

**THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HOLISTIC CHILDREN MINISTRY IN CHURCH
DEVELOPMENT IN EMMANUEL BUREMA CHURCH OF UGANDA- DIOCESE
OF KINKIIZI**

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DECLARATION

I **ABAHO OWEN** hereby declare that this research work is my original work except where references was made and had never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for the award of a diploma or degree in divinity .


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ABAHO OWEN

DATE

DEDICATION

To my dear wife Promise Abaho, my daughter blessed Miracle Arinda and our dear parents, brothers, sisters, in-laws and mentors.

APPROVAL

I hereby certify that this research report had been done under my supervision for the award of bachelor's degree in divinity.

Good Turya Haabwe

04/07/2025

Rev. GOOD TURYAHAABWE

DATE

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ABBREVIATIONS

C.O.U. Church Of Uganda

REV. Reverend

RT. Right

Ven. Venerable

CAN. Canon

U.C.U Uganda Christian University

BBUC. Bishop Barham University

BD. Bachelor of divinity

S/warden. Senior warden

M22. May intake 2022

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Table4; contribution of children ministry

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ABSTRACT

This research study was on holistic child ministry in Emmanuel Burema parish, Kanyantorogo archdeaconry, Kinkinzi Diocese. It presented five chapters which includes introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation and analysis, and discussion of the research findings and recommendation and conclusion.

This research study hinges on problem statement, objectives of the study and research questions of the study. Data collected was analyzed on the basis of the latter and former. The data collected covered the current status, contributions and way forward for holistic child ministry in Burema parish, Kanyantorogo archdeaconry.

The researcher used questionnaire, interview, and personal experience which he administered on different persons whom he arrived at using sampling techniques.

Data collected was grouped and analyzed using tables, frequencies and percentages to come with the respondents and interviewees views on the research questions and objectives of the study. Therefore it was against these that the research findings in chapter four were discussed in chapter five and recommendations to address the holistic child ministry and finally conclusions made.

The research findings showed that there was children ministry as evidenced by the activities such as children workshops, Sunday school though there was a gap for the implementation of holistic children ministry which contributes much to the development of the church.

The church has however tried to put up some measures to address the challenges such as compassion international, Sunday school programs, reaching children with the gospel, and sensitizing parents about parenting.

The researcher recommended some strategies that can help the church, government, parents, and church leaders to implement holistic child ministry for example developing curriculum for Sunday school, training children teachers, and parents acting as role models to children among others

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Child; A child is a young human being who is below the age of adolescence. Therefore the study was based on children between the ages of three to twelve who attend regularly at Emmanuel Burema parish

Church: This word comes from the Greek word, “ekklesia” which means a get-together, an assembly or congregation (truth, 2018)

Children ministry: this is a ministry in the church that nurtures children spiritual life (Allen. H, 2008).

Church development: this is the process of building a healthy and vibrant church, characterized by spiritual growth, numerical growth and community impact, through the effective use of resources, leadership and ministries (Barna, 1997).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on historical back ground of the study, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, and the significance of study

1.1 Historical background of Burema church of Uganda

Burema C.O.U is found in Nyaruhanga cell, Burema parish, Kanyantorogo Sub County in the Diocese of Kinkiizi, Kanungu district. It is approximately 7.597kms from the Diocese of Kinkiizi headquarters on Kanungu Kihihi road on the right hand side opposite Burema primary school. It is formed by four hills with no sub parish and these hills include Nyaruhanga, Kihumuro, Nyambare, and Kahama and these hills act as their congregation churches. Burema c.o.u is the centre of kanyantorogo archdeaconry in the diocese of kinkiizi. Burema c.o.u parish has a population of both males and females that is young and old approximately 381 households in four cells with a population of approximately 331 females, 299 males 679youth and 845 children church giving a total of approximately 2154 Christians .

The gospel of Jesus Christ was heard in Burema in 1922. The first church at Burema was a group of few Christians who would gather to pray under one of the big tree called “ekitooma” for shelter in the current Burema primary school playground. By then this land was for the government called “omuginda” where people would meet for government plans especially constructing of village roads. In response to the trumpet call, Christians would come for prayers wearing hides, they would sit on grass under

the tree to hear the good news of the gospel. Later a grass thatched house with banana fibers and grasses was built between those trees for shelter while worshipping.

According to some old Christians between ages of 65-90 in Burema said that sometimes snakes would attack the gathering and after biting and killing some of them, they would sing hymn 74 in Runyakole Rukiga hymn book which says there is life for a look at the crucified one), and then they would be filled by the Holy Spirit that helped them to continue increasing in number in number. This land was later given out by the government to the church and the government transferred its quarters (omuginda) at where kanyantorogo health center 3 is built .the church continued to expand in 1920s and its land was expanded by few people who had welcomed the gospel by giving their lands to the church for expansion .

According to elders, the church continued to expand land and the group of church leaders from Nyankatare which was the parish came and this land later was gazzetted using local trees like “ebitooma and ebiiko” as the church land led by Rev Elinest Rutagarukayo and Timiseo Bamuhata with a group of Christians who had welcomed the gospel by that time. The land is currently registered under Uganda lands commission with the land tittle through church commissioners holding company limited to preserve the church land as a heritage for the Anglican church of the province of Uganda while at the same time managing it in a way that gives God the glory and shows the reality and richness of Gods kingdom with in Christ- transformed communities.

1.2 Leadership history of Burema church of Uganda

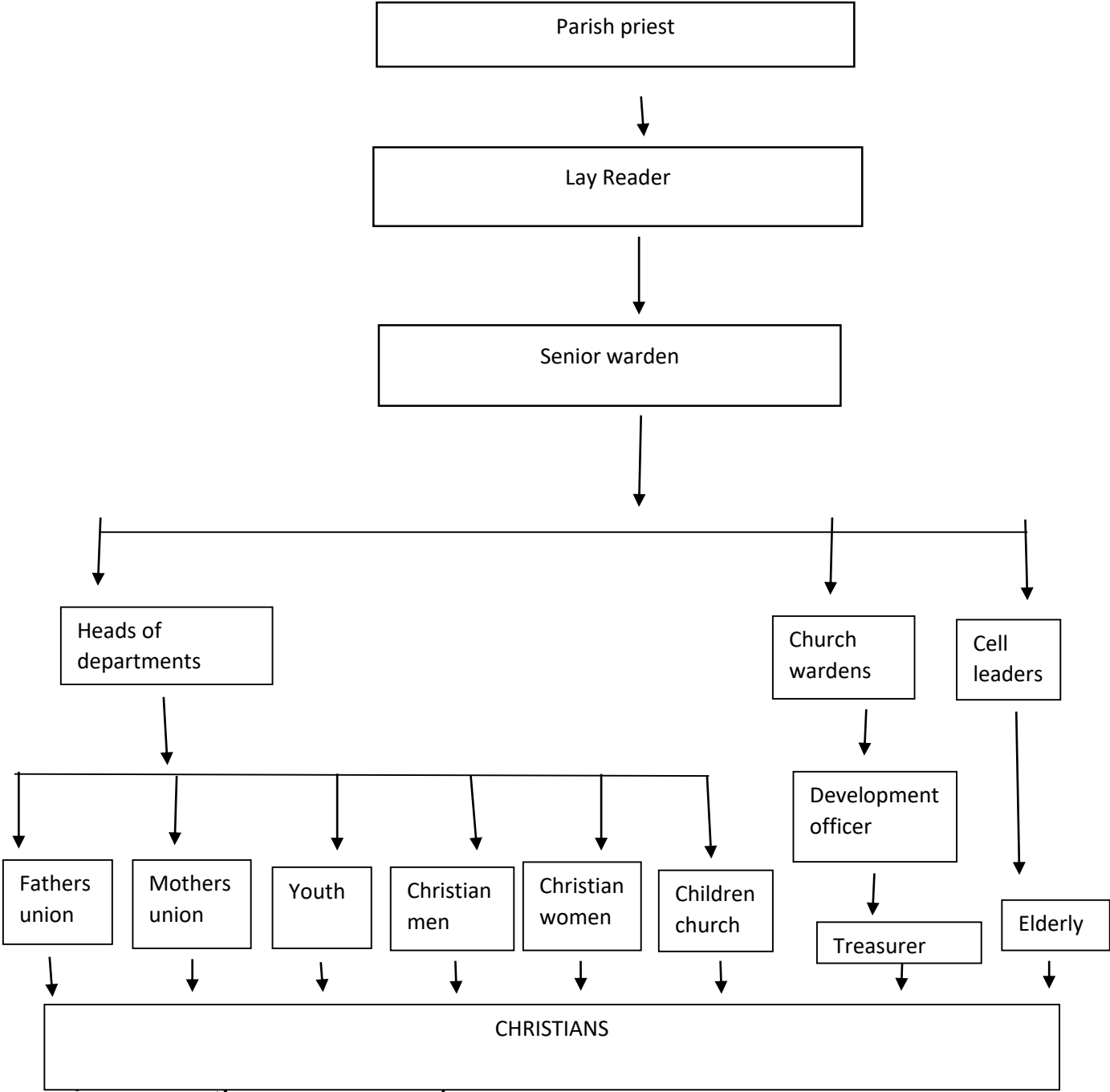
According to some old Christians , the first lay reader was called Petero Katwa-Kyoma who came from Rujumbura in 1922 as a congregation church; other catechists who followed include Mr Kosiya Kahama, Yoel Munjugu, Musa Byanyima, Isaaka Bashekye, Yokana Bakebwa, Kezekia Muhunde, Stanely Mbeeta, and Yoel Nduru. These were lay readers who worked in Burema under Nyakatare parish in the years 1922-1966.

