

## Implementation of the Principle of Repetition 6:7 in Children's Faith Education in Christian Families: A Theological and Pedagogical Study

Ruthnawaty Setiawan,<sup>1</sup> Dunant F. Soukotta,<sup>2</sup> Juan Tan<sup>3</sup>

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway<sup>3</sup>

Email: [ruth\\_setiawan@yahoo.com](mailto:ruth_setiawan@yahoo.com)<sup>1</sup>

Submit: 13 March 2024 | Accepted: 6 October 2025 | Published: 13 October 2025



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**Abstract:** Faith education in children is the primary responsibility of the Christian family, rooted in God's command in Deuteronomy 6:7. However, in the modern context, many families have lost their spiritual function due to the influence of secular lifestyles and shifting social values. This article aims to examine and implement the principles of Deuteronomy 6:7 as theological and pedagogical foundations for children's faith education in Christian families. The research employed a library research method with content analysis of biblical texts and Christian educational literature. The findings reveal that effective faith education requires synergy between parental example, love-based discipline, consistent prayer, and collaboration among the family, church, and faith community to nurture a generation deeply rooted in Christ.

**Contribution:** This study contributes by reaffirming the vital role of the Christian family as the primary center of faith education grounded in the principles of Deuteronomy 6:7. Furthermore, it proposes an integrative model combining parental example, loving discipline, prayer, and church-family synergy to shape a contextually faithful generation in the modern era.

**Keywords:** faith education; Christian family; Deuteronomy 6:7; parental example; practical theology

**Abstrak:** Pendidikan iman anak merupakan tanggung jawab utama keluarga Kristen yang berakar pada perintah Allah dalam Ulangan 6:7. Namun, dalam konteks kehidupan modern, banyak keluarga kehilangan peran spiritualnya karena pengaruh gaya hidup sekuler dan perubahan nilai sosial. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dan mengimplementasikan prinsip Ulangan 6:7 sebagai dasar teologis dan pedagogis dalam pendidikan iman anak di keluarga Kristen. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan (*library research*) dengan pendekatan analisis isi (*content analysis*) terhadap teks Alkitab dan literatur pendidikan Kristen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan iman yang efektif membutuhkan sinergi antara keteladanan orang tua, disiplin yang berlandaskan kasih, doa yang konsisten, serta kerja sama antara keluarga, gereja, dan komunitas iman untuk membentuk generasi yang berakar pada Kristus.

**Kontribusi:** *Studi ini memberikan kontribusi dengan mempertegas pentingnya keluarga Kristen sebagai pusat utama pendidikan iman yang berakar pada prinsip Ulangan 6:7. Selain itu, penelitian ini menawarkan model integratif antara keteladanan, disiplin kasih, doa, dan sinergi gereja–keluarga dalam membentuk generasi beriman yang kontekstual di era modern.*

**Kata Kunci:** *pendidikan iman; keluarga Kristen; Ulangan 6:7; keteladanan; teologi praktis*

## INTRODUCTION

Christian religious education plays a very important role in shaping children's personalities, morals, and faith from an early age, especially through the family environment. In the context of Christian families, parents are called to be the first and foremost educators who consistently instill Christian values. However, the reality today shows that many parents delegate the responsibility of spiritual education to the church or Sunday school, resulting in a less profound and continuous process of shaping children's faith. This shows that the family's function as the first institution of faith education is weakening due to the influence of modernization and parents' busy schedules. Therefore, efforts are needed to restore the family's role as the center of faith education rooted in the teachings of the Bible, especially as emphasized in Deuteronomy 6:7.<sup>1</sup>

Deuteronomy 6:7 emphasizes that parents must teach God's word to their children continuously, whether at home, on the road, when lying down, or when getting up. This command illustrates that children's faith education is not a momentary activity, but a daily process in family life. Children learn about God's love and truth not only through words, but through the example of their parents' actions. Therefore, Christian families need to develop a comprehensive educational model that encompasses the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of children. This kind of education will nurture a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also strong in faith and character.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eko Basuki, Liantoro Liantoro, Dunant Frederick Saukotta, and Yusak Tanasyah. "Peran Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Pembentukan Iman Kepada Anak Di Jemaat Gereja Bethel Injil Sepenuh Yerusalem Baru, Surabaya Berdasarkan Kitab Ulangan 6:4-9". *Journal of Religious and Socio-Cultural* 5, no. 1 (2024): 70-85. <https://doi.org/10.46362/jrsc.v5i1.239>.

