



# Parenting in the Baptist Tradition: Understanding the Influence of Faith on Family Dynamics

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of Baptist Christianity on parenting styles and children's morality in the Sakumono zone, focusing on discipline, nurturing, guidance, and moral decision-making. Through purposive sampling and interviews with 20 participants from different Baptist churches in Sakumono, a suburb of Accra, the research revealed how Baptist beliefs shaped parenting practices, emphasizing doctrinal teachings, discipline, and moral integrity. The study highlighted the significance of prayer and Bible reading in fostering children's spiritual growth and encouraging independent moral choices, with family dynamics reflecting a strong faith where children actively corrected parents if their actions contradicted scripture, promoting forgiveness, love, and loyalty. These findings contribute to understanding Moral Development Theory within the Baptist tradition and offer practical guidance for professionals working with Baptist families, recommending policy interventions to integrate religious education and support family-based initiatives. Acknowledging limitations such as sample size and potential biases, the study suggested future research to broaden its scope and enhance understanding across diverse religious denominations and geographical areas, fostering interfaith dialogue and collaboration to enrich discussions on religion, parenting, and morality.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Baptist tradition, originating from the 16th-century Reformation, emphasizes individual freedom, personal conversion, and local church autonomy.<sup>1</sup> This ethos extends to their belief in the priesthood of all believers, emphasizing direct access to God and personal spiritual responsibility.<sup>2</sup> Within Baptist theology, families play a vital role in nurturing faith and fostering spiritual development.<sup>3</sup> This perspective underscores the sanctity of marriage, reflecting the relationship between Christ and the church.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. E. E. Harkness, "Some Early Practices of Baptists in America," *The Journal of Religion* 11, no. 4 (1931): 533–53; Rafał Prostak, "Credobaptism and Religious Policy. Separation of Church and State, Freedom of Religion, and Religious Tolerance in the Writings of the Early Baptists," *World • PoliticS* 1 (n.d.): 6 ; Gregory A Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Suria Afifah Ridhuan et al., "Advocating for a Collaborative Research Approach on Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma," *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma* 14, no. 4 (December 3, 2021): 527–31, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-021-00369-7>; Pablo Blanco-Sarto, "The Common Priesthood In Lutherans And Catholics," *Roczniki Teologiczne* 69, no. 11EV (2022): 105–33.

<sup>3</sup> David Petts, *Pagan and Christian: Religious Change in Early Medieval Europe* (A&C Black, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Jesse Smith, "Transmission of Faith in Families: The Influence of Religious Ideology," *Sociology of Religion* 82, no. 3 (2021): 332–56.

Consequently, Baptists engage in contemporary discourse, advocating for traditional family values while opposing societal shifts like same-sex marriage and abortion.<sup>5</sup>

The pivotal role of parenting in children's growth emphasizes its deep connection with faith. Religion shapes parenting practices by influencing parental values, beliefs, and behaviors.<sup>6</sup> Devout parents often seek to pass on their faith to their children, resulting in an attentive and intentional parenting approach.<sup>7</sup> This style correlates with positive outcomes, including the cultivation of religious beliefs and practices. Additionally, religious beliefs can impact expectations for children's behavior and academic performance.<sup>8</sup> However, religion's influence on parenting is not universally positive, as some religious views may be detrimental to children's well-being.<sup>9</sup>

Religion addresses moral decay among youth through various interventions, such as imparting moral teachings to parents and children.<sup>10</sup> Extensive research demonstrates that religious parents actively contribute to their children's moral development.<sup>11</sup> Despite religious teachings, limited research exists on denominational impacts on parenting and children's morality. Hence, this study examines Baptist Christianity's influence on parenting and morality in selected churches in Sakumono.

This article seeks to explore how Baptist Christianity influences parenting styles in the Sakumono zone, addressing aspects like discipline, nurturing, and guidance. It also aims to investigate the observed influence of Baptist teachings on children's moral development and behavior within Baptist Churches in the area. Furthermore, it delves into how Baptist Christianity shapes children's ethical decision-making and their understanding of moral choices. Lastly, it examines how parents balance imparting Baptist teachings with allowing children to develop their relationship with God and make independent moral decisions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Emergence of Baptist Christianity in Ghana and Tema

The history of Baptist Christianity in Accra and Tema intertwines with Ghana's broader socio-economic and cultural landscape. Initiated in 1966, the Ghana Baptist Convention's formal integration into the Ghana Baptist Mission marked a significant evangelical revival across urban and rural Ghana, spearheaded by Southern Baptist Convention missionaries. In Tema, missionary efforts like the New Life for You Crusade in 1966 under Gerald and Mary Lou Calvin, alongside local initiatives, saw the establishment of foundational Bible studies and evangelistic campaigns.

Tema, planned in the early 1960s by Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah, rapidly transformed from a fishing village into a thriving industrial and residential center under the management of the Tema Development Corporation (TDC). Amidst this growth, the First Baptist Church of Tema emerged as a pivotal religious institution, initially meeting in rented spaces before establishing a permanent church structure in 1968. Led by figures like Reverend James Annis and Reverend James Barron, the church

<sup>5</sup> Dalia Fahmy, "7 Facts about Southern Baptists" (Pew Research Center, 2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/06/07/7-facts-about-southern-baptists/>.

<sup>6</sup> Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk, *Handing down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the next Generation* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> W. N. Tan and Maizura Yasin, "Parents' Roles and Parenting Styles on Shaping Children's Morality," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 8, no. 3C (March 2020): 70–76, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.081608>.

<sup>8</sup> María Castro et al., "Parental Involvement on Student Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis," *Educational Research Review* 14 (2015): 33–46; Charity S Watkins and Matthew O Howard, "Educational Success among Elementary School Children from Low Socioeconomic Status Families: A Systematic Review of Research Assessing Parenting Factors," *Journal of Children and Poverty* 21, no. 1 (2015): 17–46..

<sup>9</sup> Jan Horwath et al., "Religion, Beliefs and Parenting Practices," *A Descriptive Study. Sheffield: University of Sheffield* 66 (2008).

<sup>10</sup> Amanah, "Islamic Education as A Solution for the Moral Decadence Problems"; Chilima, "Addressing Moral Decadence"; Omosehin, Haruna, and Odeyemi, "Managing Moral Decadence among Youths in the Contemporary Nigerian Society." Siti Amanah, "Islamic Education as A Solution for the Moral Decadence Problems," *International Conference of Moslem Society* 3 (April 12, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.24090/icms.2019.2529>; Foluke Morohunmubo Omosehin, Omowunmi Bilikisu Haruna, and Dare Deji Odeyemi, "Managing Moral Decadence among Youths in the Contemporary Nigerian Society: Women as Mentors," *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, April 30, 2022, 46–56, <https://doi.org/10.9734/jesbs/2022/v35i430419>..