In 1966, Burema became a parish and pastors who served in the parish include, Rev Kezekia kanyiima, Rev Peter Kalebya, Rev Samuel Kaseto, Rev Sadayo Kabare, Rev Elinest Shakiira, and Rev Charles Busingye

In 1985, Burema was made an Archdeaconry center and Rev Stanely Mbonabweira was the first Archdeacon and was followed by the following Archdeacons Rev David kesiga, Rev. Ephraim kurama, Rev. Evas kurama Rev. Fred Bazirake, . During the above leadership, Burema was the centre of the archdeaconry with coverage of churches namely Burema, kihanda, and kihembe, bushoro, rubibwa, kangarame, and kanyugusi.

Burema later became archdeaconry centre for kanyantorogo subcounty covering 9 parishes in 2001 with the following archdeacons Rev Steven Begumisa, 2001-2004, Rev Enos Mukombe 2004-2011, Rev Canon Byamugisha bernand 2011-2018 and the current Rev. can. Wilson Twinomuhwezi. Being kanyantorogo Archdeaconry, it has nine parishes namely Emmanuel Burema, centenary Kanyantorogo, Kishenyi, Kacerere, kihembe, Rukarara, Bushoro, Bugiri c.o.u and Kanyugusi c.o.u.

1.3 The organogram of Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda parish



Globally, the church has been engaging children’s ministry in various ways to promote church development by providing intergenerational connections and

worship, encouraging meaningful relationships between children and adult leaders, and creating opportunities for children to engage in the activities of the church. Children ministry is not just about participating in local church ministry but it's about participating in God's global mission to reach and disciple. Therefore church has the critical role to play in addressing the whole life of children in crisis context (MacDonald, 2020)

In Uganda today, the province of Church of Uganda has made significant efforts to engage children in ministry through various initiatives and programs. These efforts aim to provide children with a strong foundation in faith, character, and life skills, and to support their overall development. A Study conducted by church of Uganda found that churches that engaged children ministry department experiences significant growth in attendance and participation among children and youth and children engaged were more likely to develop faith foundation and become leaders in their churches (church of Uganda, 2018)

From the background, the Burema Church of Uganda has established some metrics to assess children's understanding of biblical concepts, their engagement levels during activities, and overall spiritual growth over time. Feedback from parents and participants has informed adjustments to children programs as needed. It has nurtured children through Sunday school with some selected Sunday school teachers fostering spiritual development, engaging parents as partners, creating comprehensive programs, encouraging community involvement, addressing broader social issues affecting families, and evaluating their approaches to meet different children changing needs. However, Burema Church of Uganda, has faced challenges in effectively implementing

holistic children ministry as part of its broader church development strategy. The focus has been on traditional methods of teaching and programming that may not fully address the diverse needs of children. Their teachings and programs do not have proper child ministry curriculum. Children Teachers responsible teach storytelling, singing, dancing without an organized plan and strategy and also a need to train those teachers for Sunday school to acquire different skills of children teaching methods.

According to Osborn,(2004), a church is a physical structure where people gather to worship, learn and to have fellowship with others who believe in Jesus Christ. In another sense, a church, according the above authors, could be a spiritual community of all people who believe in Jesus Christ. In its primary sense it means a visible, local congregation, or an organized company of disciples meeting at a given place and for a given purpose. Therefore, a Church is a congregation of baptized believers united by covenant to carry into effect the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church has a mandate, among other things, to ensure the total development of their members including the children. The church, as an agent of child ministry plays a vital role, in conjunction with other stakeholders, not only in the spiritual and moral aspects of the child's development, but also see to the social, educational and psychological status of the child through its (the church's) peripheral functions.

Therefore, an effective faith-based children's ministry program requires an understanding and recognition of children's growth, development, needs and cognitive abilities. Many Christian children in Uganda today are standing at crossroad, facing some challenges in their total development. There is the prevalence of teenage

pregnancy, child malnutrition, juvenile delinquency and other developmental challenges taking the lives of children in the many villages in Uganda

According to Barna, (1995), children ministry is the process of helping children to develop their friendship with God and empowering them to become true Christians. Children ministry is a key component of the church. It is actually one of the elements at the foundation level. Jesus looks at children as a standard for entry into God's kingdom "...for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" Luke 18:16. It is however surprising that children ministry is the most neglected ministry in the church. Children are often despised as if they have nothing to contribute to the church or even the community. Children ministry is an intentional effort to create a supportive environment that fosters spiritual growth, social emotional development and positive relationship among children, families, and the broader community Roehlkepartain, (2008).

Proverbs 22:6 says that "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The research will focus on how training children at a tender age, can bring about transformation in the church.

The church was comprised of 3 major groups and these are children, youth and adults. Among these groups children are believed to be at the foundation level, this is because a growing church is evaluated by the number of children in the church. The more the children, the more the church's strength. From children we get the youth and from the youth we get the adults.

In Uganda today, 80% of the churches that neglect children ministry experience declining attendances and membership (Senter, 2017) thus there is a need to recognize children's ministry by church leaders because most of them are concerned with other ministries like mothers' union, fathers' union, the choir and other groups in the church that are rich leaving a gap between children ministry and others. In addition, too often leaders of the church are caught up in management of week-to-week programs, attending to the big picture of the church and not children.

Therefore neglecting children' ministry is like neglecting the future life of the church as children are the next generation of leaders and members (Roehlkepartain, 2008) Thus was a need to implement holistic approach to children's ministry in our local churches because it will lead to substantial growth within a church community by fostering spiritual engagement, emotional well-being, social responsibility, family integration, and volunteer participation hence church development.

1.5 Statement of the problem

Many Churches in Uganda today particularly in rural areas like Burema church of Uganda parish in collaboration with the government are responsible for holistic children's ministry by fostering spiritual development, engaging parents as partners, creating comprehensive programs, encouraging community involvement, addressing broader social issues affecting families, and evaluating their approaches to meet changing needs. Burema Church of Uganda, like many congregations, has faced challenges in effectively implementing holistic children ministry as one of its priority among development of the church's strategy. There was on traditional methods of teaching and programming that may not fully address the diverse needs of children. Their

teachings and programs do not have proper child ministry curriculum. Children Teachers responsible taught storytelling, singing, dancing without an organized plan and strategy. Many churches neglect holistic children ministry and little understanding their specific contributions to church development. It is observed that children ministry is the most neglected ministry in the church that is Many churches concentrate on mature Christians because they are the ones who contribute financially to the development of the church (Luzida, 2015) .This was not surprising because even Jesus' disciples wanted to hinder them from accessing him (Mark 10:13-14) and in the old testament bible underscores significance of children in faith communities, and yet the church is required in the bible to training of children in the way they should go.

Thus there was a need to implement holistic approach to children's ministry in our local churches because it will lead to substantial growth within a church community by fostering spiritual engagement, emotional well-being, social responsibility, family integration, and volunteer participation. Research has highlighted that early spiritual formation lead to lifelong commitment and participation in church activities (Barna, 2017). This research was to address the contributions of holistic children ministry in church development in Burema church of Uganda, kanyantorogo Archdeaconry -Diocese of Kinkiizi.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The researcher aimed at studying the contribution of holistic child ministry in the Anglican Church with specific reference to Burema church of Uganda, Diocese of kinkiizi.