<sup>2</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2022), 37.

Previous research by Madyo Eko Susilo confirms that the family is the first place for children to learn through observation and imitation of their parents' behavior.<sup>3</sup> He shows that early childhood is a crucial phase in which faith and character are formed through consistent role modeling in daily life. Thus, effective Christian education cannot be separated from the active role of parents in setting a good example for their children.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Stephen Tong's research highlights that children are a gift from God, so the responsibility of educating them is a form of obedience from parents to God, who has entrusted them to be guided according to His word.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, research by Charles Schaefer shows that a child's success greatly depends on parental involvement in shaping the right mindset and behavior through a balance of love and discipline.<sup>6</sup> Harianto GP's research also reinforces that Christian religious education must be carried out continuously within the family, not just left to formal educational institutions or churches.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, John Virgil Milla emphasizes that Christian religious education carried out at home plays an important role in fostering children's spiritual growth and shaping their faith resilience in the midst of the challenges of the times.<sup>8</sup> These research results show that the family is the main institution that determines the success of children's faith education.

Based on the above description, the main thesis of this study is that the teaching method based on Deuteronomy 6:7 is an effective biblical approach to Christian religious education in the family. This method emphasizes repetitive teaching, parental role modeling, and the integration of faith values into all aspects of family life. The significance of this study lies in its effort to revive the role of the Christian family as a center of active, continuous, and contextual faith education. Through the application of this principle, the family becomes not only a physical dwelling place, but also a space for spiritual formation that produces a generation that fears God. Thus, the results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the development of Christian religious education in the context of today's families.

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<sup>3</sup> Madyo Eko Susilo, *Dasar-dasar Pendidikan* (Semarang: Efnar Publishing, 2017), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Roy Lessin, *Disiplin Keluarga* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2023), 12.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan* (Jakarta: Reformed Injili Indonesia, 2021), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Schaefer, *Bagaimana Mempengaruhi Anak* (Semarang: Dahara Prize, 2019), 63.

<sup>7</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2022), 21.

<sup>8</sup> John Virgil Milla, *Peranan Keluarga dalam Pengajaran Agama Kristen terhadap Pertumbuhan Rohani Anak* (Jakarta: Sekolah Tinggi Teologi, 2012), 74.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the *library research* method, which is an approach that focuses on examining written sources relevant to the topic of discussion. This method is considered appropriate because this study aims to explore the theological basis and practical principles of teaching children's faith based on Deuteronomy 6:7. In the process, the researcher examined the Bible, theology books, Christian religious education literature, and previous research results discussing the responsibilities of parents in educating children. This approach helped the author find the relationship between biblical teachings and the practice of Christian family education today. Thus, the literature review method enabled this study to produce a strong and in-depth conceptual analysis of the application of the principles of Deuteronomy 6:7 in the context of teaching children about faith in the family.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the literature review method, this study also uses *content analysis* of biblical texts and Christian educational literature to interpret their meaning and practical implications for modern Christian families. This analysis technique was carried out by identifying main themes such as repetitive teaching, exemplary faith, and the spiritual responsibility of parents.<sup>10</sup> Data from biblical sources were then compared with modern Christian education theory to find its pedagogical relevance today.<sup>11</sup> Through this analysis, the researcher interpreted the text of Deuteronomy 6:7 hermeneutically and pedagogically, not just dogmatically.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this research method not only served as a literature review but also as a reflective effort to develop a holistic model of children's faith education based on the word of God.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Syaiful Bahri Djamarah, *Strategi Belajar Mengajar* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2023), 17; Intan Anggreni, Novida Dwici Yuanri Manik, Nova Liesye Lumempouw, and Lionarto Erson Jayadi. "Penerapan Perencanaan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Kristen Berdasarkan Teori Behavioristik Di Tingkat Sekolah Dasar". *MODERATE: Journal of Religious, Education, and Social* 1, no. 1 (2023): 11–19. <https://doi.org/10.46362/ptaki.v1i1.2>.

<sup>10</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen*, 37.

<sup>11</sup> W. Robert Pazmino, *Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2023), 45.

<sup>12</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2012), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2022), 88.

