Christian family role in implementing Christian education in family context to Christian character building

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Article Information

| Keywords: | Abstract |
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| Christian family | Christian families are the primary institution in forming children's character into one that reflects Christlikeness. Instructing, educating, and guiding their children to become God-fearing individuals is a crucial responsibility that parents should take very seriously. This makes it necessary for them to take on a variety of roles in their children's character education, including 1) religious teacher, teaching their kids the fundamentals of Christianity to help them develop spiritual intelligence, 2) religious educator, educating kids faith-based applications to help them develop good personalities, and 3) religious role model, influencing their kids' lives. Children's character development leads to four outcomes: 1) a life filled with Christlike qualities that serve as a benchmark for their Christian faith; 2) a life guided by the Holy Spirit, who transforms children's lives; 3) an exemplary Christian life as a result of maturity, and 4) a life that bears the fruit of the Spirit. |
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1. Introduction

In general, families serve as the primary source of education, and their household is where the kids receive religious instruction (Diana, 2019; Mary, 2020). A Christian family is joined together in the fellowship of God and is responsible for teaching children about their God and assisting them in developing their faith in Him (Wenas & Darmawan, 2017). In other words, a Christian home plays a part in a child's development of Christian character through Christian education. According to the Bible, education is implemented through the family (Darmawan, 2019; Hastuti, 2013; Nainupu & Darmawan, 2021).

Christian families, such as those depicted in the Old Testament stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as in the New Testament story of Eunice and Lois, who taught Timothy, are the foundation of Christian education. It is also evident in Jesus’ acts as the Great Teacher, who taught and regularly preached the Bible to His listeners (Karnawati et al., 2019, 2020). From His conception to His death and resurrection, Jesus lived a life that was a living example of all the truths He provided. The Bible teaches that the foundation of education should be Christian families because they create a positive internal environment that interacts constructively with external surroundings, notably formal and informal ones. This indicates that the development of Christian character in schoolchildren is greatly influenced by Christian families implementing Christian education at home. The application of Christian education, both at home and in the classroom, tends to succeed or fail depending on the Christian parents' role.

Each person is taught to know Jesus with the right foundation of faith based on the Bible through Christian education, which includes moral, mental, and spiritual training. It is a methodical learning process that involves both temporal and spiritual endeavors to carry out activities of transmission of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, skills, and manners consistent with Christian principles in accordance with God's will for all faithful to have Christlike characteristics (Labobar, 2022). Additionally, Christian education is the Church's deliberate endeavor to teach its members how to live peacefully and under Christian doctrine so that they might grow into mature members who understand, believe, and live out their faith daily (Budiyana,
It serves as a method for teaching and learning from the Bible that directs each member of the body of Christ toward true knowledge of God's will and spiritual growth (Graendorf, 2010; Kristianto, 2016). As a result, character education places a high priority on Christian education. According to St. Jerome (345-420), Christian education aims to prepare the soul to become God's sanctuary (Matt. 5:48). Meanwhile, according to Groome (2011), the purpose of Christian education is to help people realize that their lives are a response to God's Kingdom in the person of Jesus Christ and that they can live as Christians by doing so in accordance with the Christian faith. Based on the aforementioned viewpoints, it is determined that Christian education is an education that aims to develop character in order to create human beings who are mature and Christlike.

Character refers to a person's behavior, mindset, psychological makeup, and morals that make them unique. A dishonest, cruel, or greedy individual is said to have a terrible character, whereas someone who is honest and helpful is considered to have a good, even noble character (Amirulloh, 2012). According to Sidjabat (2011), character refers to a person's personality, behavior, or habit that becomes ingrained and absorbed throughout life, giving them a unique identity. Rutland (2009) stated that a person's character is a collection of virtues and principles engraved in stone, which will reveal the purpose of life. In a Christian setting, the character is a crucial component of what it means to trust in Jesus. It is important to achieve the goal of life, which is happiness (Lickona, 2001, 2004). The foundation of Christian character is total life submission to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. A solid foundation of faith in Jesus Christ should be the cornerstone of a decent character (Telaumbanua, 2015).

Character develops when a person's intellect and heart desire to receive God's power of goodness, which results in Christian values and behaviors. Every Christian follower is guided toward living a righteous life by the Christian character (Setiawan & Tong, 2010), thus everything that is right and proper should be defined under God's will. Christian character compels us to grow in faith in order to exhibit Christlike behavior. Christian kids can experience bad things. Parents should prepare themselves for the possibility of losing their children to the world and all of its forces and strategies if they do not provide education and formation in godly characters in the home (Thomson, 2001).

