

Administrating Strategic Parenting in the Church: A Christian Education Perspective

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Abstract

Parenting is the most critical and challenging issue facing the church, society, and the world today; it is incumbent on parents to bring up children as the heritage of God, rearing and accepting the responsibility for the physical care, emotional nurture and spiritual upbringing to maturity. Strategic parenting is indispensable in leading and managing children for-profit, development, and stability which is the blueprint for parental jobs in bringing up children in task and function. Strategic parenting explains the complexity of many specific behaviors of parents or people that work individually and together to influence child outcomes. Invariably, Christian education believes in reinstating the church's mission, Vision, and Values concerning parenting, critically examining the external and internal forces to inspire the mission and vision and formulating. It is a strategy to fulfill the mission and vision, establish long-term objectives and action plans after developing the system, and enact a proper and regular evaluation to determine the strategic plan's success. Presenting effective monitoring for assessing members carrying out the activities relating to the mission, and vision, thus ensuring the value of the church remains intact as far as parenting is concerned would enhance effectiveness in parenting.

Keywords: Administration, Strategic Parenting, Strategic Procedure, Church, Christian Education Perspective

Introduction

Parenting is the most critical and challenging issue facing the church, society, and the world today. Its implications have resulted in childhood illness, accidents, teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, truancy, school disruption, underachievement, child abuse, inability to become employed, juvenile crime, and mental illness. It has also played a potential role in preventing health problems in children and adolescents (Fudge et al., 2004). The phenomenon of parenting has been the direct utilization of various conceptual terms that represent the meaning and attributes of the parenting concept, such as parenthood, child-rearing, childcare, parental role and function, parent-child relationships, family process, and socialization (Virasiri, Yunibh, and Chaiyawat, 2011). Parenting connotes rearing a child or children, particularly parents providing care, showing love, and guiding children. Parenting consists of the methods, techniques, and other activities used or required in rearing children. Parenting is raising and educating a child from birth until adulthood, carried out in a child's family by both the mother and father or biological parents (TAMD, 2016). Additionally, parenting is the act or process of functioning as parents and raising children (CDEL, 2009). It connotes or refers to the skill or activity of looking after children as a parent (DCE, 1995).

It is incumbent on parents to take the responsibility of bringing up their children as the heritage of God. Parenting is a process of rearing children who are natural offspring of the mother or father; it also accepts the responsibility for the physical care, emotional nurture and spiritual upbringing of a child to maturity (Ishola, 2016). The biblical injunction in Deut. 4:4-9 makes parenting strategic; verse 7 says, "You shall teach them conscientiously to your wards and talk about them when you sit down in your house, walk by the way, lie down, and when you lie down, you rise. This implies that God has a blueprint for rearing children to bring glory to Him and benefit their generation. Therefore, this article attempts to

administer the blueprint for parenting from the Christian education perspective.

Strategic Parenting in the Church

Strategic thinking is indispensable in leading and managing organizations (e.g., Christian organizations, churches) for for-profit development and stability (Moore, 2000). It addresses the link between the inner world of business and its external environment. The strategy also discusses theoretical approaches, ranging from the more conventional, considering strategy as occupational logic, rational and sequential, to the most dynamic, which understands this process as associated with cultural and learning factors, politics, and power relations (Porth, 2002). The concept of strategy is arbitrarily used in management, from a precisely formulated course of action, positioning in a particular environment, to the entire personality, the soul, and the existential rationale behind an organization's life. It is a conception often put forward in parenting and human development, academic and business worlds, which in some aspects, is complementary (Fairholm and Card, 2009). Christensen, Learned, Andrews, and Guth (1969) expressed strategy as a pattern of objectives, purposes, or goals, significant policies and plans for achieving an organization's stated goals, and the definition of both organization and projects. Then Barney (2001) complements strategy as the theory for satisfactory performance; in other words, strategy is considered a factor influencing a successful and good performance.