## RESULTS

### The Role of the Family in Faith Education

The family is the first institution established by God to instill values of faith and morality in children.<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 6:7 clearly states that the teaching of God's word must be done repeatedly, whether sitting, walking, lying down, or getting up.<sup>15</sup> This principle shows that faith education is not limited by time or place, but is part of everyday life. John Calvin emphasized that faith education at home is a form of human obedience to God and a means of maintaining piety in the next generation.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the family becomes a spiritual center that functions to continue the faith through example and continuous teaching.<sup>17</sup>

However, the analysis also shows that many modern Christian families fail to consistently fulfill this responsibility. Busy schedules and changing lifestyles cause parents to entrust spiritual education to schools or churches.<sup>18</sup> According to Harianto GP, this shows a shift in the function of the family from an institution of faith education to merely a place of residence.<sup>19</sup> As a result, children grow up with a shallow faith and lack spiritual resilience in facing the challenges of the times.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, strengthening the function of the family as an institution of faith education has become a theological and practical urgency in the context of Christianity today.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, some contemporary theologians remind us that the role of the family should not be understood exclusively. Simon Chan emphasizes that faith education also occurs through the faith community, namely the church, which functions as the body of Christ that builds each other up.<sup>22</sup> This opinion differs from Calvin's, who emphasized the authority of the household.<sup>23</sup> This difference enriches our understanding that families and churches must work synergistically in educating Christian children. Thus, the formation of children's faith is the result of collaboration between the home environment and the church community.

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<sup>14</sup> Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, *Alkitab*, cet. ke-3 (Jakarta: LAI, 1995), 245.

<sup>15</sup> Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, *Alkitab*, cet. ke-3 (Jakarta: LAI, 1995), 245.

<sup>16</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen*, 37.

<sup>17</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen*, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini*, 22.

<sup>21</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 175.

<sup>22</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 177.

<sup>23</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen*, 40.

## Parental Role Models as a Medium of Education

Role modeling is an important aspect of faith education in the family because children learn more from their parents' behavior than from their words. Madyo Eko Susilo explains that childhood is a period of intensive observation, during which children imitate their parents' actions and attitudes every day.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, consistent role modeling is an effective form of teaching in building children's faith.<sup>25</sup> When parents live with integrity and obedience to God, children will see concrete examples of faith. Successful faith education is not only taught but also exemplified in daily life.

On the other hand, Charles Schaefer emphasizes that example alone is not enough without clear and focused discipline.<sup>26</sup> According to him, children need structure and moral boundaries to develop strong Christian character. In this context, discipline carried out with love complements spiritual example. Meanwhile, Stephen Tong reminds us that spiritual example must begin with the head of the family, namely the father, because he is the representation of God in the household. The authoritative role of the father, when carried out with love and responsibility, becomes a strong foundation for the formation of a child's faith.

However, Larry Cristenson believes that maternal love has a more profound influence in nurturing children's spiritual sensitivity.<sup>27</sup> According to him, children learn about God's love first through the experience of love from their mothers.<sup>28</sup> In this case, faith education is not only about authority, but also about empathy and attention. This difference in perspective shows that the roles of fathers and mothers cannot be separated, but rather complement each other in the process of children's faith education. Thus, family role models must reflect a balance between love and spiritual responsibility.

## Prayer and Spirituality of Children in the Family

Prayer is the most influential spiritual element in shaping children's faith in a Christian family environment. Stephen Tong explains that parental prayer is the key to

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<sup>24</sup> Madyo Eko Susilo, *Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan*, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Madyo Eko Susilo, *Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Schaefer, *Bagaimana Mempengaruhi Anak*, 63.

<sup>27</sup> Larry Cristenson, *Keluarga Kristen* (Semarang: Yayasan Persekutuan Betania, 2020), 15.

<sup>28</sup> Cheri Fuller, *Maksimalkan Potensi Belajar Anak Anda* (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 2024),

inviting God's power to work in children's lives.<sup>29</sup> Prayer is not only a spiritual activity, but also a form of living faith teaching because it shows human dependence on God. Children who grow up in an atmosphere of prayer will understand that God is present and active in their lives. Therefore, families who diligently pray together create a spiritual atmosphere that strengthens the faith of the younger generation.

However, Cheri Fuller points out that prayer done mechanically without emotional involvement can lose its spiritual meaning.<sup>30</sup> She emphasizes the importance of prayer accompanied by love, empathy, and open communication between parents and children. Thus, family prayer should be an expression of real love, not just a spiritual obligation. Children need to feel that prayer is part of a warm relationship with God, not a rigid ritual. This approach has been proven to deepen children's understanding of God's personal and accepting love.