<sup>11</sup> Smetana, "The Role of Parents in Moral Development: A Social Domain Analysis"; Berkowitz and Grych, "Fostering Goodness"; Tan and Yasin, "Parents' Roles and Parenting Styles on Shaping Children's Morality"; Ampofo, "Religious Background of Parents, Parenting Practices and Children's Moral Behaviour: The Case of the First Baptist Church, Tema, Ghana."; Maharani, "Perkembangan Moral Pada Anak."

played a crucial role in spiritual guidance and community development, evolving from the Tema Baptist Bible Class to First Baptist, Tema.

Religious institutions like First Baptist in Tema not only provided spiritual grounding but also contributed significantly to societal values and education. They engaged in outreach programs, radio broadcasts, and community welfare initiatives, addressing local needs and fostering moral development. Through their efforts, they shaped the ethical standards and behaviors of members, influencing family dynamics and community cohesion in Tema.

Today, Tema stands as a testament to Ghana's industrial progress, grappling with the challenges of urbanization and infrastructure development. The enduring presence of Baptist Christianity in both Accra and Tema shows its role as a pillar of spiritual guidance, education, and community support, contributing to the cultural fabric and societal resilience of the region.

### **Christian Beliefs and Parenting Practices**

Christian faith profoundly influences parenting teachings and styles, emphasizing discipline, moral guidance, and spiritual development within the family context. Rooted in biblical principles, Christian parents view themselves as stewards entrusted with the spiritual upbringing of their children, reflecting a covenantal relationship with God.<sup>12</sup> This perspective shapes parenting practices that prioritize moral virtues such as honesty, kindness, and forgiveness, aligning with biblical injunctions to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6 ESV). The integration of scripture into parenting fosters a holistic approach where faith permeates daily life, influencing decisions, behaviors, and values.<sup>13</sup> Central to Christian parenting is the belief that discipline is an act of love aimed at nurturing a child's moral conscience rather than simply enforcing rules.<sup>14</sup> Biblical teachings advocate for discipline that corrects and guides, reflecting God's loving correction of his children (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 3:12). This approach seeks to instill character traits that align with Christian virtues, promoting a sense of responsibility, self-control, and respect for authority.<sup>15</sup>

However, Christian parenting styles are not without controversy, particularly concerning methods of discipline. While some emphasize the importance of firm guidance rooted in biblical principles, others critique certain conservative practices, such as the endorsement of corporal punishment, as potentially harmful or outdated.<sup>16</sup> The debate over the use of physical discipline underscores differing interpretations of biblical teachings on correction and the evolving cultural norms around child-rearing.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the influence of parental theological beliefs on children's faith development can lead to varied outcomes. Research indicates that children raised in homes where faith is integrated into daily life are more likely to adopt religious practices and values into adulthood.<sup>18</sup> However, challenges arise when children's autonomy in faith formation is overshadowed by parental expectations, potentially leading to a struggle for independence or rejection of faith in adolescence.

In diverse cultural contexts, such as Ghanaian Christian families, parenting practices blend authoritative guidance with communal values, emphasizing respect for elders and community involvement

<sup>12</sup> Cameron Lee and Annmarie Early, "Religiosity and Family Values: Correlates of God-Image in a Protestant Sample," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 28, no. 3 (2000): 229–39; Nancy De Vos Stehouwer and R Scott Stehouwer, "A Christian Approach to Authority and Discipline in the Family: Theological-Theoretical Issues and Research Findings," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 4 (1983): 341–48.

<sup>13</sup> Donald F Walker and Heather Lewis Quagliana, "Integrating Scripture with Parent Training in Behavioral Interventions.," *Journal of Psychology & Christianity* 26, no. 2 (2007).

<sup>14</sup> Kyunghye Kim and Kisoook Kim, "Internet Game Addiction, Parental Attachment, and Parenting of Adolescents in South Korea," *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse* 24, no. 6 (2015): 366–71.

<sup>15</sup> Suryadi et al., "The Role of Religion and Social Capital on Employees' Performance: An Empirical Study Post Indonesia's Islamic Bank Merger."

<sup>16</sup> David Martinez and Linda Saleh Borghol, "Effects Of Corporal Punishment On Parents," 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Hillary N. Purcell et al., "'A Remarkable Experience of God, Shaping Us as a Family': Parents' Use of Faith Following Child's Rare Disease Diagnosis," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 21, no. 1 (2015): 25–38.

<sup>18</sup> Betsy Hughes Barrow, David C Dollahite, and Loren D Marks, "How Parents Balance Desire for Religious Continuity with Honoring Children's Religious Agency.," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 13, no. 2 (2021): 169-83.

in child-rearing.<sup>19</sup> This reflects a broader trend where Christian parenting adapts to cultural norms while maintaining core biblical principles, fostering resilience and ethical conduct in children.<sup>20</sup>

Hence, Christian faith shapes parenting through moral guidance and discipline, fostering spiritual growth and moral virtues in children. Despite controversies over disciplinary methods and autonomy in faith development, integrating biblical teachings enriches familial relationships and nurtures a foundation of faith that extends beyond childhood into adulthood.

### **Prioritization of Prayer and Bible Reading in Christian Faith**

Christian parents play a pivotal role in nurturing their children's faith through practices such as prayer and scripture reading, which profoundly impact their spiritual and moral development. Engaging children in prayer cultivates a personal relationship with God from a young age, fostering trust and dependence on divine guidance.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, regular scripture reading immerses children in biblical narratives, teaching moral values and guiding ethical decision-making.<sup>22</sup> These practices not only shape their understanding of Christianity but also influence their character formation and worldview, instilling virtues like compassion and forgiveness.<sup>23</sup>

Controversy arises regarding the extent of parental influence on children's faith development. Critics argue that imposing religious practices may limit children's autonomy and hinder their exploration of diverse beliefs.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the emphasis on doctrinal teachings through prayer and scripture reading can be perceived as indoctrination rather than genuine spiritual exploration.<sup>25</sup> Some studies suggest that rigid adherence to religious practices may lead to cognitive dissonance or rebellion in adolescents seeking autonomy.<sup>26</sup> However, proponents argue that providing a strong religious foundation enhances children's resilience and moral clarity amidst societal challenges.<sup>27</sup>