1.7 The Objectives of the research

They were;

- i. To expose current state of holistic children ministry at Burema Church of Uganda Parish
- ii. To find out the contributions of holistic children ministry to Burema Church of Uganda Parish
- iii. To find ways of improving holistic children ministry at Burema Church of Uganda Parish

1.8 Research questions

- a) What was holistic children's current state in Burema church of Uganda, Diocese of kinkiizi?
- b) What were the contributions of holistic children ministry in church development in Burema parish, diocese of Kinkiizi?
- c) What were the ways of improving holistic children ministry in Burema parish, diocese of kinkiizi?

1.9 The Scope of the study

This includes geographical scope, content scope and time scope.

1.9.1 Geographical scope

Geographical scope of the study was kinkiizi Diocese with particular focus on, Burema Church of Uganda Parish, kanyantorogo archdeaconry . Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda kanyantorogo archdeaconry is in the Diocese of kinkiizi, and is located in kanungu district, western Uganda, bordering Democratic Republic of Congo in the

western Uganda. It also borders diocese of kigezi, north kigezi, and muhabura diocese in the south. The Diocese is near the equator and shares the same administrative boundaries with Kananga District, Its longitude is 29.7421° E, Latitude 0.895°s and it stands at 1313 meters above the sea level. Runyankole rukiga is a predominant language spoken with in region

1.9.2 Content scope

This was focused on the current state as well as contribution of holistic children ministry to the Church development and how holistic children ministry can be improved.

1.9.3 Time scope

Research was done in a period of three months that is March, April and May 2025

1.10 Significance

Holistic child ministry is very important because it is the foundation that the church is based on . Children who are empowered holistically at their early age of childhood grow in all spheres of life, that is, spiritually, mentally physically, socially and economically.

This study was of great importance to the church because it will help in discovering how child ministry is being done, the church will be able to identify the possible gaps existing within the implementation of holistic child ministry and how they can be closed. For example, finding professional children’s church teachers who can handle the different aspects of holistic children’s ministry and finding children curriculum that will help them be nurtured in both physically, spiritually, socially, economically and politically. The study was also to help parents and caregivers to understand whether

what was being taught to their children was holistic or not. They would discover ways through which child ministry could be improved holistically for the benefit of children, church, families and the nation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This involved past studies which are related to the topic, looking at the gravity variables, the up-to-date state of children ministry, contribution of holistic children ministry in the church development and ways to improve children ministry in the church that is, spiritual, physical, social and cognitive, and its importance in grooming a child to become a fulfilled Christian adult that is self-sufficient and able to influence the environment around them.

2.2 The current state of holistic children ministry

According to Kummer (2019), statistics on children ministry shows that two thirds of Christians come to faith before the age of eighteen, forty three percent come to Christ before the age of twelve and less than a quarter of the Christians come to Christ after the age of twenty . The researchers described child hood life stage when people are most open to the gospel. The child ministry is then categorized into children's physical growth and development, motor development, cognitive development, and social and emotional development. The whole child growth occurs between 15-20 years following birth, as the individual changes from the average weight of 3.5 kg and length of 50 cm at full term birth to full adult size (Tanner, 1990).

In churches today children ministry was done through Sunday school where the focus has been on traditional methods of teaching and programming that may not fully address the diverse needs of children. Their teachings and programs do not have proper child ministry curriculum. Children Teachers responsible teach storytelling, singing,

dancing without an organized plan and strategy. Many churches neglect holistic children ministry and little understanding their specific contributions to church development. .

From the background, the Burema Church of Uganda has established some metrics to assess children's understanding of biblical concepts, their engagement levels during activities, and overall spiritual growth over time. Feedback from parents and participants has informed adjustments to children programs as needed. It has nurtured children through Sunday school with some selected Sunday school teachers fostering spiritual development, engaging parents as partners, creating comprehensive programs, encouraging community involvement, addressing broader social issues affecting families, and evaluating their approaches to meet different children changing needs. However, Burema Church of Uganda, has faced challenges in effectively implementing holistic children ministry as part of its broader church development strategy. The focus has been on traditional methods of teaching and programming that may not fully address the diverse needs of children. Their teachings and programs do not have proper child ministry curriculum. Children Teachers responsible teach storytelling, singing, dancing without an organized plan and strategy and there is also a need to train those Sunday school teachers to acquire different skills of children teaching methods.

According to The Bible in relation to Child ministry and also several scholars have expanded several theories on child development, the Bible has also some provisions that guide how children should be raised by Christians. Some of these models include birth and care of children, duty of parents in training of children, importance of children among many others. There was among Jewish wives a universal longing for, and joy in the giving of birth to children. According to Howard, (1991) explains that this

longing is well expressed in the words of Rachael to Jacob “give me children, or else I will die” (Gen. 30:1). Christians hold that children are signs of blessings from God. “Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body” (Deut. 28:4). The Psalmist pictures a man blessed of the Lord, and says of him, “Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thin house” (Psalm 128:3). Therefore, sterility in marriage was considered to be a divine visitation or a curse (Howard, 1991).

Care for infants in the Bible was done much as when Jesus was born in the gospels of the new testament. Instead of allowing the young baby the free use of its limbs, it is bound hand and foot by swaddling bands and thus made into a helpless bundle. At birth, a child is washed and rubbed with salt and then with its legs together, and its arms at its side, it is wound around tightly with linen or cotton bandage. The prophet Ezekiel indicates that these same customs at child birth were practiced in his day. “In the day thou was born Thou was not washed in water to cleanse thee; thou was not salted at all, nor swaddled at all” (Ezekiel 16:4) Biblical Command to Teach Children Under this, the Bible spells out clearly what to do with children for them to grow up as adults who know God. “Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Prov. 22:6), “these commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 4: 6).

God is the source of the command in the bible. To be commanded is to be given an authoritative order. Israel received orders to teach their children and this means that God’s people are to include the children in their responsibility toward God. “One key word to express love for God is to be concerned with the spiritual welfare of our

children and strife to bring them into a faithful relationship with God. The Godly training of children should be a foremost concern of parents” (Grand Rapids, 1992). The Lord seeks universal empire, and commands his people to teach the word to everyone. Every church and every Christian must understand that they have marching orders. Not only is every saint commanded to go, or to take steps to take the gospel to other lands, but the objective is stated. They are to make disciples, or pupils, for Christ. They have entered the school of Christ and are to be taught and afterwards to be made Disciples of Christ. Not only were the Jews to benefit but all nations. Christ came to be the Savior of the world. His is a universal religion. In the Great Commission he looks beyond Judea, and commands that the Gospel should be offered to all nations.

In the words of Coleman, (1947) every child is born with innocence, though doctrinally declared sinful with an inherent sin. Nevertheless, a child comes into this world knowing nothing; his first language is from his parents. They learn everything with people and the environment around them. Coleman added and said that, “No child should be left to grow up in our world of unbelief and fragrant sin without having heard the gospel with a persuasive invitation to believe it and accept its salvation” (Coleman, 1947).