Andrew Murray offers a different perspective by emphasizing the aspect of discipline in prayer.<sup>31</sup> According to him, prayer must be a spiritual habit that is taught consistently and earnestly. Without discipline, children tend to take spiritual practices lightly. However, discipline in prayer should not be enforced, but rather through loving example and repetition. Thus, prayer becomes a means of faith education that connects children with God in a personal and profound way.

### **Discipline and Love in Children's Education**

Children's faith education is also closely related to the concept of discipline rooted in the love of Christ. William Backus argues that true love not only gives freedom, but also sets clear moral boundaries for children.<sup>32</sup> In this context, discipline is understood as an act of education, not punishment. Conversely, Roy Lessin criticizes harsh disciplinary practices because they can create spiritual trauma in children.<sup>33</sup> According to him, love must be the basis of every disciplinary action so that children understand the meaning of spiritual responsibility.

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<sup>29</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan* (Jakarta: Reformed Injili Indonesia, 1997), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Cheri Fuller, *Maksimalkan Potensi Belajar Anak Anda*, 250.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Murray, *Bersekutaku Erat dengan Allah* (Yogyakarta: Andi Foundation, 2019), 25.

<sup>32</sup> Wiliam Backus, *Menjadi Orangtua yang Berwibawa* (Yogyakarta: Immanuel Gospel Foundation, 2021), 30.

<sup>33</sup> Roy Lessin, *Disiplin Keluarga*, 12.

On the other hand, Schaefer emphasizes that discipline accompanied by role modeling is more effective in shaping a Christian character that can withstand trials.<sup>34</sup> He states that children who are accustomed to being guided with love and consistency will have a strong moral foundation. However, if discipline is carried out authoritatively without healthy communication, the result will be rebellion and rejection of spiritual values. Therefore, discipline in a Christian context must reflect a balance between firmness and gentleness. This principle is in line with God's pattern of love, which is full of truth but also full of grace.

B. Samuel Sidjabat adds that Christian discipline is a means of continuous spiritual formation, not a momentary response to a child's mistake.<sup>35</sup> Through this process, children learn to recognize consequences and understand God's love in constructive correction. This kind of discipline teaches children to respect authority, but also fosters gratitude for parental guidance. Thus, discipline becomes a tangible expression of love that educates, not punishes. In the context of a Christian family, this principle helps children to know the truth while experiencing God's grace.<sup>56</sup>

### **Contextual Challenges of Faith Education in the Modern Era**

Technological developments and globalization present new challenges for Christian families in educating their children spiritually. Harianto GP explains that Christian religious education must be adaptive to the changing times without losing its spiritual essence.<sup>36</sup> Children living in a digital culture tend to be more easily influenced by materialistic and individualistic worldly values. Therefore, families must be able to present a faith that is contextual and relevant to the realities of children's lives. Faith education needs to be packaged creatively so that it remains interesting and meaningful amid the tide of modernity.

However, Stephen Tong offers a different perspective by rejecting the idea of excessive adaptation to modern culture.<sup>37</sup> According to him, compromising worldly values can weaken the integrity of children's faith and distance them from biblical truth. He emphasizes the need for firm principles in educating children based on the authority

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<sup>34</sup> Charles Schaefer, *Bagaimana Mempengaruhi Anak*, 65.

<sup>35</sup> B. Samuel Sidjabat, *Strategi Pendidikan Kristen* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2006), 29.

<sup>36</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2012), 21.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan*, 48.

of God's Word. However, an overly rigid approach can also give the impression that the Christian faith is irrelevant to the modern world. Therefore, a balance between firm principles and flexible methods is the key to successful faith education today.

Simon Chan adds that cultural context should not be ignored because true faith must be manifested in real human life.<sup>38</sup> Faith education that rejects context loses its transformative power. Children need to see how biblical values can be applied in everyday social, technological, and cultural life. Thus, the Christian faith is not only doctrinal, but also practical and dynamic. Christian families are challenged to present a living and relevant faith to the digital generation.

