

OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE: THE CULTURAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND THEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF CHRISTIAN CHILD UPBRINGING

Philip Tachin

Abstract

The divine and natural laws have bound parents and children together, which necessarily requires the latter to succeed the former as life progresses. Children are the future of a people or nation, which necessarily requires investing a moral and intellectual capital in them for proper ethical conduct for our healthy future. Both adults and children have complementary roles in the healthy development of human society. By the natural order, parents own children but they need to respect them and bring them up in a responsible way by not only teaching them the right things to do but also involving them in certain decisions and activities that will inculcate a sense of responsibility in them. However, this responsibility involves all adults who are not necessarily parents but who occupy positions that connect with children. This research focuses on three principal avenues of impact for child development and growth, which are the home, school and religious arena. Drawing from the basic Christian principles, the argument here underscores adults' moral capital and selflessness towards giving their time and resources in actualizing this holistic human development for the good of the society.

Keywords: children, moral capital, future, education, and religion

Introduction

“A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started ... the fate of humanity is in his hands” (Abraham Lincoln, Forbes, 2015, 1).

Raising children with Christian values plays a crucial role in building a godly nation. By instilling moral principles and fostering a love for God, parents can nurture a generation that seeks justice, compassion, and righteousness. To ensure a strong foundation, it is important for parents to educate their children about the teachings of Christ, encourage active participation in religious communities, and demonstrate in their own lives the fruits of a godly lifestyle. Ultimately, by raising children who embrace Christian values, we can contribute to the formation of a nation that reflects God's love, honour, and justice.

There are many useful scholarly works (Evans, 2010; Rinehart, 2019; Duncan, 2021) on the upbringing of children and youths development because this matter is of great significance to all human societies. This issue is approached from various angles such as the cultural, psychological, scientific, sociological, and the religious. Indeed, the future of every family and society depends on children. In shaping the future of our society, the necessity of a godly upbringing for children cannot be overstated. This research possesses a keen understanding of the complexities and challenges our world faces. It is through instilling moral values, fostering empathy, and nurturing a sense of purpose that we can raise children equipped to navigate this complex world and contribute positively to our future. A godly upbringing promotes ethical behavior, compassion, and a strong sense of responsibility, providing a foundation that helps children make moral choices and develop into individuals who strive to make a meaningful difference in the world.

Teaching children the values of honesty, kindness, and justice encourages them to consider the consequences of their actions and how their choices impact others. By emphasizing the importance of compassion and empathy, children develop the capacity to understand and respect diverse perspectives, fostering a sense of unity and belonging within their communities. Moreover, a godly upbringing instills in children a strong sense of purpose, encouraging them to seek ways to contribute positively to society and make a lasting impact in the lives of others.

It is hoped that this study will add value to the debate and practical lessons to parents who yearn for productive parenting.

Setting an enabling environment for ethical nurturing

The fact of environmental and social impact on human beings is an ancient reality even before the discovery of modern scientific study. An ancient wisdom in Proverbs 13:20 which was written probably between 970 to 931 BCE, strongly supports this: “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” This means that despite genetic regulation of human attitude and behaviour, the environmental and social repercussions on the overall personality of everyone holds the possibility of eclipsing whatever the innate qualities may hold. All human beings have innate potentials that may either be sharpened or dampened by our environmental impressions. The Apostle Paul reiterates this fact in 1Corinthians 15:33 thus: “Bad company corrupts good

character.” This statement has its opposite effect in the positive sense. It shows how important the environmental factor is in shaping human conduct either negatively or positively.

The human person is inherently an emotional and social being. The dynamism of human development posits the softness of the human personality at its early stage where adjustment of emotions and attitude can more easily take place. The human personality gets more sophisticated through experience or interaction with the outer environment which usually makes certain changes to be more difficult. The immediate environment of a child is the family which makes what happens at that early stage to be so crucial. It is quite essential that character formation should begin at a very tender age such as from 2 years and above when the child is able to learn certain signs (Bransford and others, 2000). When children begin to experience issues in their environments, they develop emotional reactions which are very important for parents or adults to pay them closer attention. The Western Washington Medical Group tersely captures this: “Environmental, genetic, and cultural factors can all affect a child’s development, and how quickly they progress from one stage to the next”(2012, para 2). The complexity of the human personality involves internal and external factors that jointly shape human character. The child may not be able to make the best of its life out of these contexts on its own except when parents or adults guide them.