Much as there is a strong desire by many parents in different communities need to spiritually nurture their children, many drop out of their spiritual path and by the time they are teenagers or adults, the lives they are leading are wanting. In Uganda, statistics on child marriage are alarming. Drug abuse is on the rise among children, teenage pregnancies are rampant, children are running away from homes and we are left to ask, what is the role of the church in nurturing children? The church has a big

aspect of nurturing development of children. It is important that children grow up with values and the church is very strategically positioned to do that. (Westerhoff, 1971)

In many churches today, children are seen as an unimportant aspect of church, church leaders and parents should pay attention to children and provide for their needs spiritually, academically, health and socially. Children are not always welcomed in church services or integrated into the full worship of the community. Sunday Schools in many churches, along with those involved in them, are perceived as rather second class compared with the 'important' activities in the main sanctuary of the church! There is thus some urgency to reflect theologically and act on behalf of children. (Land, 1975)

These developments have been in line with new discoveries by historians and theologians to deal with the important issues of theology, mission and child. One cannot but appreciate the more recent increasing interest in children and childhood studies in different academic fields, not least in theological studies. (Mukhwana, 2015)

2.3 Contributions of holistic children ministry to the church

Research indicated that a person's whole life is generally developed when they are young—particularly before their teenage years. The central point of holistic child programs is to make sure that children learn about God in an orderly way according to their age groups while they are young . It is key to understand that children learn very well when they are fed according to their age. In the new testament of the bible encourages those preaching the gospel to feed milk to those who deserve milk and when they grow, they can now feed them adult food. In that case, children deserve milk food (gospel) if they are to understand or learn well about God (Hebrews 15:13-14).²

According to Barna (2003), a person's moral foundations are generally in place by age of nine. After that age, most people simply refine their views. A person's response to Jesus (and the gospel concerning his life, death and resurrection) is usually determined before age eighteen. To add on, A person's spiritual beliefs is set in place when they are preteens. Those beliefs include the nature of God, the existence of Satan, the reliability of the Bible, the afterlife, Jesus Christ, the means of gaining God's favor, and the influence of spiritual forces in a person's life. Barna, (2003)

Barna, (2003) noted that adult church leaders usually had significant involvement in the church when they were children. Thus, those who will become the church's leaders 20 years from now are probably active in children's church programs today. Children ministry plays a crucial role in grooming leaders for today and tomorrow. In his journal equipping children for ministry. Therefore, if this ministry is organized well enables them to understand what they are taught about God since they are taught according to their age groups. Children's ministry is done by well-trained teachers (Sunday school teachers as they are called), children can learn about God truly because the teachers know what to teach, how to teach, and how to handle the children according to their age group. (Johnston, 2022).

In the children's ministry, there is a following of the curriculum. If the curriculum is followed, it begins by introducing children to a particular topic, the definitions of key terms, the explanation of difficult words, and relevant examples. According to the culture of the community and age groups relevant illustrations are done for example, the story of Goliath and David's child may act as David and another one Goliath. When Goliath is defeated by a younger boy due to the hand of help from God, children can

learn that God is powerful and he can win for us all the big battles we fear if we trust Him. In the adult church, there is no curriculum in most of the churches so children cannot understand well. Therefore, Hebrews 5:13-4 “Anyone who lives on milk being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” Children are still infants and young to know good and evil so through feeding them milk, they go on growing from milk to adult food after knowing what is good and evil. Learning is a process in which one must follow process by process and stage by stage. Therefore, children’s ministry helps children learn about God process by process and stage by stage the result is to know God truly thus children’s ministry provides an opportunity for children to learn about God truly hence leading to responsible and nurtured church leaders as well as the community .

The children’s ministry helps to bring more children and families into one congregation as they will want to regularly attend church to see their peers. Families will attend church to ensure their kids enjoy it. It will not only grow the church but help the church to gain more volunteers and sponsors as people are always keen on helping children to advance in every aspect of their lives. Fletcher, (2008)

Children’s ministries help to create meaningful relationships within family units. The church community is a family on its own but ministries help to bring children together to create good relationships with each other and the church. It not only encourages Godly parenting but also helps parents to guide their children so that they enjoy church-related activities. Families are encouraged to attend church as their kids will be involved in church and they would want to support them. Therefore this will help them

to engage with the rest of families in the life of the church, leading to increased attendance and participation (Fletcher, 2008)

Children ministry teaches child discipline for example, it teaches children how to respect authority and to have good behaviors. Discipline is core for the success of any child in life and a child cannot get discipline anywhere else apart from the church. According Psalms 1:7 states that “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” following God’s laws at an early age allows a child to grow up with discipline and it is through discipline that they attain knowledge.

Children’s ministry provides kids with opportunities to help the community, such as doing acts of good and feeding the poor. Children learn to offer service to the community through Sunday school and other children’s programs. For example, through the compassion sponsorship program children are given opportunity to do acts of service in the community such as cleaning the well, fetching water for the elderly, cleaning premises for old people’s homes and distributing some household items to families of needy people.

Children ministry supports Godly parenting. Godly parenting is very crucial for raising God fearing children with both knowledge and discipline. This is done through parent/ caregiver seminars which are intended to educate parents and caregivers about their role in parenting. Through these seminars parents and caregivers are helped to fulfil their calling by involving them in the ministry and putting them in their plans which helps parents and caregivers to carry on the ministry outside church premises which is very crucial in ministry sustainability. (Caplan, 1989)

Holistic child ministry helps caregivers to acquire some skills through sensitizations. Children ministry programs which emphasize parent/ caregiver involvement usually help in empowering them with different skills through sensitizations. For example, through compassion international children ministry, parents and caregivers are usually invited for sensitizations such as nutritional sensitizations, family planning sensitizations and disease prevention sensitizations. Such skills have a great impact on family and community. They help families to know the number of children they should have at a given time depending on the available resources. They learn how to feed their children on the foods that are appropriate for their age so that they grow as healthy vessels for the work of God. (Ministry, 2023)

It brings un churchd families together with the Gospel. In our culture, nurturing children is one of the most effective ways to make contact with un churchd groups. The Sunday school curriculum is very essential in helping children acquire spiritual knowledge necessary to equip them with the basic biblical knowledge. This curriculum is designed according to the church calendar hence it helps the children to learn the church seasons from advent through Easter, Pentecost and Trinity. Barna, (2003)

According to Bredfeldt, (2004), holistic children ministry helps to identify and develop future leaders within the church, ensuring its long term sustainability. When children are given chance to lead their peers through bible reading, leading praise, leading small groups, leading intercessions among others, they acquire leadership skills that will even help them when they are adults.

It gives community awareness of the church through special activities. Special activities such as sports gala, music dance and drama attract people from different backgrounds and as they come for such events, they become aware of the church and its programs. Events such as talent competitions - a day where kids get together to showcase their talents is a great church event idea to get parents and children involved. It even brings on board the elderly (grandma and grandpa) as cheerers of their precious little ones. (Sharma, 2023)

Holistic childcare is essential to allow parents to engage fully in the church praise and worship service as well as listening the gospel . As children are being attended to by their teachers, parents and caregivers, get time to concentrate in the adult service. Some churches which are more advanced have child care centers for even toddlers

It helps to build a strong youth ministry for example; Children who grow up in child ministry become leaders in the student ministry. Children ministry produces vibrant youth who carry on the youth ministry as youth leaders, choir leaders, church machine operators and even Sunday school teachers. There can never be a vibrant youth ministry in a church where there is no vibrant children ministry. An intentional focus on children's and youth ministry results in more young people growing in their maturity of faith, more young people inviting their friends to church, and more young people continuing in their faith post high school . Additionally, we are seeing all age groups in the church being disciples of Jesus as they witness and participate in the church's investment in ministry to children and youth." (Beilharz, 2021)

In Mark 9:33-37, Jesus welcomed children with love and said that every must welcome God's children and then Then He took a little child and put it among them, and taking it in His arms, He said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.' This suggests that caring for children is to be taken as a priority that God entrusted to all adults, not just parents. Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God is surprising. He puts it clearly that greatness in his kingdom has nothing to do with societal attitudes and assumptions. One has to become like a little child if he is to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Welcoming the little ones means welcoming the Lord (Matthew 18:1-6). Jesus taught against the exclusion of Children (Luke 18.15-17; Matt. 19.13-15; Mk. 10.13-16). Studies of children in antiquity clearly show that children were not in any way, close to adults, a concern nor a priority to society. For this reason, they were a marginalized lot. Such a nature was informed, as many are, by views of children which focus on their incapacities to the extent that their humanness is not reckoned with. This disposition of society towards children is seen with the disciples in the Gospels when they stop those bringing children to Jesus from doing so. As far as they were concerned children were to be excluded from the ministry of Jesus.

2.4 Ways through which holistic children ministry can be improved

This can be improved through a holistic approach to ensure each child's individual needs are supported in different ways holistically for example, holistic child development model is to be designed to help children grow up to become growing followers of Jesus who positively influence the world around them. its program focus not only on the spiritual but also the social emotional, physical and cognitive aspects. (Noakes, 2022)

Studies have indicated that vigorous and efficient leadership in a church can greatly influence the general prosperity and efficiency of children's ministry initiatives. Church leaders that actively participate in and support children's ministry programs are more likely to witness growth and favorable outcomes within their ministry, according to studies done by Williams et al. (2015).