Parenting is the function, role, and responsibility of the parent in the family unit (McNeill, 2004) that implies the commitment of an individual or individuals to provide for a child's physical and psychosocial needs (James and Ashwill, 2007). Specifically, parenting connotes roles accomplished by persons possessing parental status to suitably and positively enhance development in every aspect of their children's life (Hamner and Turner, 1966). According to these parenting

explanations from several sources, the meaning of parenting is presented frequently in terms of the 'activity,' 'task,' 'function,' 'process,' and 'relationship and interaction' performed by a parent or people who possess parental role.

Thus, parenting can be defined as the process and purposive activity, including interactions regarding rearing and educating a child that parent or parental figure promotes the child's growth and development. Invariably, strategic parenting in the church is the leadership blueprint, guiding the church procedures or activities towards satisfactory behavioral performance amongst the church membership in achieving long or short-term objectives on a parental role for child's growth and development.

Strategic parenting presents the blueprint for parental jobs in bringing up their children regarding task and function. Strategic parenting stipulates the duties and roles parents might be expected to perform regarding children (Gage, Everett, and Bullock. 2006). Parenting is a learned task whereby an individual provides for the child's safety and physical and emotional well-being. These parental tasks include sharing customs and traditions (McEvoy et al., 2005), fostering skills for economic survival, promoting interpersonal and communication skills, and helping children become self-regulatory, productive, and self-actualized (Eldridge, 2002). It is a parental functioning in a family focusing on childcaring and socializing (Holmbeck, Paikoff, and Brooks-Gunn, 1995).

Strategic parenting explains the complexity of many specific behaviors of parents or people that work individually and together to influence child outcomes (Darling, 1999). Strategic parenting simplifies parents' activities that provide care, support, and love to lead to a child's total development (Hildebrand, 1994). Parenting is a positive, purposive, and nurturing activity specifically aimed at promoting a child's welfare or ensuring the survival and development of children, neither of which presumes a

biological or age relationship(Hoghughi and Long, 2004). In addition, Strategic parenting also describes the complexity of parents' behaviors that involve multidimensional aspects of process, behaviors, and relationships between parents and their children (Snider, Clements, and Vazsonyi, 2004). Parenting concerns the parent-child relationships, a continuous series of interactions between parent and child (Bigner, 1989). These interactions involve bi-directional relationships between members of two or more generations, parent and child or grandmother or father, which can extend through all significant parts of the respective life spans of these groups (Berns. 1993).

Strategic parenting presents the dynamic bi-directional process from parent to child and child to parent (Bodman and Peterson., 1995). This process is an evolving process that starts from discussions between the couple. It is the couple's thinking process to achieve appropriate guidelines for raising the child or children in specific situations of the family (Ruanpan, 2006). It includes developing and utilizing knowledge and skills relevant to planning for creating, giving birth, rearing, educating and providing for children(Hamner and Turner, 1966).

Strategic parenting describes the parent-child relationship process that aims to raise and socialize a child. In particular, parenting can shape a child's attitude, behaviors, and emotional function(Pflieger and Vazsonyi, 2006). It is the process of teaching and training children in which parents encourage their growth, such as nourishing, protecting, and guiding children through development(Bornstein, 1995; Brooks, 1991). It refers to the process that parents perform toward their children in everyday life events of the family unit(Jacobson, 1999; Snider, Clements, and Vazsonyi. 2004), which depends on parents' cognition, emotions, attributions, attitudes, and values(Berg-Nielsen and Holen, 2003). This process aims to provide care, encourage a child's independent decision-making, foster economic survival skills, promote

interpersonal skills, and help children self-regulate, be productive, and self-actualized in adulthood (Eldridge, 2002: Trungkasombut, 2004).

Biblical Basis for Parenting

The discourse in 1st Kings 3:16-26 and the judgment of King Solomon was an expression of parenting. Wise King Solomon understood the protective love of a parent. Called upon to decide which of two women was the infant's mother, the King laid a trap suggesting the surviving baby be divided into two, knowing that the real mother would protect the child at all cost; the concept of protective love parenting. Parental love will see the extent to any length to protect children, Moses almost became one of the thousands of babies killed by the pharaoh in Egypt, but the parent risked their lives to save the boy. The mother carefully made a tiny boat and placed the baby in the river where the King's daughter would find him. With the help of Moses' sister, Mariam cleverly maneuvered to become his nursemaid (Exodus 2:1-10). The parenting principle in the narrative is profound; Jochebed dared disobey the law that killed all boy babies. She devoted her mind and creative energy to saving the boy and sacrificed her legal position as a mother by giving him the age weaning to the King's daughter.