Children at this age are capable of learning and they keep building their cognitive abilities as they grow through their everyday experience. They make sense of their own environment in a way adults may not understand but this is expressed in their various reactions, whether good or bad. They seek “environmental stimulation that promotes their intellectual development” (Bransford and others, 2000, p. 80). Therefore, knowing the social environmental role that adults have in raising children is crucial because children too are actively open to learning at their own level (Vygotsky, 1978). Though children may “lack knowledge and experience but not reasoning ability” and they try to make sense of what they see and experience at that level (Bransford and others, 2000, p. 112). The lack of knowledge and experience here may be relative to adult situation, not absolutely as if they do not have any at all. It has been established that when children are given tasks within their proximal capacity, they try to solve them, which because they enjoy adventurous activities and they do this through persistence (Bransford and others, 2000, p. 112). Adults need to provide scaffolding by making “connections between new situations and familiar ones for

children. Children's curiosity and persistence are supported by adults who direct their attention, structure their experiences, support their learning attempts, and regulate the complexity and difficulty levels of information for them" (Bransford and others, 2000, p. 112).

Genetic factors may not be easy to deal with but it has been established that social and environmental factors do impinge on the genes (Lobo, 2008; Cook, 2013; Cserhati, and Carter, 2021). Amy Ralston (2008, para. 3) concurs: "Environmental factors such as diet, temperature, oxygen levels, humidity, light cycles, and the presence of mutagens can all impact which of an animal's genes are expressed, which ultimately affects the animal's phenotype." This shows how the environmental conditions can make or mar human behaviour. If the social environment can have impact on genetic formation, then it can also do on character formation.

It is impossible to analyze child behavioural development without environmental and social factors (Erikson, Skinner, 1965, Cherry, 2020). It is well established that a number of "factors go into influencing personality, including genetics, environment, parenting, and societal variables" (Cherry, 2020, para. 3). Some behaviourists think that genetics influence how attitudes are developed (Plomin & Bergeman, 1991), and McLeod (2018, p. 5) illustrates this: "So, children that are genetically predisposed to be competent readers, will be happy to listen to their parents read them stories, and be more likely to encourage this interaction." This view however, misses the fact that circumstances determine children's attention or response in given situations. There is no normal child that is non reactional to situations around so what really matters in child development is the appropriate stimulus. Motivational atmosphere can spark almost equal responses from children. To some extent, environmentalists are right that social conditions have certain effects on children (McLeod, 2018). Yet it is apparent that there is more than one dimensional effect such as either genetics only or environmental only but both factors impact general human behaviour.

The family is the immediate social environment where children will begin to experience life and also factor themselves in the scheme of things. Children therefore need mentoring on how they can navigate their social and environmental interactions. The duty of parents in bringing up children in the best ways possible is one of the most important aspects of human existence. Therefore, for parents and adults under whom children grow and learn "an understanding of child development is essential because it allows us to fully appreciate the

cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and educational growth that children go through from birth and into early adulthood” (Cherry, 2020, para. 8). Thus, The Western Washington Medical Group argues that ability to understand child behaviour can also help parents and adults on “how to best communicate and connect with their child, teach their child coping mechanisms for managing emotions, and help their child progress and thrive in each new developmental stage” (WWMG Staff, 2012, para 4). One of the keys for successful parenting is selflessness by which parents can give adequate attention to child rearing.

The Cultural, Moral, Social and Theological Dimensions of Christian Child Upbringing

Parenting is a primary task for parents and thinking about the future of our children who will bear the image of the family within the larger context of the society places a burden of the psychological innuendos that parents should possess. Children are born with their own temperaments which eventually grow into their responses within their environment. Research has established that aggression is a genetic entity in every human being which could be reinforced by the environment (Hay, 2016). Therefore, parents need to pay close attention to little children and identify what they can begin to change in them. It has been argued that negative parenting aggravates the emotional conditions of children because the aggressive response of parents to little children impacts their temperament (Welsh, 2012).

There are different kinds of parental styles that yield different results and these are mostly contextualized within cultural bounds and values. Many parenting styles, such as the authoritarian, permissive, authoritative and neglectful, have been analyzed by experts with their negatives and positives (Baumrind, 1971; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, and Hart, 1995). This study focuses more on parenting that draws from the authoritative style with a certain level of modesty where there would be room for children’s participation in certain decisions and activities that would give them a sense of responsibility. This is important because when it comes to maintaining healthy values that would promote the well-being of children, parents should be firm but adopt explanatory teaching that would help them to understand why things have to be so. Such firmness should not dismissively discourage the child’s views. When children’s views are suppressed, they begin to develop inferiority complex and consequently start withdrawing to themselves.