In order to improve children ministry, there is need to develop and equip a team to carry on the ministry. This should be done prayerfully by identifying and extending a personal invitation to potential co-workers. When you ask someone to join the team, tell them what's expected, clarify what they will do, and describe how they'll be supported and trained. The church should identify children ministry workers who qualify, who have a good moral background and invest in training them and giving them refresher courses so that they effectively do the ministry as required. Building and equipping a children's ministry team also involves motivation, supervision and supporting the team with resources. (Linda, 2016)

Understanding how resource allocation strategies affect the growth trajectory of children's ministry has gathered more attention in recent years. The practice of allocating resources including money, labor and time to meet organizational goals and objectives is known as resource allocation. Practices for allocating resources in children's ministry can have a big impact on the ministry's sustainability and effectiveness. Studies have indicated that efficient distribution of resources can result in a rise in the involvement, commitment and persistence of children in ministry initiatives. However, ineffective methods of allocating resources might impede the development and prosperity of children's ministries. Financial management is a crucial

component of resource allocation in children's ministry. It has been observed that children's growth and participation tend to be higher in ministries that provide sufficient funding for children's programs.

As a result, I can state that efficient resource allocation procedures are necessary for children's ministry to continue growing. Ministries can increase the efficiency and impact of their ministry endeavors by dedicating funds, personnel and time for children's programming. On the other hand, ministries must make sure that their methods for allocating resources are in line with their aims and objectives. Ministries can increase the impact and usefulness of their ministry endeavors by investing in financial resources, staffing and time for children's programs. Baker & Jones, (2018).

Children ministry can be developed that addresses the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of children, promoting overall wellbeing (Roehlkepartain, 2008). Children curriculum addresses learning objectives like goal and focused instructions, effective teaching of children, children assessment, parental involvement and school improvement. Curriculum provides teachers with guidance for the curriculum and how to cover it. (Marzano, 2007).

Children ministry can be improved through developing a program in a way that every child's needs are attended to and a plan to achieve the overall aim is made. A good child ministry strategy includes planning for new members, child safety, making child ministry interesting by including play, investing in a curriculum among others. Union, (2019)

Children should be taught how to read the bible using bible reading guides. This helps them to develop a bible reading culture at an early age. The guide also helps them to interpret the scripture in the right context. For example, scripture union guides have helped many people to read the bible over the years. Scripture union resources such as god and me, daily power and daily guide are useful resources that can help children as they study and read the word of God. Linda (2016)

In order to improve children ministry, families must be supported as partners in the ministry. Parents/ caregivers should be helped to bless and keep as the primary disciples of their children. There is need to share the best resources for families. Children ministry workers/ church leaders should give advice, support, spiritual counsel, and career guidance. This can be done through hosting seminars for parenting, having a Sunday morning class focused on family concerns, Providing childcare for all church activities , offering a support group for new parents, and having an annual family retreat or camping trip. Caplan, (1989)

Improving children ministry involves reaching children and families beyond your church in order to achieve this the church can organize general children's events that are focused at attracting other children from the community not necessarily those from the local congregation for example giving printed invitations to families so that they invite their friends, school visitations by the pastors and children workers. When you do outreaches to schools, homes, children get to know you and they will follow you at the church. Use motivational gifts such as sending birthday cards, children bibles, and scriptural charts to families with children. Instead of waiting children to come to church, leaders need to take ministry to where kids and this will attract un churchd

kids, consider locating activities in a store front, park, or recreational center, Barna 2023

Research have highlighted that early spiritual formation lead to lifelong commitment and participation in church activities thus there is a need to implement holistic approach to children's ministry in our local churches because it will lead to substantial growth within a church community by fostering spiritual engagement, emotional well-being, social responsibility, family integration, and volunteer participation. Research has highlighted that early spiritual formation lead to lifelong commitment and participation in church activities (Barna, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 introduction

This consists of the methods which were used while carrying out the research. It was to discuss different research design, study area, study population, sample size and determination, sampling techniques and procedure, data collection methods, data quality control, data analysis and research procedure.

3.1 Research design

According to Denvir and Millett (2003), research design provided the way that holds the research project together. It was a scheme, an outline or plan that was used to provide answers to a research problem. The design applied both qualitative and quantitative methods to data collection and analysis. Quantitative method involved the use of questionnaire to get quantifiable answers while the qualitative approach involved the use of interview to the Christians, children workers/ volunteers and church leaders in the parish to know the current state of holistic children ministry, its contributions church and how it can be improved.

3.2 Study area

The study area covered Kinkiizi Diocese with particular focus on Burema church of Uganda -Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry.

3.3 Study population

This was group of people, objects or items from which samples were taken for measurement. It comprised of parents/care takers of children attending Sunday school at Burema church of Uganda Parish and other key informants like church leaders, child

ministry workers and Sunday school teachers. These given the necessary information that was required for the study.

Table 3.1: Sample size and population Targeted

Category	Targeted population	Sample size	procedure
Parent/care takers	260	116	Simple random sampling
Church leaders	9	8	Purposive sampling
Sunday school teachers	5	6	Purposive sampling
Total	274	130	

3.4 Sampling procedure

With reference to Musoke *et al.*, (2014) sampling is the plan on how units or elements within a population will be picked as to form part of the study. Therefore, the study used both simple random and purposive sampling techniques to arrive at the required number of respondents.

3.4.1 Simple random sampling

The researcher used simple random sampling especially where the researcher used non-probability methods in the selection of respondents. This was achieved by getting a list of parents/care takers of different groups of children with the help of Sunday school teachers on the day of data collection. Each parents name was assigned a random

number and it's from the random numbers that the researcher selected the required number of respondents and this method was used because it is the best in dealing with large number of respondents as it saved time and costs.

3.4.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is the method where respondents basing on the characteristics were used for key informants because it helped the researcher in gathering data from respondents with more knowledge about a specific phenomenon. This provided supplementary information that would not be provided by other respondent categories.

3.5 Source of data

The researcher gathered different data from both primary and secondary sources. Therefore, Primary data was collected from the respondents using questionnaire and interviews and Secondary information on the other hand was collected from sources like; child health registers, text books, internet, newspaper, magazines, and journals. This information was reviewed by visiting places like libraries and internet cafes and was used to supplement the collected data from different categories of the respondents.

3.6 Data collection methods

The study used both questionnaires and interviews for collecting data.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire to get data from different respondents and the questionnaire consisted of both open and closed ended questions which are

filled by respondents through writing down their responses. The questions were designed in English and later translated into local languages to make the questions more simple, clear and understandable for the respondents. Secondly, it was used because of being cheap and it collects responses with minimum errors and puts high level of confidentiality. This tool was divided into sections that included background information of the respondents, church Sunday school programs available at the church, effect of Sunday school programs on spiritual growth among children and factors limiting success of Sunday school programs and how it can be improved.

3.6.2 Interview guide

This drafted questions that the researcher was to ask during interview sessions with key respondents. The researcher administered interviews to the key participants with a help of an interview guide reflecting the study objectives. With this instrument, the researcher will engage key respondents in oral questions. The interviews were used widely to supplement and extend the researchers' knowledge about individual (s) thoughts, feelings and behaviors. While interviewing, probing was applied in cases where respondents do not give inadequate answers.

3.7.1 Data quality control

Data was controlled by its validity and reliability

3.7.2 Reliability of instruments

This was used to obtain the same results if the measure is to be repeated by using the same subjects under the same conditions. In addition, reliability was ensured by standardizing the questionnaire through pre-testing. Questionnaires were pre-tested

from a sample outside the target sample but with similar or close demographic characteristics to those of the study area. Reliability of the questionnaire in relation to the consistency of the respondents' answers were computed.

3.8 Data management and analysis

3.8.1 Data management

Data collected was, analyzed, edited and coded to avoid incompleteness during entry. Systematic organization of raw data was done to facilitate data analysis.

3.8.2 Data analysis

This was done by quantitative and qualitative analysis

3.8.2.1 Quantitative data analysis

Data was analyzed at the Univariate and bivariate levels and At the Univariate level demographic characteristics of the respondents described using largely descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Bivariate analysis identified the significant factors limiting success of Sunday school programs. The outcome of the analysis was presented in statistical tables.