Prayer serves as a cornerstone in family rituals, promoting emotional bonding and a sense of security.<sup>28</sup> It encourages children to express gratitude, seek divine guidance, and develop empathy towards others.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, scripture reading stimulates intellectual curiosity and critical thinking as children engage with biblical texts through discussion and reflection.<sup>30</sup> These practices not only deepen their religious literacy but also empower them to apply biblical principles to contemporary issues.<sup>31</sup>

Despite its benefits, the integration of prayer and scripture reading in parenting faces challenges in modern contexts characterized by secularism and diverse religious perspectives.<sup>32</sup> Educators and policymakers debate the role of religious education in public schools, balancing constitutional rights with

<sup>19</sup> Allen-Revoredo et al., "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices on Oral Health Prevention Associated with Sociodemographic Factors of Adolescent Students from a Peruvian-Swiss Educational Institution"; Clifford Allen-Revoredo et al., "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices on Oral Health Prevention Associated with Sociodemographic Factors of Adolescent Students from a Peruvian-Swiss Educational Institution," *Journal of International Oral Health* 14, no. 5 (2022): 475, [https://doi.org/10.4103/jioh.jioh\\_120\\_22](https://doi.org/10.4103/jioh.jioh_120_22).

<sup>20</sup> Allen-Revoredo et al., "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices on Oral Health Prevention Associated with Sociodemographic Factors of Adolescent Students from a Peruvian-Swiss Educational Institution."

<sup>21</sup> Paul Martens, "Back to the Basics: The Resurgence of Moral Formation in American Protestant Ethics" (SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Stephen R Holmes, "Scripture in Liturgy and Theology," *Theologians on Scripture*. Edited by Angus Paddison. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, 105–18.

<sup>23</sup> Eric Rackley, "Scripture Reading Practices of Methodist Youth," *Religious Education* 112, no. 2 (2017): 136–48.

<sup>24</sup> Uta Papen, "Hymns, Prayers and Bible Stories: The Role of Religious Literacy Practices in Children's Literacy Learning," *Ethnography and Education* 13, no. 1 (2018): 119–34.

<sup>25</sup> Patricia Hannam and Farid Panjwani, "Religious Education and the Potential for Mitigating Xenophobia," *Journal of Religious Education* 68, no. 3 (2020): 385–96.

<sup>26</sup> Corie Gray et al., "Socioecological Factors Influencing Sexual Health Experiences and Health Outcomes of Migrant Asian Women Living in 'Western' High-Income Countries: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 5 (March 3, 2021): 2469, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052469>.

<sup>27</sup> Mona M Abo-Zena, "Being Young, Muslim, and Female: Youth Perspectives on the Intersection of Religious and Gender Identities," *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 29, no. 2 (2019): 308–20.

<sup>28</sup> Nuri Friedlander, "*Sharpen Your Blade and Put Your Animal at Ease*": *Islamic Ethics and Rituals of Killing Non-Human Animals* (Harvard University, 2020).

<sup>29</sup> Lee-Anne Roux, "On Becoming Whole in Pentecostal Spirituality": The Quest for an Integrative Approach to Pastoral Caregiving and Healing" (Stellenbosch University, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> Kerrin Huth, Raymond Brown, and Wayne Usher, "The Use of Story to Teach Religious Education in the Early Years of Primary School: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Journal of Religious Education* 69, no. 2 (2021): 253–72.

<sup>31</sup> Andrey Rosowsky, "Faith, Phonics and Identity: Reading in Faith Complementary Schools," *Literacy* 47, no. 2 (2013): 67–78.

<sup>32</sup> Lars Unstad and Henning Fjørtoft, "Disciplinary Literacy in Religious Education: The Role and Relevance of Reading," *British Journal of Religious Education* 43, no. 4 (2021): 434–42.

educational objectives.<sup>33</sup> Critics argue that religious teachings may marginalize non-religious or minority religious groups, undermining inclusivity and cultural diversity.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, controversies over the interpretation of religious texts highlight differing theological perspectives and ethical implications.<sup>35</sup>

It can be seen from the literature that Christian parents play a vital role in fostering spiritual growth and moral development through prayer and scripture reading. These practices contribute to children's ethical formation, resilience, and understanding of Christian values. While controversies exist regarding parental influence and religious education, the positive impact of nurturing a faith-based upbringing is evident in children's character development and spiritual maturity.

### Christians and Moral Choices

Christian parents play a pivotal role in guiding their children's moral development through everyday interactions and religious practices. Research consistently shows that parental modeling and direct teaching of moral values significantly influence how children perceive and navigate ethical decisions.<sup>36</sup> For instance, attending religious activities together not only strengthens family bonds but also helps children develop traits like emotional resilience and a sense of responsibility.<sup>37</sup>

In many Christian families, parents prioritize the transmission of religious values such as honesty, compassion, and forgiveness. These values serve as foundational principles that shape children's moral reasoning from an early age.<sup>38</sup> Through bedtime stories, discussions at the dinner table, and participation in church activities, parents create environments that reinforce ethical norms and expectations.

However, the influence of Christian parenting on children's moral choices isn't without debate. Critics argue that overly strict or authoritarian approaches might inadvertently suppress children's autonomy and critical thinking skills.<sup>39</sup> They suggest that rigid adherence to religious doctrines could limit children's exposure to diverse moral perspectives and hinder their ability to independently assess ethical dilemmas.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, children raised in Christian households often navigate a complex journey of integrating their parents' teachings with their personal moral development. Some embrace these teachings wholeheartedly, finding comfort and guidance in their faith. Others may question or even reject certain aspects as they explore their own beliefs and values.<sup>41</sup>

Christian parents profoundly impact their children's moral development through intentional teaching and lived examples rooted in religious faith. This influence fosters a sense of moral responsibility and community within the family. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the diverse responses and challenges children face as they negotiate their individual moral identities in relation to their upbringing and broader societal influences. Understanding these dynamics enriches appreciation of how Christian parenting shapes the moral fabric of future generations.<sup>42</sup>

### Children Correcting their Parents in Religious Homes

In religious households, the dynamic of children correcting their parents on religious matters presents a fascinating interplay of authority, tradition, and agency. Studies highlight various dimensions of this interaction, revealing both supportive and controversial perspectives.

<sup>33</sup> William H Jeynes, "The Challenge of Controlling for SES in Social Science and Education Research," *Educational Psychology Review* 14 (2002): 205–21.

<sup>34</sup> Jeynes, "The Challenge of Controlling for SES in Social Science and Education Research."