Baumrind (1966, 887) defines the idea of authority in this context as “a person whose expertness befits him to designate a behavioral alternative for another where the alternatives are perceived by both.” The notion of expertise here draws from the experience of parents or teachers who know what is healthy and unhealthy for children. Therefore, they properly qualify to exert some form of authority that would guarantee the complete well-being of children so that the future heritage of the family can be maintained. The rationale for authoritative parenting is because by it “parents provide guidance to their children on issue oriented and rational manner” (Sarwar, 2016, p. 230). This child upbringing approach has been attested to be more productive because it has yielded results in many such families (Lascala, 2019; Dewar, 2010-2017). Fletcher, Steinberg, and Williams-Wheeler (2004) in their analysis of the parental influence on children enumerated some important ingredients in their relationship, such as ‘warmth, control, monitoring, and knowledge’ that properly fit more with the authoritative parenting approach. A proper balance of all the above can produce wonderful results in children and adolescents because none can stand alone. There is also acceptance of one another in this scenario, and in this development children feel a more sense of dignity in the family. These attributes qualify the total commitment and involvement of parents in guiding children into greater personalities.

There are cultural and religious values that some families have held for a long time which might not be wise for modern or postmodern cultural and social revolutions to overthrow. Research asseverates that the authoritarian works more effectively in the Asiatic culture (Baumrind, 1966, 1971; You and Malley-Morrison, 2000), which may not work as such in other cultures like the Western where liberal democratic principles prevail. Asserting authority over children should not accentuate an atmosphere of intimidation. Rather, parents should creatively and consciously allow room for mutual dialogue on issues of character or moral values so that it can be a learning moment for both children and parents (Power, 2013).

i. Authority and Servant Leadership: what children should learn

There is a distinction between authority and power. In the family setting and especially raising children with a definite objective, power has not place there but authority has. Authoritative parenting should be anchored on humility and service. Authority is a leadership license and effective parenting should see a combination of authority and humility in such a way that there can be a firm grip

on the ethical shaping and transformation into formidable future holders of family and society ethos. The project of child rearing should have two basic contexts in view, namely, the family as an immediate constituency and the larger society. So parents and teachers under whom children learn need to be aware that the latter learn from the manner that they exercise authority over them and they practiced them as their legacy. As children undergo training both at home and in the school, “It is important that our children know what lawful authority is and how to submit to it. And it is important for parents to know how to exercise authority over their children” (Beeke, 2016, para. 5). This is an important point because authority is not an arbitrary possession and exercise of power over someone. The foundational principle of authority is justice. What parents are supposed to teach children should be “good instruction” that would model them into great personalities. Spellings (2005) has articulated some excellent principles for child development which is worthy of every family to adopt.

Children learn, not only by verbal instructions, but they also emulate actions of parents because learning by example is one of the most alluring practices. “With a social learning perspective, followers emulate ethical leaders’ behavior because such leaders model normatively appropriate behavior” (Reddy and Kamesh, 2016, p. 111). Moreover, “children do not learn the values that make up strong character simply by being *told* about them. They learn by seeing the people around them *act* on and *uphold* those values in their daily lives” (Spellings, 2005, 18).

Active participation in religious communities is another vital component in raising Christian children. By involving children in regular church services, Sunday schools, youth groups, and community outreach programs, parents provide them with opportunities to engage with like-minded peers, gain a deeper understanding of their faith, and witness collective worship in action. Being part of a larger faith community fosters a sense of belonging and helps children comprehend the importance of living in harmony with others, promoting unity and solidarity.

Furthermore, raising Christian children for a godly nation necessitates parents' embodiment of Christian values in their own lives. Children are highly perceptive, and they often learn by observing their parents' actions. Thus, parents must strive to demonstrate love, compassion, and integrity in their daily interactions and decisions. By consistently embodying Christian values such as humility, forgiveness, and respect, parents provide their children with a tangible

example of a godly lifestyle. This example will leave a lasting impact on children and inspire them to embrace these values in their own lives, contributing to the formation of a nation characterized by righteousness and justice.