3.8.2.2 Qualitative data analysis

The analyzed data was done by developing themes (headings) or sub themes, which were derived from the study aims. Observational field writings were incorporated into the data for analysis. The transcripts were then read repeatedly and words with similar meanings grouped into different categories. Similar categories will be grouped into themes and subthemes which were presented as results

3.9 Research procedure

The study was approved by research supervisor of the Department of Theology, Bishop Barham University College - Kabale. Further approval was obtained from the leaders of Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda and finally informed consent from the participants themselves. Participants were given confidentiality of the information collected. This was done by thorough explanation of the aim and objective of the study. Participation was based on informed and voluntary consent. Respondents for the study were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time they deemed necessary. The questionnaire administered was prefaced with a consent form requesting consent of the respondents before participation in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This part presented data analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the field study of investigating the contribution of holistic children ministry to the church with particular focus on Burema Church of Uganda Parish. Questionnaires were administered to one hundred and thirty (130) respondents. All the one hundred and thirty respondents ably answered and brought back the questionnaires giving a response rate of one hundred percent.

4.1 Socio economic characteristics of the respondents

This presented the socio-economic features of one hundred and thirty respondents sampled. The key characteristics for the study included; gender, age bracket, marital status, education level, occupation, employment status, household size and type of household. These features were found to be of great importance hence clearly looking on the diverse background of the sample population.

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>respondents</i>	Males	62	47.7
	Females	68	52.3
<i>age bracket</i>	20-30	26	20
	31-50	43	33.1

	51-60	41	31.5
	> 60	20	15,4
<i>Marital status of the respondents</i>	Single	29	22.3
	Married	68	52.3
	Separated	22	16.9
	Widow	11	8.5
<i>Level of education</i>	None	11	8.5
	Primary	23	17.7
	Secondary	59	45.4
	University	37	28.5
<i>Occupation/livelihood source</i>	Farming	68	52.3
	Salary	20	15.4
	Business	26	20
	None	16	12.3
<i>Type of household</i>	Male as heads	102	78.5
	Female as heads	16	12.3

	Others	9	6.9
Total respondents		130	

Therefore, More than a half fifty two percent of the respondents were female and 47.7% male. It was therefore methodologically justifiable that more women than men participated in the study. The dominance of females also depicted that women largely attend church services than male.

Respondent’s age was also necessary because it was an influential factor in household decision making and power. Most (33%) were aged 31 - 50, 31.5% were aged 51 - 60, 20% were aged 20 - 30, whereas 15.4% were aged above 60.

Marital status was considered because it was very critical in decision making and having children involved in child ministry programs. More than a half (52.3%) were married, 22.3% single, while 16.9% and 8.5% were separated and widowed respectively.

Education level of the was also considered because it was important in decision making and information seeking behavior of households. Participants held different educational qualifications from primary to university level. 45.4% of those who participated had secondary education, 28.5% university education, 17.7% primary education while 8.5 % had never attended any school.

Livelihood sources were considered for the purposes of establishing participants income levels which had an impact on a direct on household management and moral direction. More than a half (52.3%) of the those who participated depend farming as their primary

occupation and livelihood source, 20% small scale petty business-like retail shops, 15.4% salary and 12.3% casual work.

4.2 Current state of holistic children ministry at Burema COU

This Section addresses the current state of children ministry at Burema COU Parish.

Rev canon Wilson Twinomuhwezi the archdeacon of Kanyatorogo said that according to his observation on child ministry, he observed that the teachers of Sunday school have been holding teachings but they were using tradition methods of teaching. He added on and said this could be caused by inadequate books of modern child ministry curriculum and inadequate teaching skills of the Sunday school teachers.

Monicah Akampurira the Sunday school teacher said that they have been having some Sunday school programs such as teaching and reading the bible, teaching ten commandments, training in spiritual values, singing but it was not done always and it needed improvement. She added and said “some of parents of Burema didn’t embrace the child ministry thus they couldn’t send their children to Sunday schools as they think it’s wastage of time”.

Justine Namara a christian of Burema C.O.U said that her child was able to tell the ten commandments correctly from his head but not in their correct order and could try to tell at least one memory verse but not appropriately.

Tumwesigye Ibzan the choir leader of Burema said that his child was able to sing some church songs very well.

Quantifiable responses of children ministry activities using the questionnaire guide were categorized according to percentages as shown in the table below.

Table 3 Children ministry activities available at Burema COU

Church Sunday school programs	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Bible teachings and reading	36	26.7	
Singing church songs	24	18.5	
Training in religious values	26	20	
Spiritual education	17	13.1	
Teaching the ten commandments	14	10.8	
Practicing love and socialization	13	10	
Total	130		
Details	Awareness	Number of	respondents
Awareness of any children ministry programs	Yes	116	89..2%
	No	14	10.7%

Results of the different child ministry programs available at Burema COU were presented in table 2 above. Majority (98.3%) of the respondents revealed that they were aware of child ministry programs at Burema C.O.U whereas 1.7% said no. Among the programs available, 26.3% of the respondents mentioned Bible teachings and reading, 19.5% training in religious values, 16.9% singing church songs, 14.4% spiritual education, 11.9% teaching the Ten Commandments whereas 11% mentioned practicing love and socialization.

4.3 The contribution of holistic children ministry programs to Burema COU Parish

This section addressed research objective two which aimed to determine the contributions that children ministry programs on church growth.

Mr. Tugume Richard The senior warden of Burema C.O.U a 70 year man said that Children ministry programs are breeding ground for potential leaders for the church and community. He emphasized this by setting himself that he was once part of the Sunday school during his young age. He added and said the knowledge he gained was still helping him even in his old age.

Annet kiiza a church warden of Nyaruhanga in Burema C.O.U said that child ministry offers children an opportunity to meet and socialize. She added and said it's important because it improves the mind capacity, social skills in a way that it reduces the egocentric nature in them.

Osylia Robert the Sunday school teacher said that children ministry curriculum deepens children's understanding of Christianity and morality thus children would not be taken by churches with cults and false teachings in future.

Winner Ahebwa the youth leader in Burema church of Uganda said that child ministry brings children close to Christ. He said these children knew sin and its penalty at their young ages, they were able appreciate the love that God has up on this earth. In addition learners were able to know that without God one cannot achieve anything

In addition, Quantifiable responses gathered for this purpose were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) as presented above

Table four; contribution of Children Ministry to Burema COU

Impact of Children ministry at Burema COU	frequency	Percentage (%)
Spiritual nourishment of children	21	17.8
They prepare children to grow up in Church	17	14.4
It brings children close to Christ	22	18.6
It helps children relate the Bible teachings to their daily life	20	16.9
It offers children an opportunity to meet and socialize	12	10.2
Children ministry curriculum deepens children's understanding of Christianity and morality	15	12.7
Children ministry programs are breeding ground for potential leaders for the church and community	11	9.3

Total	130	
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Therefore, Results of the contribution of children ministry on church growth were presented in table 3 above. Most (18.6%) reported that children ministry programs bring children close to Christ, 17.8% revealed that they support the spiritual nourishment process of children, 16.9% mentioned that children ministry helps children relate the Bible teachings to their daily life, 14.4% disclosed that they prepare children to grow up in Church, 12.7% testified that children ministry lessons deepen children’s understanding of Christianity and morality, 10.2% stated that they offer children an opportunity to meet, share and socialize whereas 9.3% indicated that children ministry programs are breeding ground for potential leaders for the church and the community.

4.4 Ways of improving children ministry at Burema COU Parish

This part addressed research question three which is on to identify the possible ways considered to improving children ministry.

Mrs Akankwasa Enid the church warden from Nyaruhanga said that parental involvement should be the first prioty of improving children ministry. Parents should be taught about the benefits of holistic children ministry to their children.

Hope Ariyo assistant senior warden together with the teachers of Sunday school said the church should support the staff through training and workshops concerning child ministry in order to effectively perform their duties .

Mr. Festo Tumuranye the church elder and other elder participants said that the church should introduce and implement a modern and current child ministry curriculum because it was alleged that teachers complain they didn't have curriculum to follow while teaching children.

The quantifiable responses gathered on this objective were as follows

Table 5: Ways of improving children ministry

Ways of promoting children's participation	frequency	Percentage (%)
Provision of more basic facilities to support the programs	19	14.6
Boost supervision of children ministry programs	18	13.8
Introduction and implementation of children ministry curriculum	24	18.5
Increase the budget for children ministry activities	28	21.5
Promoting parental involvement	26	20
Improvement of teaching skills and knowledge of children ministry staff through training	15	11.5
Total	130	

Results of the possible ways of improving children ministry programs were presented in table 4 above. Among the ways, most (21.5%) recommended budgetary increment for children ministry activities, 20% called for strengthening parental involvement in children ministry programs, 18.5% talked of introducing and implementing a children ministry curriculum, 14.6% recommended the provision of more basic facilities to support the programs. 13.8% talked of boosting supervision of children ministry programs and 11.5% suggested improving skills and knowledge of Sunday school staff through training.