### **Repetition and Habituation as Principles of Education**

Deuteronomy 6:7 teaches an important principle about teaching that is done "repeatedly" as a form of spiritual habit formation. Simon Chan interprets that a person's virtue and faith are formed through consistent and continuous actions.<sup>39</sup> In the context of the family, this means that parents need to teach spiritual values every day through simple conversations and actions. Repetition makes faith not just information, but a habit of life that is embedded in children. Thus, faith education becomes a long-term process that shapes character and virtue.<sup>40</sup>

However, Andrew Murray rejects the idea of repetition without personal reflection because it has the potential to produce a shallow faith.<sup>41</sup> According to him, true faith is not enough with memorization or routine, but must be accompanied by spiritual understanding and awareness. He emphasized that every teaching must open space for dialogue so that children understand the meaning of each teaching. If teaching is done without explanation and reflection, then children will only develop a formalistic faith. Therefore, repetition needs to be combined with reflection in order to produce true maturity in faith.

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<sup>38</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 177.

<sup>39</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 179.

<sup>40</sup> Yohana Penina Zefanya Ribka and Novida Dwici Yuanri Manik. "Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Anak Di Keluarga Berantakan: Suatu Studi Literature Review". *Journal of Religious and Socio-Cultural* 3, no. 2 (2022): 131-149. <https://doi.org/10.46362/jrsc.v3i2.112>.

<sup>40</sup> Andrew Murray, *Bersekutu Erat dengan Allah*, 41.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Murray, *Bersekutu Erat dengan Allah*, 41.

In addition, B. Samuel Sidjabat sees repetition as a means of forming spiritual habits that strengthen children's spiritual memory.<sup>42</sup> By hearing and doing God's Word every day, children learn to connect their daily lives with the values of faith. This process fosters stable spiritual awareness and shapes a Christian character that can withstand trials. The principle of repetition is not merely cognitive repetition, but the internalization of spiritual values within the child. Through this method, faith becomes a way of life that is rooted in the heart.

### **Adjusting Methods Based on Age and Developmental Stages**

Every child has a different stage of spiritual development, so the method of teaching faith needs to be adjusted to their age and abilities. Charles Schaefer argues that the emotional approach must be adjusted to the child's level of maturity so that the message of faith can be received effectively.<sup>43</sup> For example, young children need concrete illustrations, while teenagers need reflective and critical discussions. If parents fail to understand these needs, faith teaching becomes less effective. Therefore, pedagogical flexibility is necessary to keep faith education relevant throughout a child's development.

Conversely, John MacArthur asserts that the truth of God's Word is universal and does not need to be adapted to age or social context.<sup>44</sup> According to him, spiritual principles derived from the Bible apply to all people without exception. Excessive adaptation can actually diminish the authority of the Word and obscure the eternal message of the Gospel. This opinion emphasizes the supremacy of theological truth over pedagogical considerations. However, this approach is often criticized for ignoring the psychological dynamics of children and their social context.

Meanwhile, Harianto GP offers an integrative approach by combining biblical truth and modern educational principles.<sup>45</sup> He argues that adapting methods does not mean changing the truth, but adjusting the way it is conveyed so that it is more easily accepted. For example, the use of Bible stories, educational games, or interactive reflections can strengthen children's understanding of faith. This approach emphasizes that flexibility is not a compromise, but a pedagogical strategy to enliven children's

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<sup>42</sup> B. Samuel Sidjabat, *Strategi Pendidikan Kristen*, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Schaefer, *Bagaimana Mempengaruhi Anak* (Semarang: Dahara Prize, 1989), 89.

<sup>44</sup> John MacArthur, *Kiat Sukses Mendidik Anak dalam Tuhan* (Jakarta: Imanuel, 2020), 54.

<sup>45</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini*, 35.

faith. Thus, adjusting methods becomes part of obedience to make God's Word effective in every generation.

### **Relationships of Love in Teaching and Spirituality**

The loving relationship between parents and children is the main foundation of Christian family faith education. William Backus emphasizes that sincere love creates a safe space for children to accept correction and learn from their mistakes.<sup>46</sup> Without love, faith teaching will turn into oppressive dogma. Conversely, true love fosters trust and opens children's hearts to know God personally. Thus, faith education based on love will form a healthy and balanced spirituality.

Roy Lessin adds that love must be manifested in concrete actions such as spending time together, hugging, and honest dialogue.<sup>47</sup> For children, concrete experiences of love are more influential than abstract verbal advice. Emotionally felt love leads children to understand God's unconditional love. Conversely, the absence of love can cause emotional distance and spiritual confusion. Therefore, true faith education always stems from an authentic loving relationship between parents and children.