And the same way that leaders in business organizations develop servant leadership style that allow their followers to grow should be applicable to the family and school contexts. Many parents tend to give more time and opportunities to their work and make it flourish than they give to children in the family. Children can grow through practical assignments. However, parents and teachers should use their authority in a way that will bring out the best in children. This kind of servant leadership authority within the family and school contexts should create trust, motivation for personal growth and self-actualization, fairness, motivation, respect and selflessness among parents, teachers and children (Reddy and Kamesh, 2016). Both family and school settings should gear more towards helping children to actualize their potentials. Parents need to forge a nurturing leadership that is both authentic and transformational and not one type versus the other, so that a vision of the family's future can cultivate an attitude of selflessness towards one another (Turner and Barling, 2002; Tonkin, 2013).

ii. The Social Context

There is a natural moral and social contract between parents and children which hold both in indebtedness towards one another. Parents owe children a purposeful upbringing and children owe parents a reciprocal obedience and care in the course of life. And though there is a moral imperative for children to be responsible towards parents, especially in taking care of the aging it does not always work exactly so in some Western cultures (Silverstein and Conroy, 2008). However, this works mostly in African cultures where children strongly feel this moral and social obligation, although this has mixed results even in some African contexts based on economic and other factors (Okoye, 2012; Tanyi, André & Mbah, 2018; Pharr, Francis, Terry and Clark, 2014). Preparing children for greater responsibility can be achieved through avenues such as family "training, discussion and modelling," and this can also be extended to educational and religious institutions where parents are involved for the moral and social capital funding (Silverstein and others, 2012, p. 11).

What then is the warrant for the future of our families and society? This is a question of how a good society can be created, and this is a responsibility that does not stop with only one generation of people. The Platonic tradition placed

this on the shoulders of virtuous people (O'Neil, 2008). The assurance of building a virile family and society rests on character, and character is the first foundation of education. The Greek culture was saturated with concerns for a good life and happiness which were attached to principles of human conduct summed under the virtue of justice (Striker, 1987). Families which have strong cultural and social values preserve ways of transmitting them across generations. The challenge in this project of rearing children is what moral, social and cultural capital that families have. There is a biblical statement which throws out the challenge of actualizing this agenda if every family is to be brought to light. It argues: "The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil" (Jesus, Matt. 12:35). How can families that may be qualified by this statement, assumed not to be good of its moral capital, fulfil the mantra of breeding good children that would shape the integrity of any society? All humans in every society and culture know what is acceptable as good which makes such society to flourish well. Therefore, any family that falls short of that standard definition can be helped through orientational campaigns on how to change their image.

The concept of moral and social capital can be ambiguous because of its wider applicability in areas including business and public service (Gichure, 2006), which this paper deliberately narrows its focus on the family setting. By restricting the concept to the family in this paper, which involves individuals, it is important that the underlying value for nurturing children should be integrity of character. As Gichure rightly captures, "integrity, which is what is meant here by moral capital, is that quality which makes a person good as a human being, a person who would never readily sacrifice his moral excellence as a condition to gain wealth, knowledge, social connections or profit" (2006, p. 98). In the same vein, Sison (2003, p. 31) argues that moral capital is the anchor of all other capitals such as cultural and social and it is that moral aspect that "makes a person good as a human being."

Silverstein and Conroy, (2008, p. 320) posit: "If social capital represents the reserve of goodwill that resides in others, cultural capital can be said to represent the knowledge to behave toward others in expected and socially acceptable ways – essentially, the rules of social engagement for particular relationships." Such residual goodwill and knowledge are acquired through social contacts rather than biological. The moral capital drives the social and cultural capital and together creates reliable personalities upon which generations thrive. This moral base

capital is “the normative precepts that are inculcated in children by parents” while social capital pertains to “the value of interpersonal social investments” (Silverstein and Conroy, 2008,p. 320). These distinctions are important but they are indivisible as they all come under the moral capital, which “embodies the value of *values*” (Silverstein and Conroy, 2008, p. 320).

iii. A Biblical Pedagogical Imperative

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

This pedagogical imperative underscores some critical realities in the ethical cultivation of children. As a command, it places authority upon parents or teachers who are the ethical and intellectual navigators for children. This responsibility is obviously drawn from the assumption that the parent or teacher possesses the requisite experience to guide children in the appropriate manner of living as a responsible human being. This order also presupposes that children necessarily need a formation that would be their legacy for a guaranteed future. The presumption here also implies the many options in life, some of which may be detrimental to the future of the children and also of the family and the entire society, which necessitates the specific direction that is decided for them. Why not let a child grow and learn when it becomes older enough what it should choose in life? It is important to teach children certain skills in life which might be beneficial to them as they grow. Such skills include learning how to make decisions, taking into consideration their consequences, especially bad ones (Duncan, 2021). There are some important values or virtues such as honesty, justice, determination, consideration, and love, which parents and teachers should consciously seek to cultivate in children (Parents Magazine, 2005). The success of the injunction to train children in their formation age so that when they grow up they would not sway off depends largely on the faithful implementation by those who are given this task.