CHAPTER FIVE: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

5.0 Introduction

This entailed the biblical view on the child's state, the contribution for holistic children ministry to the church and the ways of improving holistic children ministry. It gave the Bible its importance to the church and the ideal or how children ministry should be according to the objectives of the study.

5.1 Old Testament view on holistic children ministry

According to old testament of the bible in genesis chapter one verses twenty eight, children ministry was revealed by God's concern for children especially When God created man and woman in the book of Genesis, He blessed them and said "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

More so, Psalm 127:3-5 Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court. Improving Children ministry requires visionary leadership; people who can foresee the future of the ministry and plan to achieve it.

Both old and new testament of bible gives several examples of people whom God appointed to leadership positions at a young age for example:

In Genesis 22:12, Isaac grew as a God-fearing child walking in the footsteps of his father Abraham and from him the nation of Israel was born saved.

In 1 Samuel 3:10 “The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

Samuel was dedicated to God by his mum, Hannah after she had prayed persistently for a child. When Samuel was around four-years-old, he was taken to the tabernacle to serve under Eli the priest. Even as a child, Samuel was given his own tunic, a garment normally reserved for a priest. Samuel was a prophet and heard from God:

However, Many Hebrew children were killed because Pharaoh wanted to wipe out the Israelite community from Egypt but God didn’t allow it. He had purposed that Moses would lead the people of Israel from the land of slavery in Egypt to the promised land of Canan.

Exodus 2:3 says “But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. Exodus 2:3. Moses was able to survive death and later God used him to deliver the children of Israel from the land of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land in Canan. The bible is very clear on the importance of a vision for the success of any project or ministry for example Proverbs 29:18 says “Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed are the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction. To envision is to imagine, plan beforehand, or ponder the possibilities. What has God placed in your heart and mind? People need to know the why and where of children ministry is.

Therefore Improving Children ministry requires visionary leadership; people who can foresee the future of the ministry and plan to achieve it. Isaiah also prophesied that

the new earth will never again witness an infant “who lives but a few days” (Isaiah 65:20). God will remove all sorrows and sufferings. Indeed, children as “signs point us not only to the Messianic Kingdom but also help us understand our Mission on earth.

5.2 The New Testament view of holistic children ministry

According to the New Testament, the state of holistic children ministry is revealed by Jesus’ ministry from his birth and the whole of his ministry. Jesus was persecuted right from birth. King Herod didn’t want him to reach his dream and sought to kill him as an infant. In Mathew chapter twelve verse thirteen says “When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” Later after the death of King Herod Jesus was able to return to Nazareth and grew to accomplish God’s plan of redeeming mankind.

During Jesus’ Ministry on earth, he met several instances where children were being marginalized and despised from accessing him. For example, Matthew 19:13-14 Jesus said “then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Throughout the bible, children have always faced challenges but God has always used them to accomplish his purpose and plan. As seen above God chose many young people like Moses and David. Much as they faced persecution and other challenges, He never

left them. He was with them throughout their childhood and enabled them to grow up to their full potential and used them to accomplish his will.

Jesus declared “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” and then this means that Children ministry helps in grooming children into mature Christian adults that are able to carry on God’s work when the elders are no longer alive. In serving Jesus Christ, the ministry teaches children the importance of the Lord. The ministry shows children the way and helps to guide them into adults that are devoted to the church. In return, they will devote time to helping the church, and teach others the importance of church which will help the church to grow and spread the word of the Lord.

In Romans 13: 1 says “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God established and then this shows that Children ministry helps in training children to respect authority at an early age. Respect for authority is very crucial because it helps children not to fall in conflicts with the law and end up being criminals. Children ministry is good for schools as it teaches children how to respect teachers, elders and to have good morals.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10 says “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you are perfectly united in mind and thought.” The Bible encourages us to take care of our brothers and sisters - whether or friends or enemies. We must remember the importance of maintaining the connection with each other and focusing on building a community of love in word and actions. Children’s

ministry provides kids with opportunities to help the community, such as doing acts of good and feeding the poor without discrimination.

1 Timothy 4:12 says “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and purity.” Paul wrote this letter to young Timothy knowing that he would be leading a group of people who are much older than him. There may be a possible conflict in people’s acceptance of a younger leader, but Paul reaffirms Timothy to stand and do what a leader should do and build his leadership through leading by example. Children ministry teaches kids to work together and to work hard which teaches them to be better employees and future leaders.

Improving children ministry requires a strong team that will carry on the ministry. 2Tim 2:1 says “and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus Improving children ministry requires a holistic approach. John 10:10 “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Fullness of life involves all aspects of life that is the spiritual, the physical, social and educational. The spiritual life involves bible study, prayers and fellowship. The physical life includes nutrition, physical exercises and medical care while the social life involves interpersonal relationships and managing emotions hence Considering Family as the center of God's plan for the happiness and progress of His children. The Holy Bible also teaches that God established families from the very beginning, and it shows us many examples of strong families. It also teaches us how to have a loving, happy family. Parents should never feel isolated or alone. Children ministry helps parents embrace

and excel as the primary disciples of their children. It regularly shares the best resources for families, provides advice, assistance, spiritual counsel, and a deeper level of dialogue about family faith formation parent to child relationship and bonding. .

5.3. Conclusion

This study concluded that children ministry programs have an effect on children's' whole life and this effect is mainly through bringing children close to Christ, spiritual nourishment, helping children relate to Bible teachings, improving morals as well as depending the understanding of Christian faith. These aspects are all critical in children's moral and spiritual development

Theologically Israel children were meant to love, worships, and serve God, following the teachings and the example of their parents and that of the community. psalms 148:12 "praise him young, old, and children. And also the covenant commanded Israel makes sure they tell their children about God's love so that it is told by generation to other generation. Deuteronomy 6:4.

Jesus also had love for children as much as for adults and this acts as standards of righteous Mathew 18:1-5, mark 10:15ff. He illustrates the amounts of attention given by God to them. Therefore children must be given the same attention that the bible instructs to parents, church leaders and the government.

CHAPTER SIX: INTRODUCTION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RESEARCH

6.0 Introduction

This study was undertaken to find out the contribution of children ministry to the church - a case study of Burema Church of Uganda Parish. This section discussed the major results under the study and it further suggests the areas for further research.

6.1 Summary of the Research

6.1.1 The Current State of Holistic Children Ministry at Burema Church of Uganda Parish

The study found out the different children ministry programs available at Burema COU Parish include bible teaching and reading, religion values training, singing church songs, spiritual education, teaching the Ten Commandments as well as practicing love and socialization . The most common methods of delivery were group discussion, lecturing, and mentoring and these helped to get the required data.

The findings were also in support of Barton *et al.*, (2014) who noted that the basis of children ministry programs rests on the provisions of different commands to fulfill as in Matthew 28:18-20 regards to divine command of Christ Jesus. More so, the funds are apportioned in accordance to the needs of different church departments where children evangelism and mission work take the lion share.

6.1.2 Contributions of Holistic Children Ministry to Burema Church of Uganda Parish

The study found out those holistic children ministry programs had a significant contribution on Burema COU Parish. Children ministry programs were found to bring

children close to Christ, support their spiritual nourishment process, help children relate Bible teachings to their daily life, grow up in Church, understand Christianity and morality, as well as offer them an opportunity to meet, share and socialize. All these aspects were critical in children's moral and spiritual development as well the overall growth of the church. Moles, (2016) cited that the development of children ministry hinges on the ministry of God the Father, God the Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers' ability to follow the direction of the Triune God through the study of Scripture. The direction by God amounts to the elements of being an example of nurturing, equipping, and becoming lifelong disciples and hence leading to responsible citizens

The findings were also in agreement with findings by Eri, (2016) who noted that children ministry is conducted for children and young people of ages between three years and twenty-one years.

6.1.3 Ways of improving holistic children ministry

The ways of promoting children ministry programs includes budgetary increment for children ministry trainings, strengthening parental involvement in children's spiritual paths, introducing and implementing new children ministry curriculum, provision of more basic facilities to support the programs, boosting supervision of children ministry programs, improving skills and knowledge of children ministry staff through training while boosting financial support for the programs.

According to O'Neal, (2019) stated that there is a need to introduce and implement new children ministry curriculum that is friendly and meets the needs of the children.