Love that is not accompanied by truth can lead to moral permissiveness.<sup>48</sup> Love must be accompanied by firm principles so that children learn to distinguish between right and wrong. The balance between love and truth reflects God's character, which is merciful yet just. In this context, faith teaching must display guiding love, not permissiveness.<sup>49</sup> Christian families can be places where children experience the love of Christ in a tangible and educational way.

Based on the findings above, it can be said that the method of teaching faith based on Deuteronomy 6:7 provides a strong theological and practical foundation for Christian families. The principles of repetition, role modeling, prayer, discipline, and love are at the heart of living faith education. However, there is no single approach that applies to all families because each household has a different context, culture, and dynamics.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the success of faith education depends on the ability of parents

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<sup>46</sup> William Backus, *Menjadi Orangtua yang Berwibawa*, 30.

<sup>47</sup> Roy Lessin, *Disiplin Keluarga*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan*, 52.

<sup>49</sup> Recky Pangumbahas and Oey Natanael Winanto. "Membaca Kembali Pandangan Moralitas Postmodernism untuk Konteks Pendidikan Kristen (Re-Reading the Worldview of Postmodernism Morality for the Context of Christian Education)". *QUAERENS: Journal of Theology and Christianity Studies* 3, no. 1 (2021): 73-84. <https://doi.org/10.46362/quaerens.v3i1.33>.

to integrate biblical principles with their family circumstances. This contextual approach reflects spiritual wisdom that is in line with God's will.

## DISCUSSION

This discussion aims to interpret and analyze the research results in depth within a theological, pedagogical, and contextual framework. Through this section, the research findings are critically examined to find practical implications for the faith education of children in Christian families according to Deuteronomy 6:7, taking into account the perspectives of different Christian theologians and educators.

### Theological Implications of Faith Education in the Family

Faith education for children in Christian families is rooted in the theological mandate affirmed in Deuteronomy 6:7. This verse affirms the responsibility of parents as the primary agents in conveying God's Word repeatedly and contextually to their children. John Calvin interpreted this verse as a form of the holy calling of the family to establish the kingdom of God in the household.<sup>50</sup> The responsibility of faith education is not merely a social duty, but a spiritual command that comes directly from God. Faith education at home is a tangible manifestation of obedience to the Word.<sup>51</sup>

However, in contemporary theological developments, this responsibility is no longer understood exclusively. Simon Chan argues that the formation of children's faith is a collaboration between the family and the faith community, because the church is an extension of the body of Christ in the world.<sup>52</sup> This understanding broadens the meaning of "home" to include the spiritual environment of the congregation as the family of God.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, Calvin continues to emphasize the importance of the family as the primary educational institution that gives birth to pure and personal faith. These two views show a dialectic between household authority and the function of the church in the process of faith education.

This debate shows that Christian family theology must be understood as complementary, not competitive. Chan sees that faith education that relies solely on the

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<sup>50</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen*, 37.

<sup>51</sup> Yohanes Calvin, *Institutio Pengajaran Agama Kristen*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 174.

<sup>53</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 176.

family risks becoming trapped in closed private morality.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, faith education that relies solely on the church can lose the intimacy and continuity of spiritual values in everyday life.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, an integrative approach that combines the theological values of home and church is the ideal model. In this context, faith education is understood as a dialogue between personal and community life that enriches each other.

From a practical theological perspective, Christian families must function as living and active "mini churches." Stephen Tong emphasizes that Christ-centered households will be effective witnesses of faith in the world.<sup>56</sup> However, this is only possible if parents understand their spiritual role not only as educators but also as family priests.<sup>57</sup> The theological implications of faith education in the family emphasize not only responsibility but also the spirituality of leadership. Spiritual leadership in the family is the foundation for the growth of a strong and fruitful faith in children.

### **Exemplary Behavior and Discipline in Shaping Children's Faith**

One of the main pillars of faith education is role modeling accompanied by discipline in love. In the context of a Christian family, the formation of a child's character takes place through daily life, where the words and actions of parents become the most effective means of spiritual education.

Parental role modeling is the most powerful instrument in shaping children's faith. Children learn not only through verbal teachings, but especially through concrete examples of their parents' behavior. Madyo Eko Susilo emphasizes that children find it easier to imitate actions than to listen to advice.<sup>58</sup> Thus, spiritual role modeling becomes a way of life that embodies the truth of the Gospel in the home. True faith education is the process of bringing the Word to life through the real lives of parents.