<sup>35</sup> Maria Du Toit, Jeannie Van der Linde, and De Wet Swanepoel, "Early Childhood Development Risks and Protective Factors in Vulnerable Preschool Children from Low-Income Communities in South Africa," *Journal of Community Health* 46 (2021): 304–12.

<sup>36</sup> Kate Ott, "Taking Children's Moral Lives Seriously: Creativity as Ethical Response Offline and Online," *Religions* 10, no. 9 (2019): 525.

<sup>37</sup> Sam A. Hardy, David C. Dollahite, and Chayce R. Baldwin, "Parenting, Religion, and Moral Development," in *The Oxford Handbook of Parenting and Moral Development*, ed. Deborah J. Laible, Gustavo Carlo, and Laura M. Padilla-Walker (Oxford University Press, 2019), 178–96, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638696.013.18>.

<sup>38</sup> Hardy, Dollahite, and Baldwin, "Parenting, Religion, and Moral Development."

<sup>39</sup> Nancy K Schlossberg, *Counseling Adults in Transition* (Springer Publishing Company, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Deborah J Laible, Gustavo Carlo, and Laura M Padilla Walker, *The Oxford Handbook of Parenting and Moral Development* (Oxford Library of Psychology, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> Mark D. Regnerus, "Shaping Schooling Success: Religious Socialization and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Public Schools," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 3 (September 17, 2000): 363–70, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0021-8294.00030>.

<sup>42</sup> Regnerus, "Shaping Schooling Success: Religious Socialization and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Public Schools."

Children in religious homes often actively participate in religious conversations, sometimes correcting their parents. Boyatzis et al. found that in many families, religious discussions are bidirectional, where children are not merely passive recipients but active contributors to the religious discourse.<sup>43</sup> This involvement can sometimes lead to situations where children correct their parents, challenging traditional hierarchies within the family. For instance, a child might point out inconsistencies in their parents' religious practices or interpretations of religious texts, reflecting their own understanding or teachings from religious education that might differ from their parents' views.

Parents' reactions to such corrections can vary significantly. In some cases, parents may appreciate their children's insights, viewing them as signs of the child's growing understanding and commitment to their faith. Barrow et al. note that parents often balance their desire for religious continuity with honoring their children's religious agency.<sup>44</sup> This balance involves respecting children's views and sometimes even adjusting family religious practices to accommodate the child's perspectives. Such adjustments can foster a more inclusive religious environment, where dialogue and mutual respect are prioritized.

However, the act of children correcting their parents can also lead to tension, particularly in households where traditional hierarchies are strictly maintained. In some religious families, questioning or correcting elders may be seen as disrespectful or indicative of a loss of traditional values. This tension is often more pronounced in communities with strong patriarchal structures or where religious observance is closely tied to cultural identity.

Generational shifts in belief and practice further complicate this dynamic. Iles-Caven et al. found that children's religious beliefs are often more secular than those of their parents, with a significant proportion of offspring not believing in God or a divine power compared to their parents.<sup>45</sup> This secularization can lead to children correcting parents not just on specific religious practices, but on broader theological or philosophical grounds, questioning the very foundations of their parents' faith. This divergence can strain familial relationships, especially if parents perceive their children's corrections as a rejection of their values and identity.

The impact of such corrections can also be moderated by the perceived acceptance of the parents. Kim, McCullough, and Cicchetti as cited in Bao et al. argue that children's religious beliefs and practices are more influenced by parents' religiosity when the parents are perceived as accepting.<sup>46</sup> Thus, in homes where children feel accepted and valued, corrections are more likely to be received constructively. Conversely, in less accepting environments, these corrections might exacerbate conflicts.

Furthermore, Petts et al. highlight that religious homogamy, where both parents share similar religious beliefs and practices, can contribute to a more harmonious religious upbringing.<sup>47</sup> In such settings, children correcting their parents may be less contentious because the family's religious framework is more cohesive, and deviations are less likely to challenge the family's collective identity.

Thus, children correcting their parents on religious matters in religious homes is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors, including the nature of parent-child relationships, generational shifts in belief, and the family's religious structure. While such interactions can lead to greater religious understanding and cohesion in some families, they can also provoke tension and conflict, particularly in environments where traditional hierarchies and beliefs are rigidly upheld. As religious beliefs continue to evolve across generations, the dynamics of these corrections will likely remain a significant aspect of familial religious life, reflecting broader societal trends towards individualism and secularization.

## METHODOLOGY

The research methodology implemented in this study was crafted to thoroughly explore the intricate relationship between religion, parenting practices, and children's morality within the Baptist churches situated in the Sakumono zone. Central to the methodology was the utilization of a purposive sampling

<sup>43</sup> Chris J Boyatzis, David C Dollahite, and Loren D Marks, "The Family as a Context for Religious and Spiritual Development in Children and Youth," *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, 2006, 297–309.

<sup>44</sup> Barrow, Dollahite, and Marks, "How Parents Balance Desire for Religious Continuity with Honoring Children's Religious Agency."

<sup>45</sup> Charlease P Kelly-Jackson and Tandra O Jackson, "Meeting Their Fullest Potential: The Beliefs and Teaching of a Culturally Relevant Science Teacher," 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Michael E. McCullough et al., "Interpersonal Forgiving in Close Relationships: II. Theoretical Elaboration and Measurement.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75, no. 6 (1998): 1586–1603, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.6.1586>.

<sup>47</sup> Petts, *Pagan and Christian: Religious Change in Early Medieval Europe*.

approach, which facilitated the selection of 20 participants who shared crucial characteristics: being born-again Christians and active members of Baptist churches within the region. Notably, the Baptist churches included in this study were Victory Baptist, Triumphant Grace Baptist, Abundant Grace Baptist, Hallelujah Temple Baptist, Grace Baptist, Grace Community Baptist, Redemption Baptist, and Goodnews Baptist Churches. By deliberately selecting churches with diverse congregations, the sampling strategy aimed to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences relevant to the research objectives.

Data collection, a pivotal phase of the study, primarily comprised semi-structured interviews conducted over three months, spanning from March to May. The timing of the interviews was meticulously planned to accommodate participants' schedules, with sessions scheduled on Sundays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. This timeframe was chosen to maximize participation while minimizing disruption to participants' daily routines.

Commencing in March, the data collection process involved multiple visits to the aforementioned Baptist churches. These visits allowed the primary researcher to engage with potential participants, elucidate the study's purpose, and extend invitations to participate. Each visit typically lasted around one hour, during which the researcher fostered an atmosphere of openness and receptivity, encouraging individuals to share their perspectives candidly.

