian parenting in ECWA Ibadan District.	523 (26.2%)	486 (24.3%)	544 (27.2%)	444 (22.2%)
2.	Illiteracy is one of the factors responsible for the improper parenting in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council.	357 (17.9%)	533 (26.7%)	483 (24.2%)	624 (31.3%)
3.	Peer pressure constitutes hindrance to Christian parenting in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council.	711 (35.6%)	823 (41.2%)	211 (10.6%)	252 (12.6%)
4.	Effects of economy is another challenge of Christian parenting	551 (27.6%)	508 (25.4%)	526 (26.3%)	412 (20.6%)
5.	Modernity and social media also constitute challenge to Christian parenting.	587 (29.4%)	422 (21.1%)	427 (21.4%)	561 (28.1%)

Source: Field Survey: 2023

The results in table four above reveal that 1009 (50.5%) of the respondents agreed that broken home poses threats to Christian parenting while 988 (49.5%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. Also, 890 (44.6%) admitted that illiteracy is one of the factors responsible for the improper parenting in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council; while 1107 (55.4%) of the respondents disagree with this assertion. Similarly, 1534 (76.8%) agreed that peer pressure could hinder Christian parenting in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council, while only 463 (23.2%) disagreed with this claim. The table further shows that 551 (27.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 508 (25.4%) agreed that effects of economy is one of the major challenges facing Christian parenting. However, 526 (26.3%) of the respondents disagreed while 412 (20.6%) strongly disagreed. It therefore shows that majority of the respondents did not see effects of economy as a challenge to Christian parenting. In addition to this, 587 (29.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed,

while 422 (21.1%) agreed that modernity and social media constitute challenge to Christian parenting, however, 427 (21.4%) disagreed while 561 (28.1%) strongly disagreed.

4.2 Analysis of Questionnaire on Children

Table 1: My parents are my role models.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	209	20.7%
No	801	79.3%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in the above table indicate that 209 respondents (20.7%) were of the opinion that their parents serve as role models in their lives. However, 801 respondents (79.3%) did not confirm it. It shows that majority of children did not see their parents as their role model in life. This claim does not agree with the claim of their parents who profess to be role models for their children.

Table 4: I received adequate home and moral trainings from my parents in compliance with the parenting principles.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	410	40.6%
No	600	59.4%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table also shows that 410 which represent 40.6% of the respondents received adequate home and moral trainings from their parents in compliance with the principle of Christian parenting, while 600, representing 59.4% did not. This means that majority of the ECWA children in Ibadan District Church Council claimed not to have received adequate home and moral trainings from their parents. This claim therefore does not agree with the earlier submissions of their parents who claimed to have given adequate home and moral training to their children.

Table 5: My parents apply rod as instrument to discipline me

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	177	17.5%
No	833	82.5%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above reveals that 177 respondents, representing 17.5%, confirmed that their parents apply rod as an instrument to discipline them. Whereas, 833 children representing 82.5% confirmed that their parents do not. This means that majority of parents do not comply with principles of Christian parenting in this regard. This failure was confirmed by 82.5% of the respondents which represent majority of the Children in the study area. The submissions of both the parents and their children agree on this view.

Table 6: I always enjoy affection and love from my parents

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	284	28.1%
No	726	71.9%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in the table above show that 284 respondents representing 28.1% confirmed that they always enjoy affection and love from their parents. However, 726 which represent 71.9% said no to this statement. This is to say that majority of ECWA parents did not show affection and love to their children all the time. It shows their parents' level of commitment to this parenting principle. The children's responses as well validate those of their parents.

Table 7: My parents provide appropriate information on Christian values for me

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	390	38.6%
No	620	61.4%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in the above table indicate that 620 children representing 61.4% claimed that they did not get appropriate information on Christian values from their parents, while 390 representing 38.6% did confirmed that they got. This shows that majority of ECWA parents did not receive appropriate information on Christian values. This confirms what the parents also said in their responses.

Table 8: My parents do care about friends I keep

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	323	23%
No	778	77%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above reveals that out of the total respondents that participated in the study, parents of 232 representing 23% did care about friends that their children keep while 778 representing 77% did not. This implies that majority of the parents in ECWA do not care about friend their children relate with. This contradicts the claim made by their parents in this regard.

Table 9: My parents do chastise me whenever I make mistake

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	492	48.7%
No	518	51.3%
Total	1010	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above indicates that 492 (48.7%) out of the total respondents admitted that their parents do chastise them whenever they made mistake, whereas, 518 (51.3%) did not admit. This shows that minority of the parents do not comply with this principle of Christian parenting. It also agrees with the submission of the parents themselves.