One key aspect of raising Christian children for a godly nation is the transmission of biblical teachings. Parents should take the responsibility to educate their children about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ found in the Holy Scriptures. This includes introducing them to stories and parables that convey essential moral values such as love, empathy, forgiveness, and honesty. In doing so, parents create a strong foundational knowledge of Christ's teachings,

helping children develop a God-centered worldview that serves as a compass for their actions and decisions.

Henry emphasizes the importance of ethical guidance for youths, especially in preparing them for leadership: “It is a great mercy to young people, especially to all young men of rank, like Jehoash, to have those about them who will instruct them to do what is right in the sight of the Lord; and they do wisely and well for themselves, when willing to be counselled and ruled.” (Henry, 2010, p.631). That youths could have such an opportunity is a “great mercy” because it saves them the future dangers of self-destruct when they grow up and lose the right sense of direction in all that they do. Conversely, it will be great wickedness on the part of adults for failing to take the task of grooming youths properly to be more responsible in the society. This can have grave consequences on the values that can hold the society strong. Achebe (1994) has demonstrated how collapsed values can bring disaster to a society that was hitherto very strong in nearly all things.

One of the key lessons in Scripture for building a healthy future for children and young people is Paul’s nurturing of the young Timothy for the task ahead of him. Timothy, who was a young minister of the word was going to face some tough challenges, especially from the opponents of the gospel. How was he going to respond to such situations? His hope of navigating those turbulent forces was his reliance on “his memory of Paul’s teaching and example (2Tim 1:13-14; 2:1-2; 3:10-17) as well as whatever wisdom Paul can pass along now in this letter (e.g. 2Tim 2:4-7, 15-16, 20-26)” (DeSilva, 2004, p. 734). The experience that Timothy got from Paul’s training was resourceful for his future success and one could only imagine a situation where such experience as a young person were not there. For the Christian family, we are required to promote “Behaviors and attitudes that will reinforce an image of Christians as people who support and respect the social order, steering away from behaviors that might appear subversive, where subversion is nonessential” (DeSilva, 2004, p. 748). Believers’ children are to be taught to conform to the cultural and political ideals within their social and cultural settings that are not contrary to biblical teachings (DeSilva, 2004). Although children who grow up may find the situation of things in future different from what their parents or adults experienced, which would require new answers, their previous foundation would greatly enable them to creatively make wise decisions that would continue to give hope to human existence. The upbringing of children in a godly way was part of the comprehensive package of

the cultural mandate to the first humans whom God personally taught to exert their governing authority on the entirety of the creation, including the children they would bear (Gen 1:28).

The Bible has enumerated nine virtues or human qualities that are termed fruits of the Spirit. These are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). These are qualities that all human beings desire and supposing every human being possesses them, our world would be a heaven on earth. They are placed in direct contrast to “sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies” (Gal. 5:18-21). Many societies have laws against these unethical behaviours, which those who are not driven by the Christian faith may condone. But the virtues above are called fruit of the Spirit because the general human condition is depraved of them and it is believed that it is those whose mindset are renewed or changed by the power of God that can manifest them. Ellicot (1877-1879) explains that these qualities are the requisites of Christian morality, which their real substance flows from the work of the Holy Spirit. However, whether we are Christians or not God intends that all these qualities are residual in every person. And to a large extent, even some (moralists) who are not Christians have some of these qualities, sometimes better than some Christians. While Christians may understand that these virtues cannot merit salvation from God, we can cultivate them for the well-being of human co-existence, which desires for our world. It is therefore, crucial that parents and adults in the home, school and religious contexts plant these virtues in children when they are at a very tender age.

One of the important results to be achieved in this parenting procedure is building ethical resilience in children which in the long run would yield positive effect on parents too. It places a sense of responsibility on children for parents even as young as they are and they grow up with this prudence. In some African culture, parental upbringing sets children in early responsibilities, especially for mothers in the aspects of house chores (Evans, 2010) and gives them durability as they grow up, facing some challenges of life. According to Zakeri and others, (2010, p. 1069-1070):

Warmth, supporting, and child-centred parenting style associated with the development of resilience and therefore, could be regarded as a protective factor that may increase the ability to overcome negative life events and crisis. These parents

have gained the knowledge of suitable behaviour toward children, showing more understanding and unanimity relative to their children's needs; so parents help children to be hard in stressful conditions of life by making a positive and close relationship with children and increasing resilience in them.