Hannah desperately yearned for a child; she wept and earnestly prayed that she would have one and vowed to God that if she had a son, she would give the boy back to God to serve in the temple (1 Samuel 1:9-28). Jochebed and Hannah teach us about the extreme importance of early year parenting; each has a son for only a short time, but then in the time they had, each imparted love, discipline and faith in those children and God blessed them.

Today, parenting is sadly belittled; it comes far down on the list of what many parents value. Yet the healthy heart of an individual and the nature of our civilization depend on good parenting; without a deep commitment to having and raising

children, our world will not survive. Here are some concrete guidelines for godly parenting (Idowu, 2007:6-7)

a. Godly parenting Sacrifices: Parents give up their wishes gladly to provide for the children's needs—missing sleep, going without possessions and pleasures, calmly accepting the displeasure of a connection.

b. Godly parenting guides actions: When the parents establish directions, the ultimate aim of all and sundry in the home is ordered by the specified instructions or directives.

c. Godly parenting enables everyone in the home to prepare and provide the needed resources ahead of the time they will be required to achieve religious parenting goals.

d. Godly parenting forces everyone at home to look to the future and obliges them to anticipate problems in the house and take steps in time to avert them.

e. Godly parenting teaches the children. Children need to learn how in turn, they must give up some pleasure to mature. They must achieve self-control and learn respect and consideration for others. They will have to master a sense of duty and responsibility if God is to use them.

f. Godly parenting nurtures. They provide food for their children's bodies, minds, and spirits. They foster loving social interaction and teach their children how to be kind and happy with others while maintaining their uniqueness.

g. Godly parenting enhances protection. Parents took after their children's physical safety,

but balance challenged their growth and physical prowess. They also protect their children from evil and agnosticism but teach them to face the truth with courage and discern good from the bad.

h. Godly parenting is always there. Correcting prioritizing allows the parent to show their children that they have a special place in their hearts. Even if they physically separate from their children, means of the parent's involvement are provided that they know one can count on them and in time, they will be able to and will have to depend on them. All this may sound complex, but the mother who appealed to King Solomon knew the simple essence of parenting to be willing to give up all for the benefit of the son or daughter she loves (Cook, 1989:65).

A proper approach to parenting needs to leave adequate room for the relational component of parenting. Christian parenting should be undergirded by wisdom derived from meditation on Scripture, the filling of the Holy Spirit, advice from others based on biblical principles, and relational experience with the child. Ultimately, we should be careful not to rely on any one human method that, no matter how biblical it may claim to be, is always one step removed from the Bible. Our utmost trust should be in God and his Word, and we must humbly acknowledge that our understanding of Scripture is not to be equated with the teaching of Scripture itself.

In this parenting relationship, there must be a balance of unconditional love, spiritual nurture, and discipline (Ephesus 6:4) in discipleship and Christian growth (2 Peter 3:18). Biblical parenting requires that parents understand that children are not merely disobedient; they are also sinful and could be rebellious *because* they are immoral. Hence, children ultimately need salvation, not simply parental discipline. Moreover, as mentioned, children are also "simple" in the

scriptural meaning of that term (Proverbs 1:22), which requires parental instruction, training, and constant cultivation, much like a garden needs continuous and consistent tending.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen offered the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which predicts an individual's intent to engage in the behavior at a specific period and place. It postulates that behavior is driven by behavior intentions, a function of three determinants: an individual's attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen 1991). Intentions predict the individual's behavior; beliefs predict intentions about the act, the personal criteria encase the action's execution, and the individual's perception of their control over the behavior (Conner and Armitage 1998).