In view of this, parents must completely submit their family to God and raise them in Christian principles in order to prevent their children from giving in to worldly desires in the face of the rapidly changing modern world (Thomson, 2001). Building character to deal with numerous challenges and changes in the world begins in the family, which serves as the center of education. Therefore, to foster a positive spiritual environment for their children's growth and development and to overcome their fears of the evil world engulfing them, parents should be able to fulfill every stage of their children's development with solid, Biblical Christian education. Parents who fail to provide a Christian education for their kids will eventually witness them in severe temporal and spiritual difficulties. In this vein, Christian parents must foster their children's spiritual development.

The formation of children's Christian character is not only the job of the school, but also a shared obligation of all those involved in the values and lives of young people, beginning with the family and extending through religious communities (Lickona, 2012). The formation of children's Christian character in the home is an ongoing process, including their relationship with their parents, and all of their family experiences ultimately shape their personalities, particularly in terms of their spirituality (Thomson, 2001).

2. Central Role of Christian Families in Education

Family provides the best environment in building a child's spiritual intelligence. It is expected that early education can nurture religious behaviors in children. In realizing this, the education provided in instructions and living examples (Arifianto, 2020; Hapsarini & Suprihati, 2019; Sutisna et al., 2019). In the Bible, the concept of the family comes from God. God established the institution of a family with a double-sided eternal purpose: to realize a God-centered fellowship and to establish a relationship between God and other human beings. It is through family that God's plans are realized (Budiyana, 2018; Ndruru, 2019). Family is the single most fundamental unit in the formation of civil society, being a reflection of the relationship of one human being with God and with other human beings (Tanhidy et al., 2021). Thus, a family's formation must result from an interpersonal relationship that forms intimacy by following the examples of God. There is no bond closer, tighter, or firmer than that of a husband and a wife since God created it so.

In the Bible, families are united by God through marriage (Gen. 2: 18, 25). This can be understood through four basic understandings: 1) marriage is God’s design and initiative, 2) in marriage, it is God that initially delivers a husband into a wife’s heart vice versa, 3) God makes marriage true, and 4) in marriage, God declares a husband and a wife to be united in one flesh. Since marriage is the first institution created by God, it is intended to glorify Him (Piper, 2012). A Christian marriage is a commitment involving three persons: the husband, the wife, and God. It is a call to serve each other and a call to enjoy a joyful lifestyle. However, it is also a call to suffering, in which the key to facing it is each other's respective responses (Wright, 1997). Marriage is a gift from God that signifies His goodness since, through it, God permits each person bound to understand the joy of life full of intimacy and familiarity (Thomas, 2015). Based on the definitions above, it is understood that a Christian family is a family united in fellowship with God with the intent and purposes to do His will. A Christian family can also be defined as a happy family, signified by the decrease in tension and disappointment and the full contentment with all aspects of each member's being and surroundings, covering physical, emotional, and social aspects (Gunarsa, 2000). Hence, a Christian family is the miniature of God's family in this world; a family in which God reigns above them, guaranteeing harmony and happiness (Tong, 2017).
Christian education, applied within a Christian family, has several purposes of creating a Christian family that: 1) has correct knowledge of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, 2) put their faith truly in God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, 3) always seek God with deep longing through various spiritual activities done both individually and collectively within the family, 4) is fond of demonstrating the will of God in Christ to others, 5) is always responsible to spread the Gospel to all nations so that they become Jesus’ disciples, and 6) always build and preserve good relationship with God and all of His creatures (Labobar, 2022; Nuhamara, 2018; Simamora & Hasugian, 2020). In order to realize this in the world, God in Jesus Christ through His Holy Spirit has anointed and sent apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to make disciples of all nations (Labobar, 2022). Christian education applied within a family is expected to create a Christian family with quality spiritual life that loves to be in fellowship, to witness, and to serve with faithfulness, God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (Labobar, 2022; Panggarra, 2019).

3. Christian Family Role in Character Education by Implementing Christian Education

In order to shape their children’s Christian personalities and prepare them to be good students in a classroom, Christian parents who are in close fellowship with God have a responsibility to provide Christian education for their children at home. Since the home is the most important environment for life and the primary setting for spiritual formation, particularly for children, the process of becoming more like Christ begins in the family (Thomson, 2001). Christian parents must assume these various tasks to implement Christian education in the home setting.