The interview guide, meticulously crafted to explore key thematic areas, comprised three sections. The first section focused on behaviors exhibited by believers within the church community, shedding light on the practical implications of religious teachings on everyday conduct. The second section delved into the belief systems of Christian parents, seeking to uncover how religious beliefs inform parenting practices and decision-making. Lastly, the third section explored the role of pastoral teachings in shaping parenting styles and influencing children's moral development. Through these structured inquiries, the aim was to extract nuanced insights that would enrich the understanding of the complex dynamics at play.

Throughout the data collection process, stringent adherence to ethical standards was paramount. Participants were approached with respect and integrity, and informed consent forms were administered before commencing interviews. This ensured that participants were fully informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as participants. Importantly, participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and mechanisms were in place to facilitate their withdrawal from the study at any stage if they so desired.

Despite the overall smooth progression of the data collection phase, certain challenges were encountered along the way. Scheduling conflicts and communication barriers with a few participants posed logistical hurdles that required prompt resolution. To address these challenges, flexible scheduling options were offered, and clear communication channels were established to facilitate seamless coordination. Moreover, proactive measures were taken to foster a supportive environment wherein participants felt valued and respected, thereby nurturing an atmosphere conducive to open and honest dialogue.

Consequently, the data collection procedures adopted in this study were designed to elicit comprehensive insights into the influence of religion on parenting practices and children's morality within the Baptist churches of the Sakumono zone. By combining purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, and adherence to ethical guidelines, the research team succeeded in gathering rich and nuanced data that contributed significantly to advancing understanding in this field. The involvement of 24 participants ensured a diverse range of perspectives, enriching the depth and breadth of the findings. Through rigorous methodological rigor and a commitment to ethical conduct, this study offers valuable contributions to the scholarly discourse on religion, parenting, and moral development. Additionally, it's important to note that the study was approved by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and a letter was issued authorizing the researcher to conduct the study in the Baptist churches of Sakumono in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Data collection took place on Sundays after church services, utilizing a tape recorder to capture the interviews.

## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### ***Demographic Characteristics of Participants***

Twenty participants were used for this research. Among them, individuals from Victory Baptist Church (VBC) varied in age, with Parent 1 and Parent 3 aged between 37 and 46, while Parent 2 and Parent 4

were older, ranging from 40 to 55. Their educational backgrounds ranged from diplomas to degrees. Similarly, participants from Triumphant Grace Baptist (TGB) covered a wide age range, from 34 to 50, with educational qualifications spanning from diplomas to tertiary degrees. Abundant Grace Baptist (AGB) participants also exhibited diversity in age and education, with ages ranging from 33 to 59 and educational backgrounds varying from diplomas to tertiary degrees. Participants from Hallelujah Temple Baptist (HTB) were relatively consistent in age, with ages ranging from 32 to 49, and most held degrees. Grace Baptist (GB) participants were aged between 34 and 55, with all having completed the Senior High School (SHS) level. Grace Community Baptist (GCB) participants ranged in age from 40 to 58, with educational backgrounds varying from SHS to degrees. Participants from Redemption Baptist (RB) and Goodnews Baptist Church (GBC) were presented as family groups (FG), with ages spanning from 30 to 57 and educational levels from SHS to degrees.

### **Influence of Baptist Christianity on Parenting and Morality in the Sakumono Zone**

In the vibrant community of Sakumono, Baptist Christianity serves as a cornerstone for shaping parenting practices among its devout adherents. With a focus on instilling Baptist beliefs and values, fostering discipline, and nurturing moral uprightness, Baptist parents play a pivotal role in guiding their children toward a life rooted in faith and righteousness. Through prayer, Bible reading, and prioritizing attendance at Baptist churches, parents imbue their offspring with a profound connection to their religious heritage. However, amidst these expected influences, surprising elements emerge, such as the encouragement of independent decision-making and personal connections with God. Additionally, the rarity of divorce, emphasis on forgiveness, and promotion of love, modesty, and loyalty within Baptist teachings add distinctive layers to the parenting landscape. This multifaceted interplay of tradition, spirituality, and contemporary parenting practices emphasizes the profound impact of Baptist Christianity on familial dynamics within the Sakumono community.

#### ***Emphasis on Baptist beliefs and values in parenting***

The emphasis on Baptist beliefs and values in parenting within the Sakumono community is deeply ingrained and multifaceted, as articulated by a multitude of respondents. It starts with a fundamental commitment to instilling Baptist teachings in children, as highlighted by Respondents One and Two. Respondents' views were:

*"It emphasizes family values and teaching children Baptist beliefs."*

*"Baptist parents are encouraged to bring up their children in the Baptist doctrine and teachings."*

This emphasis on doctrinal transmission serves as the bedrock for parenting styles, shaping decisions and behaviors within the family unit, as noted by Respondents Three and Four. Respondents Three and Four views were:

*"The teachings of Baptist Christianity strongly influence parenting styles in the Sakumono zone."*

*"Baptist Christianity shapes my parenting, grounding it in Scripture with principles like 'spare the rod and spoil the child.'"*

Moreover, the influence of Baptist Christianity extends beyond mere instruction, permeating various aspects of familial dynamics. Respondents Five and Six pinpointed the role of discipline and moral uprightness in shaping children's behavior, echoing the sentiment that adherence to Baptist values fosters excellence and ethical decision-making within the home. They commented:

*"Grace Baptist witnesses children excelling due to disciplined parenting, aligning with Baptist teachings in the Sakumono zone."*

This emphasis on values is not limited to parental directives but extends to communal engagement and personal spirituality. Respondents Seven and Eight emphasized the grounding of parenting in Scripture, while Respondents Nine and Ten highlighted the influence of Baptist values on personal prayer and spiritual practices. Respondents' comments were as follows:

*"Baptist Christianity has influenced my parenting style by guiding me to base it on Scripture."*

*“Baptist Christianity shapes my parenting, grounding it in Scripture with principles like ‘spare the rod and spoil the child.’”*

*“Baptist values, such as emphasis on the Word of God and prayer, influence my parenting style.”*

*“Baptist values guide my parenting, emphasizing careful associations, daily prayer, and studying the Word of God.”*

Furthermore, the pervasive influence of Baptist beliefs is evident in the intentional alignment of family life with Baptist doctrines, as noted by Respondents Eleven and Twelve. Their comments were:

*“Parental teachings on quiet time and Bible study foster independent, morally guided decisions.”*

This alignment fosters a sense of identity and belonging within the Baptist tradition, as observed by Respondents Thirteen and Fourteen. They commented that:

*“Baptist Christianity proves influential in parenting, shaping lives with lasting impact on character and societal values.”*

*“The teachings of Baptist Christianity strongly influence parenting styles in the Sakumono zone.”*

It is important to acknowledge that Baptist doctrines have a far-reaching impact beyond just the family sphere. These beliefs play a crucial role in shaping broader societal values and fostering personal development. In this result, respondents Fifteen and Sixteen highlighted the exceptional qualities of Baptist children regarding education and social interactions. Their comments were:

*“In Baptist families, parents follow rules from the Bible to teach their children the right way.”*

*“Baptist teachings from the Bible make children different from others at school and work.”*

In contrast, respondents Seventeen and Eighteen emphasized the significance of instilling values like forgiveness, love, and loyalty through Baptist teachings.