5. Conclusion

The research work is an empirical assessment of Christian parenting by ECWA Ibadan District Church Council members. The study looked at the way this has affected the socio-religious life of members of the church. Factors that affect the processes of Christian parenting were carefully studied. ECWA Ibadan District Church Council remained the target population of the study. It was gathered that some anti-social behaviours that are seen in the young ones are as a result of poor Christian parenting. The findings from the research also revealed that the rate at which the young ones are migrating from the church is very high, particularly in Ibadan District Church Council. One of the reasons for the migration is not unconnected with the perceived lukewarm attitude or mode of worship in ECWA. ECWA does not emphasize “Pentecostal manner of worship” which

most youths today are yearning for. Besides, children as early as twelve years are engaging in sexual immorality, Cultism, Examination malpractices, et cetera. Broken homes, peer pressure, poverty amongst others were noticed to have been factors hindering Christian parenting in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council. Furthermore, the research study indicated that if Christian parenting is emulated; the church and the entire society will be more peaceful. Specifically, it will enhance church growth and nation building. Finally, this study submits to the fact that Christian parenting is the master key to the development of children in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council and the entire society. Considering the prevailing circumstances in the society and the church in particular regarding the immoral and other anti-social behaviours militating against the upbringing of a child; the study underscores the reality of effective Christian parenting vis-a-vis the need to adopt the biblical instruction as a means of building good character in the lives of the young ones and thereby reducing the level of moral decadence and social value bankruptcy to a manageable level in the society.

6. Recommendations

In order to reduce the negative effects of social-vices among children in the society to a manageable level the following recommendations are put forward. Children should be taught necessary religious values early enough that will help them to grow and become disciplined members of the society as well as helping them to build a positive future. In view of the rate of divorce in the society, parents in ECWA Ibadan District Church Council and the society at large must avoid anything that will cause separation between them. Parents must be good role models to their children. What they do must be consistent with what they teach their children. Further still, each family should plan to have only the number of children they can adequately cater for because the Yoruba says, *omo beere, osi beere ni*, (express birthing comes with serious poverty). Parents should not withdraw the rod of discipline from their little children if they prove prankish and rebellious to instructions. This is consistent with the teachings of the Bible which says, "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). Parents should ensure that their children are taught all the necessary religious traditions that will help them to grow and become mentally, spiritually, morally, and physically disciplined. This is because, "There is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal" (Bunge, 2001:21). And finally, the church leadership should give moral and financial supports to children programmes. Clerics should preach regularly on Christian parenting.

References

- Ademiluka, S. O. (2011). "A Powerful King but a Weak Father: David in the Context of Parental Responsibility in Africa." *Biblical Studies and Youth Development in Africa*, (8), 95-111.
- Adewale, B. (2009). *Parenting without Tears*. Lagos: Living Home Ventures.
- Akintunde, D.O. (2008). "The Role of Church in the Care of Street Children in Africa." *Africa Journal of Biblical Studies*, 26, (2) 25-36.
- Ayantayo, J. K. (2011). *Child Rights in Literacy Genres and Religious Scriptures*. Ibadan: Aflame Publishing House.
- Babatunde, E. A. (1992). "Yoruba Concept of Good Character and its Implications for Christian Spiritual Formation in Yoruba land of Nigeria. Unpublished Ed. D Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Illinois.
- Babatunde, E. (2004:219). "Traditional Marriage and Family." *Understanding Yoruba Life and Culture*. Edited by Lawal, N. S. Sadiku, M. N. Dopamu, P. A. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Bunge, M. J. (2001). "Introduction" *The Child in Christian Thought*. Edited by M. J. Bunge, pp. 1-28. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Fafunwa, Babs. (1990). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Gillard, P. (2003). *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (New)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jane. E. Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology: 'For What Purpose Do We Older Folks Exist, Other Than to Care for... the Young?'" *The Child in Christian Thought*. Edited by M.J. Bunge. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Nwasuoke, I. A., Bamgbose, Y., and Moronkola, O.A. (eds). (2004). *Contemporary Issues and Researches on Adolescents*. Ibadan: Royal People.
- Oderinde, Olatundun Abosede. (2015:56). The Study of Children in Mark 10:13-16 from a Yoruba Perspective. *An Asian Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Part 1, 2015:51-58.
- Ogunsola, Victoria Oluwaronke, Christian Parenting as a Tool for Mitigating Societal Vices in the Contemporary Society. *International Journal of Family Life and Societal Development*, Institute of Family Life and Societal Development, Vol. 1, No. 2, December. Akure: Johnstar Educational Services, 2022: 149.
- Ogunsola, Victoria Oluwaronke, Christian Parenting as a Tool for Mitigating Societal Vices in the Contemporary Society. *International Journal of Family Life and Societal Development*, Institute of Family Life and Societal Development, Vol. 1, No. 2, December. Akure: Johnstar Educational Services, 2022: 130.
- Okpako J. E. F. (2004). "Parenting the Nigerian Adolescents towards Smooth Transition to Adulthood." In I. A. Nwazuoke, Y. Bamgbose, & O A. Moronkola (eds.), *Contemporary Issues and Researches on Adolescents*, pp. 275-288. Ibadan: Royal People Nigeria.
- Okpako J. E. F. (2004). "Parenting the Nigerian Adolescents towards Smooth Transition to Adulthood." In I. A. Nwazuoke, Y.

- Bamgbose, & O A. Moronkola (eds.), *Contemporary Issues and Researches on Adolescents*, pp. 275-288. Ibadan: Royal People Nigeria.
- Otoikhila, F. (2011). *Single Parenting and its Effects on Nigerian Children*. Being a Thesis Submitted to the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan for the Award of B. A. Christian Religious Studies.
- Shodipo, S. O. (2014). *Godly Parenting*. Ibadan: Unique Pathfinder.
- Shodipo, S. O. (2014). *Godly Parenting*. Ibadan: Unique Pathfinder.
- Simon, J. and T. Edim. (2013). *The Berom Tribe of Plateau State of Nigeria*. Jos: FAB Education Books.