3.1. Christian Parents as Religious Teachers

Christian parents have a complete obligation to teach their children the fundamentals of the Christian faith as the religious teachers of their own families. They must have an adequate understanding of the subjects they will train in order to be able to accomplish this, but even more crucially, they must have ample spiritual life experiences with Christ (Hendricks, 2016; Hendriks, 1982).

The task of teaching is designed to enhance and nurture the kids’ spiritual wisdom and intelligence. Self-esteem, morals, and a sense of community are built on the psychological, mental, or inner self, which is also referred to as the spiritual reality. Accordingly, being in a right relationship with God, one’s neighbors, and other living things is the state that is referred to as having Christian spiritual wisdom and intelligence. Such awareness establishes a direct link between people and God (Deut. 6:1-9). It is evident from the aforementioned scriptural reference that the primary responsibility of Christian parents is religious instruction, carried out through the implementation of Christian education within Christian families (Darmawan, 2019; Wenas & Darmawan, 2017). In other words, it is the responsibility of Christian parents to introduce their children to God as revealed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit while also guiding them to live in a fellowship of faith with God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, through the fellowship of His Holy Spirit. (Graendorf, 1981; Lebar, 1998; Nainupu & Darmawan, 2021).

Christian parents need to grasp the truth and live in it in order to be able to teach it to their children because “only those living in the truth are able to teach the truth” (Kristianto, 2016; Mary & Darmawan, 2018; Setiawani & Tong, 2010). There are a number of strategies that can be used to develop children’s character in a Christian home, such as: 1) learning as the process of acquiring new knowledge, understanding, skills, beliefs, and behaviors through a series of mental and psychological activities occurring in the context of an active engagement with the environment (life character), and 2) development of skill sets that can teach kids to be responsible, to be able to make decisions, to see and express beauty, to be thankful, to have good morals, to fear the Lord, and to have a set of values, such as honesty, studiousness, and artfulness (Telaumbana, 2011).

3.2. Christian Parents as Religious Educators

The formation of a child’s spiritual personality in the present and the future in a Christian household is highly influenced by the religious education of the children. Faith does not come naturally to children; it must be fostered via experiences of love they have in their family lives and through spiritual upbringing from their parents, (Diana, 2019; Rinuwati, 2020). According to the Bible, children hear and know God—and subsequently, Jesus—from their mothers’ mouths. For this reason, parents are expected to act as educators in guiding and educating kids to understand the truthfulness of God’s word (Boehlke, 2018). Christian parents must submit to God’s laws—the standards for Christian families—in this topic as they serve as educators and character builders for their kids (Thomson, 2001).

It is emphasized that God desires for every child in Christian homes to have an education and be shaped in divine characteristics in accordance with Biblical principles (Diana, 2019) in order to bring all of God’s promises—including longevity, spiritual and material blessings, and the ability to “become the head and not the tail”—to fruition in the lives of children of the faithful (Hermanto et al., 2021). God has given parents the duty of educating their children in order to fulfill these promises (Prv. 22:6, 29:17, Eph. 6:4).

To become spiritual educators at home, Christian parents must do the following: 1) establish daily routines for their children, 2) construct their pattern of association, 3) create a learning environment for them at home, 4) improve their skills, 5) mature them via varied responsibilities, 6) protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional harm, and 7) train them to have life values such as honesty, respect for others, responsibility, mercy, patience, forgiveness, kindness, humility, and benevolence (Adewumi et al., 2012; Jethro & Aina, 2012).

3.3. Christian Parents as Spiritual Role Models

Since the parents’ lives significantly impact their children's, it is only natural and appropriate that they start their own spiritual growth before moving on to the kids. Children with a strong Christian faith will eventually result from Christians'
exceptional spiritual lives (Labobar, 2022). The Bible has stories that highlight the value of living an exemplary life, such as the ones in which Abraham introduced God to Isaac, in which Eunice and Lois set a good example for Timothy, and in which Joseph and Mary taught the young Savior (Gen. 22:6-8, Titus 2:2-8, II Tim. 1:5, Luke 2:21). These examples make it abundantly evident that the parents' exceptional spiritual lives are viewed as examples of their positive behavior, which will affect the character of their offspring (Grinnell, 2012).