*“Baptist families promote forgiveness and strong family bonds, guided by biblical principles.”*

*“Baptist teachings, rooted in the Word of God, profoundly shape parenting and morality.”*

*“In the Sakumono zone, Baptist parents emphasize forgiveness, teaching younger ones to forgive, echoing Jesus Christ’s example.”*

As per the feedback received from members of various churches in Sakumono, Baptist beliefs hold a noteworthy impact on the parenting practices in the Sakumono community. These beliefs shape the dynamics of families and their spiritual connections, serving as a foundation for creating a strong sense of identity and communal ethos. By adhering to Baptist principles, families not only influence their households but also contribute to wider societal norms and individual development, as expressed by the perspectives shared by the participants.

## **Discipline**

The teachings of the Baptist faith have a profound influence on the way parents approach child-rearing and ethical behaviour. This is particularly evident in the emphasis placed on discipline. Many interviewed people shared the importance of instilling values of discipline and moral integrity in children from a young age. Respondent Three stressed the impact of Baptist Christianity on parenting in the Sakumono area, specifically in terms of discipline and moral values. The respondent view was:

*“The teachings of Baptist Christianity strongly influence parenting styles in the Sakumono zone, emphasizing discipline and moral uprightness.”*

Respondent Four shared a personal experience of how adhering to Baptist principles has influenced discipline, emphasizing its role in shaping a child’s behavior. The respondent acknowledged that occasional rebellion is a natural part of the discipline process, highlighting the importance of persistence in upholding Baptist values within the framework of parenting. The comment of the respondent was:

*“As a Baptist parent, my firm adherence to Baptist principles contributed to my child’s discipline, despite occasional rebellion.”*

Respondent Five confidently emphasized disciplined parenting as a key catalyst for children to excel within the Baptist community. This assertion firmly highlights the strong alignment between disciplined upbringing and adherence to Baptist teachings. It suggests that disciplined parenting acts as a vital conduit for nurturing ethical behaviour deeply rooted in Baptist values. Respondent Five commented that:

*“Grace Baptist witnesses children excelling due to disciplined parenting, aligning with Baptist teachings in the Sakumono zone.”*

The influence of Baptist Christianity on discipline extends beyond individual households to encompass broader community dynamics. Respondent Seven reflected on how Baptist Christianity shapes parenting styles by grounding them in Scripture, with specific reference to verses advocating for discipline such as “spare the rod and spoil the child.” This indicates a holistic integration of religious teachings into parenting practices, with discipline serving as a tangible manifestation of these beliefs. Respondent even commented:

*“Baptist Christianity has influenced my parenting style by guiding me to base it on Scripture.”*

*“Verses like ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’ and teaching children in the way they should go have shaped my approach.”*

Expanding on this, Respondent Eight explained that Baptist Christianity shapes parenting strategies, particularly by prioritizing principles like “spare the rod and spoil the child.” This highlights the significant impact of religious teachings on parental disciplinary methods. It implies that discipline is not solely about punishment but also about imparting values in line with Baptist principles. The respondent view was:

*“Baptist Christianity shapes my parenting, grounding it in Scripture with principles like ‘spare the rod and spoil the child.’”*

Finally, Respondent Twelve highlighted how Baptist values imbue children with not just discipline but also responsibility and accountability. This emphasizes the diverse aspects of discipline within the Baptist parenting framework, encompassing not only correcting behavior but also fostering character development and ethical accountability. Respondent said that:

*“Baptist values instill discipline, responsibility, and accountability in children.”*

The comments from respondents show how Baptist Christianity strongly affects parenting in Sakumono. They stressed the importance of discipline and moral values, which come from Baptist teachings. Parents say their discipline methods come from Baptist beliefs, even when dealing with occasional rebellion. This type of upbringing helps children behave well and learn to be responsible, following Baptist values closely.

### **The Pivotal Role of Prayer and Bible Reading**

Apart from teaching discipline and morals, Baptist Christianity also encourages families to pray and read the Bible. The views shared by Respondents Three, Four, Eight, Ten, Fourteen, and Nineteen all echo a shared sentiment: the significance of imparting Baptist values, especially through prayer and Bible study, in shaping the lives of children in the Sakumono area.

Respondent Three stressed the importance of children learning Baptist values through prayer and reading the Bible. For parents in Sakumono who follow the Baptist faith, these aren't just daily habits – they're crucial parts of their beliefs. By prioritizing prayer and Bible study, parents aim to give their children a strong spiritual foundation to navigate life as they grow up. The Respondent stated:

*“Baptist parents in the Sakumono zone believe in instilling Baptist values first, including prayer and Bible reading. As their children grow into adults, they trust that these values will guide them in developing a personal relationship with God, allowing them to make independent moral choices while staying true to their Baptist upbringing.”*

Likewise, Respondent Four emphasized the ongoing relationship with God that starts from early experiences with prayer and reading the Bible. This means that by regularly praying and reading the Bible, people are more able to keep these values as they grow up, making their faith strong even when life gets tough. The respondent stated:

*“Instilling Baptist values, including prayer and Bible study, fosters a lasting connection with God, ensuring they carry these values into adulthood”*

Bringing Christian values into everyday life goes along with what Baptists believe. Balancing Baptist values with your spiritual growth means including children in prayer, focusing on the Lord’s Prayer, and getting them involved. The respondent said:

*“Including Christian values in my everyday life fits well with what I believe as a Baptist. To grow spiritually while staying true to my Baptist beliefs, I make sure to involve my children in our prayers. We focus on the Lord’s Prayer and I encourage them to join in and be a part of it.”*