The guarantee of our future rests on investing our resources in children. What sustains a family and a society is people of great character. A strong character is not an automatic given but it is a moral structural codification which can be anchored in young children before they grow up. The general society suffers largely because of lack of virtues like 'compassion, honesty and fairness, self-discipline and focus, good judgments, respect, courage, responsibility, concerns for their community, self-respect' (Spellings, 2005, p. 1).

What is in view in this old adage, which might have been the wisdom that was well known in the Ancient Near Eastern culture, is a holistic education. Perhaps, this philosophy may have informed the Greek-Spartan mentality, which the state took over training of children as soldiers to endure hardship, pain and self-denial to become enduring warriors (HistoryWiz, 1998-2008). Although the Spartan philosophy may be seen today as child abuse, it was accepted at the time as the ideal life, which worked for them. The instruction is to be taken in light of the mental capacity and physical development of the child. The success or failure of this depends largely on the compliance of parents, adults or teachers and the methods they apply in the training. Building moral resilience in children requires deliberate family and educational policies. To achieve this, adults need personal patience, perseverance and innovative ways of engaging children to learn the rubrics of life.

The assumption of the success of this philosophy of child development may not have been universally tested and proven to be absolutely the case that with such good upbringing children would not grow to depart from it but many cases may also be true. Though the above statement appears categorical and assuring but practically, "We all know that we can try our best, and sometimes the results are different than we would have hoped. God has given us free will to make our own choices, after all" (Rinehart, 2019, para. 2). Attempts to understand this adage suggest that this passage is "about parents helping their children discover their purpose and path in life. Parents are in the unique role of helping children discover how God has equipped them and how they can use their gifts in a positive way as adults" (Rinehart, 2019, para. 5). In view of the practical

realities that can be attested globally with variables, the passage may be understood more about sound guidance so that our children can discern what is right and wrong and make an appropriate decision when confronted with various temptations. It will certainly be worse if our children do not get sound teaching when they are young as they would make some fatal mistakes that would also consume their lives.

Conclusion

This research has established that cultivating moral, social, and theological qualities in children is of utmost importance in today's society and essential in shaping the future generation. Given that we are living our globalized social and ethical revolution, this has become necessary to avoid the collapse of our society. A combined nurture of these human fabrics begins at a young age and is effected through various avenues including parenting, school education, and the community environment. Cultivating holistic character in children involves teaching them fundamental values such as honesty, kindness, respect, and fairness. It is essential to provide children with opportunities to practice moral decision-making, reflect on their actions, and learn from both positive and negative experiences. By doing so, children can develop a strong moral compass that will guide them in making ethically responsible choices as they navigate through life.

As children live in a community of humans, social skills are equally important in children's development as they enable them to foster healthy relationships, cooperate with others, and become productive members of society. By teaching children essential social skills such as active listening, effective communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork, we can equip them with the tools necessary for success both personally and professionally. Moreover, cultivating empathy and perspective-taking skills encourages children to understand and respect diverse backgrounds and perspectives. These qualities are vital in creating a compassionate and inclusive society and fostering relationships built on mutual understanding and respect.

Life is a human continuum with successive generations; it is like athletes in joint race where batons are passed to one another. It is therefore incumbent upon the person that is to hand over the baton to the next person to work harder and faster so that their own line would win the race. In the same light, all parents and adults of good conscience are supposed to think about the future of their families

and society. Our children are our future world. Therefore we have a responsibility to invest in them, using all the good principles in our religions, education and healthy cultural values that can strengthen the fabrics of family and social development in our societies. As adults, we have seen the good and bad in our societies, and we know what can be done so we need to strive harder to bequeath a fabulous society that if we were to come back to this same world, we would appreciate our children for being better leaders and managers of our world. This ideal family and society in view here may not be absolutely achieved because of the corruption of human nature but if we deliberately sacrifice our time and resources in actualizing it, we will still have a better world than ours presently.

Raising Christian children with a focus on godly values is fundamental to building a nation that reflects divine principles. By imparting biblical teachings, encouraging active participation in religious communities, and embodying Christian values in their own lives, parents play a significant role in shaping the beliefs and actions of their children. By nurturing a generation grounded in love, compassion, and integrity, we can hope to witness the emergence of a nation that embodies the qualities of a godly society, promoting justice, harmony, and righteousness.

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