The emergence of sentiments of being cared for and loved in the family will be fueled by parents' positive examples to their kids, while children will be inspired by their parents' guidance and wise words (Sanderan, 2021). A good Christian lifestyle, such as good religious observance, good thought, good communication, good behavior, good social contact, and the manner of making friends with God's creation, can effectively transmit to children the model spiritual lives of Christian parents (Labobar, 2022).

As their children will live according to their experiences, parents' exemplary spiritual experiences are another aspect of the model of spiritual life they provide for them. Since a child's spiritual development is based on family, one's level of faith maturity is influenced by parental training efforts (Kadarmanto, 2003; Simanjuntak, 2016). In order to help the children develop their spiritual selves, the parents' spiritual experiences always showed every action taken, every responses provided, every relationship dynamics occurring, every thinking held, and every emotion released in the family (Thomson, 2001).

4. Outcome of Christian Character Building

The following goals are meant to be attained through children's spiritual character development.

4.1. A Life Filled with Christlike Qualities

The standard for one's Christian faith is the character of Christ. Christian children, like Christians, should focus on and grow in Christ Jesus (Artonang, 2021). Indeed, studies on character should start with God since He is the only one having the ideal character. The entirety of God's nature as revealed in the Bible is the perfection of God and, consequently, of Christ. All of God's attributes (natures) proclaim His perfection (Sirait, 2020). Christians should model their life after Christ, the perfect example. The need to adopt Christ's character should be understood in a Christian's life, and this awareness should be nurtured beginning in childhood. Children must possess traits like humility (Matt. 20:26–27), self-control (Matt. 4:1), kindness (Mark 10:13–16), objectivity (John 4:9), and empathy (John 11:35) in order to be like Christ (Lim, 2021).

4.2. A Life Guided by the Holy Spirit

"Transformation" is one of the Holy Spirit's works. The Holy Spirit gives life (John 6:63) and works renewal of life in a Christian's life (Silitonga et al., 2020). In Titus 3:5, the apostle Paul discussed the way the Holy Spirit brings about renewal (Diana & Silitonga, 2021; Thiessen, 2010). The early Christians were transformed into amazing individuals who performed several miracles in God's power after obtaining the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In this manner, children are inspired by the Holy Spirit to imitate Christ. Children who live their lives according to the Spirit's leading will undergo life transformation, including attitudes like the enjoyment of Bible reading, prayer, religious observance, and thankfulness (Darmawan & Objantoro, 2020; Katarina & Darmawan, 2019; Zaluchu, 2019).

4.3. An Exemplary Christian Life

The most crucial component in developing a child's character is leading an exemplary life (Aningsih et al., 2022; Sondakh et al., 2021). Young individuals learn from examples how to maturely achieve lofty goals and work toward fully realizing themselves (Lickona, 2004), i.e., without enough examples, it is impossible to develop character successfully. Parents set an example for their children's lives just like Jesus Christ did for Christians. Therefore, setting a good example for children as teachers and parents is crucial to developing their individuality and character.

4.4. A Life Producing Fruit of the Spirit

Children can have a life that bears fruit of the Spirit if their character is developed by Christian ways, which is one of the anticipated outcomes (Cheyo & Mfugo, 2021; Eldridge, 2022). Christian personalities based on the fruit of the Spirit include the capacity to express love for God and others (1 John 4:10-11, 20-21), to do good (Rom. 12:1-2, Heb. 12:10), and to exercise self-control (II Tim. 4:5, I Pet. 4:7), as well as the possession of joy as God's grace (Rom. 5:2), peace (Rom. 5:1), patience (Col. 3:13), kindness (Eph. 4:32, II Cor. 8:2, 9:13), faithfulness to worship (II Tim. 3:12), & Christ-like gentleness (II Cor. 10:1, Gal. 6:1) (Darsana et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

The primary function of Christian parents in family-based Christian education is to serve as spiritual leaders. To develop and nurture their children's spiritual intelligence, parents are obligated to teach their kids the fundamentals of the Christian faith. They also serve as religious educators. Children's faith education determines their ability to develop their religious personalities in the present and the future. Children's trust in Christ should be fostered through family love experiences and religious instruction from parents. In order to set a good example for their children in terms of religion, parents must also act as role models themselves. This is important because children often carry on their parents' faith traditions.

Children's Christian character development aims to accomplish numerous goals, including 1) a life filled with Christlike qualities that serve as a benchmark for their Christian faith; 2) a life guided by the Holy Spirit, who transforms children's lives; 3) an exemplary Christian life as a result of maturity; and 4) a life that bears the fruit of the Spirit.

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