

A REFLECTION ON THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF ATONSU DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In recent times, the role of the church has been expanding from purely spiritual and moral survival concerns of their members to include components which foster the healthy psychological and social development of children. However, many Christian children of today are standing at crossroad, facing challenges including teenage pregnancy, child malnutrition, juvenile delinquency in their total development. **Objective:** The objective of this study was to examine, in details, the concept of child development from the perspectives of psychology and theology and to find out how the Atonsu District Assemblies of God Church, as an agent of child development, is carrying out her duties in that direction. **Methodology:** The study adopted qualitative research approach and data was collected from 50 purposively selected respondents using questionnaire, interviews and observation. **Data Analysis:** Data gathered were analysed using thematic content analysis. **Results:** The results of the study revealed that the church and child development are two inseparable entities. The holistic development of the child must take into consideration habits of his caregivers; and the role of the church as an agent of child development cannot be ignored. **Conclusion:** The Assemblies of God Church as a dynamic community with considerable human and financial resources can effectively carry out a critically needed ministry to children. A community focused on children's ministry with a sense of urgency and permanent commitment, supported by appropriate structures and programs, and above all supervised and guided by inspired and trained leaders and personnel, will not only bring about essential benefits in the holistic development of the children but will also beckon the Church to a more secure future in the fulfilment of its mission. **Recommendation:** The Assemblies of God Church has a mandate to focus on the priority of children's ministry through the development and implementation of effective programs, coordinated by the Regional children's Department. Therefore, the leadership of the Assemblies of God Church in the District under study should make it a point to develop and expand qualified Church personnel engaged in child development at all levels. Correspondingly, professional teachers and child development facilitators must be connected to the appropriate Seminary or Theological institution which should serve as the highest centre for research, publications, and training pertaining to child development and children's ministry.

Keywords: Assembly of God Church, Role, Child Development, Atonsu District, Ghana.