Therefore, this theory looks at the attitudes toward one's behaviors and the factors influencing such actions. It also explains how a person's perceptions of the operation can indicate whether the behavior will occur. This article on Administering Strategic Parenting in the Church: Christian Education Perspective will align with the theory's basis of studying influencing factors on behavior. The ability to follow specific actions and learn to pursue a lifestyle pattern is a central premise of planned behavior theory (Ajzen 2006).

This theory intends to function in predicting and understanding influences that motivate an individual to perform a specific behavior thought to be beyond the person's control—learning to recognize various strategies to change the practice and explain all the decisions an individual makes regardless of their importance (Lee and Kozar 2005). Suppose there are negative behavioral or lifestyle patterns in individual children. In that case, it must get to the awareness of the Christian education department, or the authority involved in

the church's claim to assist with interventions to change the behavioral pattern.

The theory of planned behavior guides our understanding of why individuals exhibit a particular behavior. This theory looks into the individual's behavioral beliefs, explains the attitude about certain practices, understands normative beliefs, and bothers subjective norms, knowledge, and perceived social pressure for performing the behavior (Ajzen 1985). Control beliefs, dealing with perceived behavioral control, understanding a person's initiative to act based on how easy or difficult it will be to complete the behavior and the difficulty in performing it (Ajzen 1991).

These areas combine to influence behavioral intention and, ultimately, the behavior understudied. Based on the theory, perceived behavior control is also directly linked to actual conduct. However, if parents see particular behavior as a norm, it could influence them to exhibit a specific action. Christian parents' various factors leading to children's behavioral patterns may appear to be expected and acceptable behavior. According to the theory, the perceived behavioral expectations from the strategic management plan for administering strategic parenting from the Christian education perspective make up the church's normative beliefs (Ajzen 2006)

The normative beliefs that appear attainable and perceived as high expectations by the individual's significant group comprise the subjective norms. Subjective norms are an individual's perception of social pressure to participate or not participate in the behavior. When parents receive a continuous stream of parenting guidelines and information, whether from media or different forums through the church by the Christian education department, disburses the information relating to the strategy, these parents may believe this behavior is expected to occur (Davis et al. 2002). Control beliefs relate to the parent's idea of accessibility to the

behavioral pattern. If parents believe the behavior could happen, the church, through the Christian education department, will formulate and ensure the strategy is actualization (Cheon et al., 2012).

Christian Education in the Church

Education is training given by suitable habit to children's first instincts of virtue when pleasure and pains are implanted in non-rational souls. The unique training in respect of pleasure and pain leads to hate and love for what you ought to hate and love; this implies that education has a moral emphasis on good and evil, pleasure and pain (Ishola, 2016). However, education is also seen as a deliberate attempt by the learner or someone else to control, guide, direct, influence, or manage a learning situation to attain a desired learning outcome or goal. It could be formal education in a school setting or informal as in training children at home, as in conformity that education begins from the house as in the Hebrew schools of the Old Testament period (Ilori 2002).

Understanding the general sense of education will bring us into contextualizing education to the Christian perspective. Then, Christian education becomes a process by which those who have experienced a personal spiritual rebirth in their relationship with God partner with the indwelling Holy Spirit to grow in the image of Christ. It is incumbent on individuals to grow in Christ before thinking about training or helping others to grow in Christ (Anthony 2004). Christian education is a life-long process that has its roots firmly planted in the teaching and traditions of the Old Testament theory of education, which is expressed about the sacred scriptures, esteeming the family as a divine institution, celebrating critical religious days, radically altering the path of falling humanity and reconciling humankind to the Creator (Anthony, 2004). Invariably, Christian education is a continuous process in the life of individuals for growth; it refers to all teachings directing people towards the knowledge of and obedience to God

Almighty. It focuses on the whole or total person, producing changes in a person's behavior and intentionally aiming to teach the Christian faith's norms and standards.

Christian education touches the people's lives within a community in the society as it is described as the disciple-making arm of the church, which focuses on spiritual development, energy, change, and value education that cannot be compared with general education. Moreover, Christian education is an aspect of the Christian faith that emphasizes Christian nurture, growth, and development with the tools of the Bible, prayer, and worship, which are stressed for individual Christian growth into Christ-likeness (Ayandokun, 2013). It is encouraged that teachers, priests, and Christian homes are expected to teach Christian education to all age groups for the moral transformation of society.