In across Africa, many churches still rely on aspects of Sunday school curriculum that was initiated by the missionaries.

6.2 Conclusions

This study showed that there were different children ministry programs available at Burema COU such as bible teachings and reading, training in religious values, singing and praising, spiritual education, teaching the Ten Commandments as well as practicing love and socialization however they were inactive without a scheduled and followed plan for effective nurturing of children both physically, mentally and socially

The study also shows that children ministry programs have a significant effect on children's' spiritual growth and this effect is mainly through bringing children close to Christ, spiritual nourishment, helping children relate to Bible teachings, improving morals as well as depending the understanding of Christian faith. These aspects are all critical in children's moral and spiritual development.

The study further concluded that there were ways of improving children ministry programs such as increasing children ministry training budgets, encouraging care takers to take part in their children's spiritual paths, implementing new Sunday school curriculums, provision of more basic facilities to support the programs, boosting supervision of the programs as well as improving skills and knowledge of children ministry staff.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Recommendations to the church

In order for St Emmanuel Burema COU Parish to improve the children ministry programs like worship, bible readings, bible activity, bible story, bible responses, and prayers. This will promote the overall church growth and spiritual warfare of children.

There is a need for church to introduce and implement new Sunday school curriculum based on different children age groups and that is friendly and meets the needs of the children. This will promote easy and quick learning.

The church must provide more basic considerations like study rooms, writing materials, and blackboards, lesson books, teaching aids, registers and stationery to streamline Sunday school operations.

There is need to retrain children ministry teachers so that they become effective in service delivery to the young people.

The church must consider making the budget and work plan for children ministry trainings and operations. This could help address the problem of financial shortage in children ministry program implementation. Development in schools.

The church must also consider and buy children learning aids such as blackboards, charts, diagrams, friezes, flannel boards, models; pictures children study bibles, drama and others.

The church should also select parish children's church committee/ Team that includes children's church supervisor, children's church treasurer, one of the church teachers,

one of church leaders and an elder in church to ensure effectiveness of running the Sunday school church

6.3.2 Recommendation to parents

Parents should understand that they have an obligation to counsel and guide their children as the bible requires us to train a child the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it . This is in support with proverbs 29:15 where the bible says that correction imparts wisdom but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Therefore parents should know that their children remain children to them no matter the age and need to counsel.

Parents should act as role models to their children that is parents lifestyle speaks volumes to them than what they say for example in 2 kings 14:3 tells us that Amaziah followed the example of Joash his father in everything .

Parents also have a duty to give their children quality time that is to love and affirm them when they do what is right to help them identify themselves and reason for existence

Parents should pray and bless their children. They are the ones to teach them about Gods commands as Deuteronomy 4:9 says and psalms 133. This helps children to have hopes for present and tomorrow.

6.3.3 To the government

The government should incorporate children life skills as emotional intelligence, problem solving and other children related skills into their curriculum. This will help children to develop essential skills for navigating real life situations

The government should encourage and support children extracurricular activities such as sports, music, bible drills, and art, to foster physical, social emotional and spiritual development.

The government should develop and implement character education programs that focus on values like empathy, kindness, and responsibility. This can help children develop strong moral and positive relationships with others in present and the future.

The government should preserve and teach children rights to communities through different Medias as the way of securing the future of children with in communities

The government should collaborate with the church to promote children ministry and teach children in order to have better responsible future leaders who are socially, spiritually and mentally upright.

The government should take part in promoting and empowering children ministry teachers to equip them with knowledge related to child ministry. This will help children to grow both spiritually, socially and physically stable hence good future citizens as change agents with in the community. By implementing the above initiatives, the church, parents and the government can play an important work in training children holistically, making them to success in all aspects of life

6.4 suggestions for research study

Improving children ministry requires supporting families and this shows that a Family is at the center of God's plan for the happiness and progress of His children.

The study also finds out that children between the ages of 4-14 are at their best open, receptive and at the most effective age for the mission. It is also the most vulnerable age when many suffer from neglect and exploitation leading to decay of their morals and this means that. We are guilty of many errors and many faults but our worst crime is abandoning children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many things we need can wait; children cannot.

The work of the children church begins with the big church because the church is made up of those people who know and serve Jesus. In Mathew 28:19 Jesus commands the church to reach all nations which include children.

Children between the ages of 4-14 are at their best; open, receptive and at the most receptive and effective age for the mission. It is also vulnerable age when many suffer from neglect and exploitation. Therefore, holistic children ministry should be given first priority by both parents and church leaders for nurturing responsible citizens

Communication and counseling children is vital and highly recognized by child care professionals as a component of child development. Therefore if this is done helps children to understand and cope with difficult circumstances

APPENDIX I: A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

I am ABAHO OWEN pursuing bachelor's degree of divinity of Uganda Christian University Bishop Barham University College - Kabale. I am doing research on the topic;. The contributions of holistic children ministry in church development in Emmanuel burema church of Uganda Kanyantorogo archdeaconry I therefore need you to answer the following questions and promise that your views shall only be used for the purposes of this study and shall always be confidential.

Tick in the boxes and fill in the blank spaces.

Section A: bio-data Information

A1. Sex 1. Male 2. Female

A2. Age bracket

1. 20 - 30 2. 31-40 3. 41- 50 4. 51-60 5. > 60

A3. Marital Status

1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Widowed

A4. Education Level

1. None 2. Primary 3. Secondary 4. University

5. Others.....

A5. Occupation/livelihood source

1. None 2. Farming 3. Salary 4. Business

A6. Monthly Income in shillings.....

A7. Employment status

1. None 2. Self-employed 3. Employed

A7. Members at household.....

A8. Type of household

1. Male headed 2. Female headed 3. Others

A9. Number of children attending Sunday school at household.....

Section B: Church Sunday school programs available at St.Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda

B1. Are you aware of any church Sunday school programs available at Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda?

1. Yes 2. No

B2. If yes, choose from the following?

	Program	Yes	No
1	Bible teachings and reading		
2	Singing church songs		
3	Training in religious values		
4	Spiritual education		
5	Teaching the ten commandments		

6	Practicing love and socialization		
7	Others.....		

B3. Any other comment?

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Section C:

Effect church Sunday school programs on spiritual growth of children attending St Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda

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C1. Could there be any effect church Sunday school programs on the spiritual growth of children attending St. Emmanuel Burema church of Uganda?

1. Yes 2. No

C2. If yes, choose from below?

	Effect	Yes	No
1	Spiritual nourishment of children		

2	They prepare children to grow up in Church		
3	Sunday schools bring children close to Christ		
4	Sunday schools helps children relate the Bible to their daily life		
5	Sunday schools offer children and opportunity to meet and socialize		
6	Sunday school lessons deepen children's understanding of Christianity and morality		
7	Sunday school programs are breeding ground for potential leaders for the church		
8	Others.....		

C3. If no in C2 above, justify your answer?

.....

Section D: Ways of promoting participation in church Sunday school programs

D1. Could there be any ways of promoting children's participation in church Sunday school programs?

1. Yes 2. No

D2. If yes in D1 above, choose from below?

	Ways	Yes	No
1	Providing more basic facilities to support the programs		
2	Boosting supervision of Sunday school programs		
3	Introducing and implementing new Sunday school curriculum		
4	Increasing the budget for Sunday schools trainings		
5	Promoting parental involvement		
6	Improving skills and knowledge of Sunday school staff through training		
7	Boosting financial support for the programs		
8	Others.....		

D3. If no in D1 above, justify your answer?

.....

D4. Any last remarks

.....

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am ABAHO OWEN pursuing a bachelor degree of divinity of Uganda Christian University Bishop Barham University College - Kabale. I am carrying out research on the topic;. The contributions of holistic children ministry in church development in emmanuel burema church of Uganda kanyantorogo archdeaconry I therefore request you to answer the following questions and promise that your views shall only be used for the purposes of this study and shall always be confidential.

Do you have any post in your parish?

Yes

No

If yes, which post?

.....

Do you have child ministry activities in your church?

Yes

No

If yes, what those activities?

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.....

Suggest the methods that Sunday school teachers use in implementing child ministry curriculum?

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.....

Suggest the contributions of child ministry in your parish?

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.....

Is child ministry active?

Yes

No

If no , Give reasons why its not active?

.....
.....

How can your parish improve child ministry?

.....
.....

Thank you for cooperation

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