According to Respondent Ten, teaching children to make their own moral choices is closely tied to the extent to which they pray and study the Bible. Respondent Ten asserted:

*Helping my children make their own good choices means I encourage them to pray and read the Bible by themselves every day, making sure they include these practices in their daily routines.*

Respondent Fourteen agreed with Respondent Three, stating that Baptist values help guide children to develop their special bond with God. According to Respondent Fourteen:

*“In Sakumono, as a Baptist parent, I believe in teaching my children Baptist values right from the start, like praying and reading the Bible. As they grow up, I trust that these values will help them connect with God on their own and make good choices that match our Baptist beliefs.”*

Lastly, Respondent Nineteen, who represents a group, focused on Baptist teachings becoming part of everyday life. Children get their Bibles, so they can learn even when their parents aren’t around. This idea of taking personal responsibility for their faith matches with the bigger picture of helping children learn to make their own good choices through prayer and Bible reading. The participant said that:

*Encouraging children to have their own Bibles and praying and reading them regularly is like helping them grow closer to God. It’s like having a special friend who guides them in making good choices based on what’s in the Bible. As they get older, they learn that listening to what the Bible says helps them have strong values and live a life full of faith and meaning.*

The comments from the participants all agree on the importance of prayer and Bible reading in teaching Baptist values to children in Sakumono. They see these practices as crucial for building a strong connection with God and guiding children to make good choices based on their faith. By encouraging children to pray, read the Bible, and take charge of their faith, parents believe they are helping their children develop lasting values that will guide them through life with faith and purpose. Together, these respondents illustrate a community deeply dedicated to fostering not just a religious affiliation, but also a profound connection with God that guides ethical choices.

### **Parental Guidance Based on Scripture**

The statements below demonstrate the influence of Scripture and Baptist values on parenting approaches. Each respondent shared their reliance on religious beliefs in raising children, highlighting the significance of faith in family life. The respondents relied on Scripture and Baptist values in parenting. Respondent Seven integrates teachings like “spare the rod and spoil the child” from Scripture to guide their children, believing in its authority in teaching morals. According to the respondent:

*In my approach to parenting, I rely heavily on Scripture, integrating teachings like “spare the rod and spoil the child” to guide my children according to biblical principles. (Respondent Seven)*

Respondent Eight bases their parenting on Scripture, aiming to balance Baptist values with personal spiritual growth. They involve their children in prayer and Bible study to nurture their spirituality

and teach morals. Similarly, Respondent Nine's parenting is deeply rooted in Baptist values. They stress the importance of God's Word and prayer in guiding their children's behavior, believing it instills discipline and responsibility. According to the respondents:

*For me, parenting finds its foundation in Scripture, where I strive to strike a balance between Baptist values and personal spiritual growth by actively engaging my children in prayer and Bible study. (Respondent Eight)*

*My parenting style is deeply influenced by Baptist values, with a particular emphasis on the Word of God and prayer as guiding principles for my children's behavior and choices. (Respondent Nine)*

These views show the influence of religious beliefs on parenting, making morals from Scripture and Baptist values central. By integrating faith into family life, these parents aim to pass down values and encourage spiritual growth in their children.

### **Encouragement of Moral Choices**

In Sakumono, Baptist teachings stress the importance of children making their own moral decisions. This emphasis is seen in parents guiding children to take responsibility for their actions. Children often show initiative without being told, like sharing lessons from church without prompting from parents. This reflects the values they have learned. According to the respondent:

*"Children prioritize attending Baptist churches and make choices based on doctrinal beliefs. Parents create opportunities for children to apply teachings and observe them making responsible decisions." (Respondent Two)*

Parents actively integrate Christian values into daily life, giving children a clear moral compass. This helps children understand right from wrong based on their Baptist beliefs. The respondent said:

*"Parents in the Sakumono zone believe in instilling Baptist values first, including prayer and Bible reading. As their children grow into adults, they trust that these values will guide them in developing a personal relationship with God, allowing them to make independent moral choices while staying true to their Baptist upbringing." (Respondent Seven)*

As a result, children are better equipped to resist negative influences and make choices in line with their faith. They learn to seek guidance from parents while still making their own decisions. This balance between parental support and independence fosters strong moral character. Respondent said:

*"Relationship decisions are approached with parental involvement, emphasizing character assessment and values."*

In Sakumono, Baptist teachings highlight children's moral independence, guided by parents. Children often take initiative, like sharing church lessons unprompted. Parents embed Christian values into daily life, helping children understand right from wrong. By instilling these values early, parents trust children to make their own moral decisions. This balance builds strong character, with children seeking guidance while asserting independence. Eventually, Baptist teachings empower children to make good choices in line with their faith.

### **Family Dynamics and Religious Values in Baptist Parenting**

In Sakumono's Baptist community, children correct parents when statements conflict with scriptures, reflecting their deep faith. Respondents highlighted forgiveness and family bonds, attributing rare divorces to biblical principles. Teaching forgiveness echoes Jesus' example, shaping harmonious family dynamics rooted in Christian values and mutual respect. Respondent Seventeen noted instances where children in Baptist families actively engage in correcting parents if their statements conflict with scriptures, demonstrating a personal relationship with God cultivated through church attendance and biblical upbringing. The respondent said:

*In Baptist households like mine, it's not uncommon for our children to step in and correct us if they notice our words or actions don't align with the teachings of Scripture. This dynamic speaks*

*volumes about the depth of their personal relationship with God, which they have cultivated through consistent church attendance and a strong foundation in biblical upbringing.*

Respondent Eighteen and Respondent Nineteen emphasized the promotion of forgiveness and strong family bonds within Baptist households. They highlighted the rarity of divorce in Baptist homes due to adherence to biblical marriage principles and stressed the importance of teaching younger ones to forgive, echoing Jesus Christ's example. Their views on this matter were:

*In my family, we follow Baptist beliefs and encourage forgiveness and strong family ties, guided by what the Bible teaches us. We don't like divorce and try to show our children how important it is to stick together, with God's help in bringing us closer.*

*In Sakumono, Baptist parents stress forgiveness, teaching children to forgive as Jesus did. They discourage divorce and set positive examples for their children, emphasizing God's role in joining couples.*

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The research question explored Baptist Christianity's influence on parenting and morality in Sakumono. Interviews in the area revealed how Baptist teachings shape parental approaches, emphasizing discipline and scriptural guidance. Parents prioritize prayer and Bible reading to instill values and deepen children's connection to God. This encourages children to make moral choices while maintaining their Baptist identity. Family dynamics reflect a strong faith, with children correcting parents if actions contradict scripture. In the light of this, Baptist values foster forgiveness, love, and loyalty, strengthening family bonds. The findings of the study on Baptist Christianity's influence on parenting and morality in Sakumono resonate with existing research in the field, showcasing similarities in the emphasis on discipline, prayer, and scriptural guidance.<sup>48</sup> This echoes broader themes found in studies on Christian parenting practices worldwide. Parental prioritization of discipline and scriptural guidance aligns with the biblical injunctions found in Proverbs and Ephesians, emphasizing the role of parents in shaping their children's behavior through loving correction and teaching. Similarly, research by Rich emphasizes the importance of moral education in children, suggesting that understanding right and wrong is crucial for moral development.