The aim of Christian education remains unique and well-focused; in Christian knowledge, faith in God is developed in individuals through the knowledge of Christ Jesus. However, a more comprehensive statement on the aim of Christian education is given:

- Christian education involves all efforts and process which helps to bring children and adults into vital and saving experience of God revealed in Christ Jesus;
- To quicken the sense of God as a living reality so that communion with Him in prayer and worship becomes a natural habit and principle of life, meaning their growing experience value;
- To establish attitudes and habits of Christ-like living human relations;
- To enlarge and deepen the understanding of the historical facts on which Christianity rests and of

the rich content of Christian experience, belief, and doctrine (Ilori 2002)

Strategic Parenting Procedure in the church

However, every strategy in an organization has an appreciable procedure for working out a blueprint from one stage to the other within the institution to achieve the desired objectives. It will lead to exploring the Christian education perspective's strategic guidelines for parenting in the church. A strategic procedure is a boundary-spanning planning activity considering all the elements of an organization's micro and macro environments. The following are the critical tasks for developing and implementing strategic parenting in the church to be applied by Christian education (Below et al., 1987).

Reinstate the Mission, Vision, and Values of the church

The first step in the strategic procedure is establishing the church's mission, vision, and values concerning parenting. Christian education should understand the church's mission, vision, and value concerning parenting and constantly make it explicit to the congregation. It describes what the church is into, identifies its reason to exist, and its scope of operations. The parenting mission defines the church's purpose; vision clarifies the direction and identity, while values establish boundaries to carry out the mission organization (Boyd, Finkelstein, and Gove, 2005). Christian education should see this as a continuous process of reiterating parenting to individuals to conform to the church's purpose. It redefines the church's mission and vision, encouraging every member to identify with the underlying values and assumptions, commitment's moral imperatives, and faithfulness's importance to effective parenting (Kraus, Kauranen, and Reschke, 2010).

Analysis of the External and Internal Resources

The subsequent step in the strategic procedure is a critical examination of the external and internal forces that could inspire the mission and vision of the organization to ascertain a clear and complete picture of external prospects and fears and inner strengths and weaknesses of the church. Erikson and Lehtimaki (2001) express that social and religious trends, political climate, public and regulatory policies, economic conditions, and other similar organizations constitute external factors, with opportunities to take advantage of and threats to neutralize or void the planning. The internal analysis includes the church's resources such as people (individual skills and expertise), cultural endowments (reputation, beliefs, norms, and accumulated learning and experience), operational service delivery (ministry programs, production or service delivery), financial status (past performance and future requirements including capital and operating needs), and other internal resources such as technology, information systems. Comparing the external and internal analyses helps Christian education identify the strategic issues confronting the church and its members and bring together its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as it presently exists (Bowman et al., 2002).

Strategy Formulation

In the strategic parenting procedure, Christian education should present statements that identify the significant gaps between the mission of an organization and the current realities of parenting, relating to the fulfillment of the church's mission and vision. Strategy parenting formulation is the Christian education's definition of the membership's course to fulfilling parental activities, giving a clear statement on where the church is heading, initiatives for its direction and explaining the compatibilities of the initiatives to the mission and vision of the organization (Ghemawat, 2005). The initiatives should promote the understanding and practice relating to the fulfillment of parenting, provide Christ-centered, result-oriented capacity building among the

members, implement innovations to educate the community about the long-term benefits of parenting, and install a state-of-the-art information system on parenting (Hakansson and Snehota, 2006).

Long-Range Planning

Christian education is set to establish long-term objectives and action plans after the formulation of the parenting strategy. The goals spell out the results to be expected and should be linked to the time frame, specific enough to measure, and flexible enough for variations (Hakansson and Snehota, 2006). This plan becomes actionable as it spells out the timeline, the needed resources, the personnel, and the feedback mechanism for each short-term result within a long-term objective. It will also integrate the different parental functions in the planning process; sometimes, some short-term effects needed for one purpose may show as short-term steps for another. Invariably, the plan states the actions to achieve the strategic parenting that will move the church towards each long-term objective (Obembe, 2010).