However, this view is criticized by Charles Schaefer, who argues that exemplary behavior without discipline will result in weak faith.<sup>59</sup> According to him, children need moral boundaries and firm correction in order to understand the dimension of faith responsibility. Discipline is not a form of violence, but an expression of love that educates and guides. Conversely, Roy Lessin asserts that discipline without love will

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<sup>54</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 177.

<sup>55</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 178.

<sup>56</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan*, 51.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan*, 52.

<sup>58</sup> Madyo Eko Susilo, *Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan*, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Schaefer, *Bagaimana Mempengaruhi Anak*, 89.

cause fear and emotional wounds.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, a balance between role modeling and discipline is key to healthy faith education.

Stephen Tong believes that the primary responsibility for role modeling and discipline lies with the father as the spiritual leader of the family.<sup>61</sup> He emphasizes that the father's authority reflects God's leadership over His people.<sup>62</sup> However, Larry Cristenson offers a different perspective by emphasizing the role of gentle and empathetic maternal love in shaping a child's faith.<sup>63</sup> He argues that a mother's love helps children understand God's merciful character.<sup>32</sup> These two approaches demonstrate harmony in diversity: authority and love work together to build a child's spirituality.

Faith education must be relational and balanced. Role modeling shapes the heart, while discipline shapes character. Love fosters intimacy, while moral boundaries foster spiritual maturity. It is in this balance that children learn to love God and others in the right way. Therefore, families that are able to provide both love and firmness will foster mature and responsible faith in their children.

### **The Contextual Dynamics of Faith Education in the Modern Era**

The formation of a child's faith cannot be separated from the ever-changing social and cultural context. Therefore, Christian families need to adjust their faith education strategies to be relevant to the challenges of the times without losing their theological foundation.

The modern cultural and social context presents new challenges for Christian families in nurturing their children's faith.<sup>64</sup> Harianto GP highlights that digital and individualistic lifestyles have weakened spiritual communication within families.<sup>65</sup> Children interact more with the media than with their parents. As a result, faith values

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<sup>60</sup> Roy Lessin, *Disiplin Keluarga*, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan*, 54.

<sup>62</sup> Renita Novia Tarore, Yusak Tanasyah, Eko Basuki, and Ruthnawaty Setiawan. "Karakter Kepemimpinan Pemuda Kristen: Peran Pendidikan Agama Kristen Gereja Meningkatkan Kepemimpinan Spiritualitas". *Indonesian Journal of Religious* 6, no. 2 (2023): 129–140.  
<https://doi.org/10.46362/ijr.v6i2.58>.

<sup>63</sup> Larry Cristenson, *Christian Family*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Ricky Ivan Kristian Sitorus, and Yusak Tanasyah. "Guidance for Students in Christian Religious Education to Improve Learning Motivation at Benih Pengharapan Elementary School in Lembang, West Java." *SERVIRE: Journal of Community Service* 3, no. 1 (2023): 47-58.  
<https://doi.org/10.46362/servire.v3i1.134>.

<sup>65</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini*, 25.

have lost their place in the daily lives of modern children. Faith education is now required to adapt its methods without changing its message.

Some contemporary theologians, such as Simon Chan, propose a contextual approach in which faith must be manifested in modern social and cultural practices.<sup>66</sup> According to him, families should not reject change, but should Christianize culture through example and Gospel values.<sup>45</sup> However, Stephen Tong strongly opposes this view.<sup>46</sup> He believes that adapting to worldly culture often compromises the holiness of faith.<sup>47</sup> Tong emphasizes the need for a clear separation between spiritual and secular values so that faith does not lose its purity.<sup>48</sup>

The opinions of both men reveal the tension between *relevance* and *purity* in faith education.<sup>49</sup> Chan prioritizes social relevance so that faith is contextual, while Tong emphasizes purity so that faith remains holy.<sup>50</sup> In this context, the solution that emerges is a moderate approach that does not reject culture, but tests it based on the Word of God.<sup>51</sup> Modern faith education must uphold divine principles while adopting pedagogically effective methods.<sup>52</sup> Thus, children's faith can live in modern reality without losing its spiritual foundation.<sup>53</sup>

B. Samuel Sidjabat supports this integrative approach by emphasizing that faith education must be adaptive to context but rooted in absolute truth.<sup>67</sup> He stresses that methods can change, but the principles of the Word must not be compromised. In practice, Christian families need to develop faith communication through digital media, shared prayer, and spiritual discussions relevant to children's experiences.<sup>68</sup> Through this method, faith becomes a real part of life, not just doctrinal teaching. Modern faith education thus becomes a process of inculturating Gospel values into today's culture.