Moreover, the emphasis on prayer and Bible reading in instilling values and deepening children's connection to God is consistent with the findings of studies on the role of prayer in Christian households.<sup>49</sup> For instance, the Barna Group's research highlights the prevalence of prayer among American adults, especially within evangelical circles, demonstrating a shared emphasis on spiritual practices across different Christian communities. The study's observation of children correcting parents if their actions contradict scripture reflects a dynamic family environment shaped by strong faith values. This aligns with research by Hart, advocating for encouraging children to develop their moral compass rather than imposing rigid moral standards, fostering a sense of responsibility for one's actions.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, the promotion of forgiveness, love, and loyalty within Baptist families resonates with the broader Christian principle of unconditional love, exemplified by Jesus' sacrificial love for humanity. This parallels findings from Proctor et al. and Kim et al., which identify helping others and caring for the less privileged as central themes in Christian expressions of love.<sup>51</sup>

Despite these similarities, the study's focus on Sakumono offers unique insights into the specific cultural and religious context of Baptist Christianity in the region. While the emphasis on discipline,

<sup>48</sup> Siegfried Kreuzer, "The Septuagint South of Alexandria—in Antiquity," in *The Septuagint South of Alexandria* (Brill, 2022), 3–27.

<sup>49</sup> Robin Barnard Bachelor, "Alternative Assessments and Student Perceptions in the World Language Classroom," *Online Submission 6* (2017): 30–44; Martens, "Back to the Basics: The Resurgence of Moral Formation in American Protestant Ethics"; Holmes, "Scripture in Liturgy and Theology"; Roux, "On Becoming Whole in Pentecostal Spirituality": The Quest for an Integrative Approach to Pastoral Caregiving and Healing"; Huth, Brown, and Usher, "The Use of Story to Teach Religious Education in the Early Years of Primary School: A Systematic Review of the Literature."

<sup>50</sup> Caroline Sarojini Hart and Nicolás Brando, "A Capability Approach to Children's Well-being, Agency and Participatory Rights in Education," *European Journal of Education* 53, no. 3 (2018): 293–309.

<sup>51</sup> Susan P Proctor et al., "Effect of Overtime Work on Cognitive Function in Automotive Workers," *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, 1996, 124–32; Jungmeen Kim, Michael E McCullough, and Dante Cicchetti, "Parents' and Children's Religiosity and Child Behavioral Adjustment among Maltreated and Nonmaltreated Children," *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 18 (2009): 594–605.

prayer, and scriptural guidance aligns with broader Christian parenting practices, the study's findings shed light on how these principles are applied and experienced within a particular community.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the validation and extension of Moral Development Theory within the context of parenting in the Baptist tradition. The emphasis on discipline, prayer, and scriptural guidance aligns with existing theories of moral development, affirming the role of religious teachings in shaping ethical values and behaviours.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the unexpected finding of children actively engaging in interpreting and applying religious teachings challenges conventional notions of hierarchical parent-child relationships, extending an understanding of how moral development unfolds within religious communities. This is also similar to a study done by Boyatzis et al., where children are not merely passive recipients but active contributors to the religious discourse.<sup>53</sup>

Practically, these findings offer valuable insights for professionals working with families in the Baptist tradition. Professionals, such as educators, counselors, and religious leaders, can leverage the emphasis on discipline and scriptural guidance to support parents in nurturing moral development in their children. Intervention designs could incorporate religious teachings into parenting programs to promote ethical decision-making and family cohesion. Stakeholders, including parents and religious communities, may benefit from guidance on fostering forgiveness, love, and loyalty within families, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships and community bonds.

Policy recommendations stemming from these findings could include the integration of religious education and support for family-based interventions within educational and social service systems. Recognizing the role of religious teachings in moral development, policymakers may consider initiatives to support parental involvement in religious communities and promote the integration of faith-based values into public discourse on family and social issues. Regulatory implications may involve considerations of religious freedom and parental rights in education and child welfare policies. Additionally, resource allocation decisions could prioritize funding for research and programs aimed at understanding and supporting the role of faith in family dynamics and moral development.

In light of this, the study revealed that Baptist Christianity shapes parenting and morality in Sakumono, emphasizing discipline, prayer, and scripture. These practices are seen in other Christian communities but are unique to Sakumono's culture. The research supports Moral Development Theory by showing how faith influences ethical values in families. These findings help both academics and practitioners understand and address family dynamics and moral development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of the study call for opportunities to develop parenting education programs within Baptist communities that integrate religious values to support parents in nurturing their children's moral development. Lastly, promoting interfaith dialogue and collaboration could foster mutual understanding and respect among different religious traditions, enriching discussions on the complex interplay between religion, parenting, and morality.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has investigated the impact of Baptist Christianity on parenting styles and children's morality in the Sakumono zone, focusing on discipline, nurturing, guidance, and moral decision-making. The study highlighted the significance of prayer and Bible reading in fostering children's spiritual growth and encouraging independent moral choices, with family dynamics reflecting a strong faith where children actively corrected parents if their actions contradicted scripture, promoting forgiveness, love, and loyalty. It is important to emphasize that Christian faith plays a significant role in shaping family dynamics, influencing values, behaviors, and even the structure of the family unit itself. It permeates various aspects of family life, from moral and ethical foundations to daily interactions and long-term life choices. Furthermore, Christian traditions play a significant role in parenting, fostering a sense of unity and continuity. Regular practices such as family prayers, Bible study, and attending church services together reinforce the family's spiritual connection and provide a platform for shared experiences and values.

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<sup>52</sup> Kreuzer, "The Septuagint South of Alexandria—in Antiquity."

<sup>53</sup> Boyatzis, Dollahite, and Marks, "The Family as a Context for Religious and Spiritual Development in Children and Youth."

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