Results Management

Christian education's ability to effectively and efficiently implement the formulated objectives and action plans are paramount in any church's strategic parenting procedure. The proper enactment and regular evaluation of the process determine the strategic plan's success. Therefore, the first four steps of the strategic parenting procedures address planning results as Christian education is concerned with implementing the program by the members. According to Kuvaas and Kaufmann (2004), results management involves five related activities:

1. Ensure that the right people are responsible for a specific result.

2. Coordinate the information, resources, and support members' need to get things done
3. Monitor progress toward short-term results and long-term objectives
4. Modify the plans to meet the desired objectives
5. Provide feedback to the strategic plan's leadership team, co-workers, and other stakeholders.

The strategic parenting procedure does not always go smoothly because the plan is not following a blueprint without deviation. It is like sailing a ship on the high seas, though it takes many variations to stay on course with the destination set. Results management is an ongoing process that requires control and flexibility, caution and speed, risk, and restraint (Kraus, Kauranen, and Reschke, 2010). However, by paying close attention to how things are done, leaders and co-workers will play an essential role in ensuring that the strategic plan is carried out.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the last step in the strategic parenting procedure in the church. It presents the Christian education effectiveness in monitoring and assessing the members on carrying out the activities relating to the mission and vision and ensuring the value of the church remains intact as far as parenting is concerned. Christian education in this final stage organizes a program of activities with the church to review what has been learned, identifies areas of correction, and operates differently based on the feedback obtained through observation, interactions, and different reports (Ghemawat, 2005). Moreover, Christian education decides on what has been accomplished and its importance to the church

members. Besides, with the experience learned from the strategy implementation, evaluation is the first step in the next cycle of strategy parenting planning; it is the beginning of the procedure of strategic parenting, and evaluation shows whether the membership is on purpose with the mission and vision of the church (Portela et al., 2008).

Benefits of Strategic Parenting in the Church

Kolawole (2020) highlights the benefits of strategic planning as it implies strategic parenting in the church, opined that it enhances effectiveness in parenting, cohesiveness, and health of a church and the membership, and avoids the stress of regret in parenting, making a difference in church effectiveness. The benefits of strategic parenting in the church include:

- a. It clearly defines the purpose of parenting, establish realistic goal and objectives consistent with the value in a stipulated time frame within the church's capacity for implementation
- b. Strategic parenting communicates the goals and objectives of parenthood to the church membership
- c. It ensures the most effective use of the church resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities
- d. Strategic parenting provides a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change if the needs arise.
- e. It welcomes the membership's opinions to be able to build consensus about the direction of the church on parenting

- f. Strategic parenting provides a more precise focus for the church, thereby producing more efficiency and effectiveness in parenting (<http://managementhelp.org/strategicplanning/index.htm//anchor>)

In the context of strategic parenting and the benefits pointed out above, more specifically, strategic parenting would be advantageous to the church.

Conclusion

In this study, strategic parenting in the church has been the concern of Christian educators; it discussed the concept of strategic parenting and its necessity from the Christian education perspective. In line with the aims of Christian education, critical tasks for developing and implementing strategic parenting in the church are discussed, such as: Reinstating the Mission, Vision, and Values of the church concerning parenting, critically examining the external and internal forces that could inspire the mission and vision of the church, formulating strategy relating to the fulfillment of the church's mission and vision. Establish long-term objectives and action plans after the formulation of the parenting strategy, enacting a proper and regular evaluation of the process that determines the strategic plan's success. Presents effective monitoring for assessing that members are carrying out the activities relating to the mission and vision and ensuring the value of the church remains intact as far as parenting is concerned. The study believes that a proper administration of this strategy will enhance effectiveness in parenting, cohesiveness, and health of a church and the membership, as well as avoids the stress of regret in parenting, making a difference in church effectiveness.

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