### **Synergy between Family, Church, and Faith Community**

The final discussion emphasizes the importance of cooperation between family, church, and faith community as a spiritual ecosystem that shapes the Christian generation. This synergy is the foundation for maintaining faith across generations.

Christian faith education cannot stand alone in the family without the support of the wider faith community. The church serves as a complement in strengthening the

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<sup>66</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 179.

<sup>67</sup> B. Samuel Sidjabat, *Strategi Pendidikan Kristen*, 30-33.

<sup>68</sup> W. Robert Pazmino, *Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen*, 48-52.

teachings of faith that have been instilled at home. Simon Chan refers to this relationship as a "*spiritual ecosystem*" — where families, churches, and Christian communities reinforce each other.<sup>69</sup> This synergy ensures that children's faith does not stop at the personal level but develops in a social context. Thus, faith education becomes a communal spiritual movement.

However, Stephen Tong believes that too much dependence on the church can weaken the spiritual responsibility of the family.<sup>70</sup> According to him, the church only serves as a reinforcement, not a substitute for the role of parents. Tong emphasizes that without a strong spiritual foundation at home, church ministry will not be effective. Conversely, Chan sees the church as playing a role in filling the spiritual void that modern families are unable to fill.<sup>71</sup> These two positions emphasize the need for a balance between the roles of family and church in nurturing children's faith.

Hariato GP adds a third dimension, namely the Christian social community, as an agent supporting faith education.<sup>72</sup> According to him, a healthy community creates a spiritual culture that strengthens family faith. In a loving environment, children can learn to live out Gospel values in social interactions. Therefore, faith education is not only vertical toward God, but also horizontal toward others. This synergy builds a complete faith, not only personal but also social.

The faith education of children in Christian families requires collaboration across spiritual institutions.<sup>73</sup> The church equips, the family instills, and the community nurtures.<sup>74</sup> The three work together to create a sustainable spiritual space. Thus, faith education becomes part of a holistic Christian life, not a temporary project. It is in this harmony between family, church, and community that the Christian faith is passed on from generation to generation.

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<sup>69</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 179-181.

<sup>70</sup> Stephen Tong, *Membesarkan Anak Dalam Tuhan*, 58.

<sup>71</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 179-181.

<sup>72</sup> Harianto GP, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Alkitab dan Dunia Pendidikan Masa Kini*, 24-26.

<sup>73</sup> Krisna Karolina Tafetin, Christian Ade Maranatha, and Ester Agustini Tandana. "The Application of Christian Religious Education Teacher Leadership to Achieve Quality Sunday School at the Batu Hidup Muara Karang Christian Church in Jakarta." *SERVIRE: Journal of Community Service* 2, no. 1 (2022): 129-139. <https://doi.org/10.46362/servire.v2i1.130>

<sup>74</sup> Yohana Penina Zefanya Ribka and Novida Dwici Yuanri Manik. "Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Anak Di Keluarga Berantakan: Suatu Studi Literature Review": 131-149.

## CONCLUSION

The faith education of children in Christian families is a theological mandate that has interconnected spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. Based on Deuteronomy 6:7, parents are called to teach God's Word repeatedly and contextually, making faith an integral part of daily life. Faith education is not only a cognitive process, but a transformation of life rooted in exemplary behavior and loving relationships within the household. The results of this study show that the success of faith education is largely determined by a balance between discipline and love, authority and empathy, and firm principles and cultural relevance. Thus, Christian families play a role as centers of faith formation that produce generations with Christ-like character and rooted in God's truth.

Furthermore, this study confirms that effective faith education cannot stand alone but must synergize with the church and the faith community.<sup>6</sup> The church acts as a spiritual partner that equips families through teaching and pastoral ministry. The faith community functions as a social environment that nurtures children's spiritual growth. In this synergy, the family becomes the first place to instill faith values, the church becomes a place of spiritual strengthening, and the community becomes an arena for applying Gospel values in social life. Therefore, children's faith education must be viewed as a holistic process that involves all dimensions of Christian life.

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