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by Noh I. Boiliu

Submission date: 29-Nov-2023 04:43PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2241821899

File name: FamilyAsTheFirstLocusOfChristianReligiousEducationLearning.pdf (217.14K)

Word count: 6846

Character count: 35129

Family As The First Locus Of Christian Religious Education Learning: Textual Analysis Of Deuteronomy 6:7-9

Noh I. Boiliu,^{1*} Daniel Stefanus,² Christina M. Samosir,³ Fransiskus I. Widjaja,⁴ Aeron F. Sihombing⁵

^{1,3}Christian Religious Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Christian University of Indonesia, Jakarta

² Cipanas Theological Seminary, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

³ Real Theological Seminary, Batam, Indonesia

⁵ SAPPI Theological Seminary, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Email : boiliunoh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The article attempts to address the family as the first locus for religious education and its essential role for children. Parents play a role in leading children to believe in God and play a role in guiding children. Parents must perform this role in the family as the first locus. However, parents are not yet fully aware of their duties and responsibilities as teachers and do not understand that family is the first to teach Christian religious education. This analysis will focus on the text of Deuteronomy 6: 7-9. The method used in this research is exegetical. Based on the study of the text of Deuteronomy 6: 7-9, the family is the first place where Christian religious education takes place. Success at the family level becomes a force for the task of teaching Christian religious education. Christian religious education (family as the scope) as an approach for learning duties to build and maintain faith from within. In the first place, the family can play a role in developing the child's belief. In the family, children can imitate their parents because their parents are an adequate and close faith model. Herein lies the role of the family in the development of children's faith.

Keywords: Family, First Locus, Christian Religious Education, Learning, Deuteronomy 6:7-9

Article Received: 24 October 2020, Revised: 13 December 2020, Accepted: 06 January 2021

Introduction

Parents have a central role in conducting the children's lives that it is not to be replaced or taken over by any parties. Parents must bear it. In 2018, a survey was held by Bilangan Research Center (BRC)¹ on "Spirituality of Indonesian Young Christian Generation". The survey indicates the most deserving "figure" who guides the children to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and savior. The data suggest that parents do 73.1% of that role, and the remaining 10.6% are by pastors. This data shows a positive result concerning the parent's role is merely guiding the children towards Christ. Yet another significant variable is being surveyed and unfortunately the results turn to be negative on the parent's side. The survey is on the parent's role of leading the children to Christ by discussing or studying the Word of God. This time, the data shows that only 23% done by parents and 77% is by nonparental role.

The survey shows that parents are not wholly concerned with their duty as educators and their lack of understanding about the family's centrality as the locus of Christian religious education. This article is an exegetical approach to Deuteronomy 6: 7-9 as an Old Testament text often used due to parental responsibility for the children's religious education.

Deuteronomy's book firmly emphasizes the idea of teaching children by talking about God's commandment over with them (Deut. 11:19). The act is supposed to be done directly and not through the use of symbols of any kind. Deuteronomy 6: 6; 11:18 shows that the very act of teaching is to be done full-heartedly. Weinfeld states that this is a "reflection of the teaching or didactic circle of wisdom."² The distinctive pedagogical consciousness of Deuteronomy can be seen from its didactic vocabulary. The word "teach" למד is not found anywhere in the other books in the Pentateuch, except in Deuteronomy. The connotation of the word is synonymous with the word "discipline" יסר, that derives from the phrase מוסר, which also used in Deuteronomy (19:18; 29:17; 13: 1), the same word also used in the divine discipline (3: 11-12). Just as

¹⁸ D. Handi Irawan and Cemara A. Putra, "Orang Tua Tidak Peduli Pertumbuhan Rohani Anak/Parents does not concern about the children spiritual growth," <http://bilanganresearch.com/orang-tua-tidak-peduli-pertumbuhan-kerohanian-anak.html>, 2018.

²⁷ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 302-302.

a father disciplines children, it is so with God who punishes the people as His children (8: 51; see 11: 2).³

6 Textual Analysis of Deuteronomy 6:7-9

Moses' pedagogical regulations in the book of Deuteronomy can be seen as his "political" standpoint, which constitutionally placed as his (national) policy. The policy deals primarily with the role and function of religion. The part of faith that Moses utters is at the same time his political standpoint for education, where the *Torah* becomes the primary basis for the quality of the Israelites' education. Barret emphasizes the politics and religion aspect as the "nation-state documents in the book of Deuteronomy."⁴ Besides this, Habel also finds the similarity when quoting Josephus and McBride that "Deuteronomy's book is a political document."⁵ Base on that given notion only, Moses' political standpoint for education can be understood.

וְקִיְמוּהָ וּבְשִׁקְבָהּ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְלִכְתָּהּ בְּבֵיתָהּ בְּשִׁבְתָּהּ, בְּמֵן וּבְדֶרֶךְ. לְבָנֶיךָ וְשִׁנְתָּם.

"You shall teach diligently to your children. Some consider this word "snn-sinan as *snh-sanah*, which means *to repeat* or *to read*"⁶ (see Tigay⁷). While Lundbom relates the word *sinan* as *to sharpen* or *to deepen* (Deut. 32:41), which means "to implant something in such a way that it impresses or gives the impression, or to carve an experience upon children or to train them."⁸

You shall teach them to your children. See verse 11:19: "and (you shall) teach (limited) them to your children." Society is often referred to as the *sons (banim)*", especially in the wisdom literature (see Eccle. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:7; 8:33, etc.); and also in the

³ Ibid., 303.

⁴ Rob Barrett, *Disloyalty and Destruction. Religion and Politics in Deuteronomy and Modern World* (New Heacen and London: T & T Clark, 2009), 35. Barrett explains the notion of "nation-state document" in *Religion and Politics in Deuteronomy*.

⁵ N. C. Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologis* (Mineapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 36.

⁶ James E. Robson, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Texas: Baylor Universyt Press, 2016), 216.

⁷ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphi, Jerusalem: The Jews Publication Society, 1996), 73.

⁸ Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2019), 313. It seems that Robson does not really cite the full expalation from Lundbom. For Lundbom, *snn-sinan* means *to carve*, *to give impression*. So as Landom comments on Tigay, that Tigay refers it as instuction through repetition.

Mesopotamian, the teacher is referred to as a *father*. The rabbis intend to translate the word "sons here as a society."⁹ The very sentence "teach them diligently" is always understood in its didactic context. The name *sinantam* has its root in the word *snn*, which has a different translation from 'sharpen,' and it is found in the Ugaritic dan Accadian which means "tell," "recite," or "teach."¹⁰

You shall recite them (...at home...when you lie down...when you get up). The constant reading of the law is also in the principles governing kings (Deut. 17:19), "he shall read in it all his life," which also then paraphrased in God's commandment to Joshua as a leader. "the book of the law shall not cease from your lips, and you shall recite it (hgh b) day and night" (Josh. 1:8). The same idea appears again in Psalm 1:2, "and his law he murmurs (hgh b) day and night."¹¹

When you stay at home, when you are away when you lie down, and when you get up), and you shall bind them as a sign (See Prov. 6:20-22). It is evident that in Proverbs and Deuteronomy, the constant awareness of the divine message is firmly required. It should bind the body just as an amulet accompanies man his whole time. The text's simile style (which clearly expresses this constant awareness directly) stands for the declaration of political allegiance. Compare with the text of Hittite Agreement, "as you wear a dress so shall you carry with you these oaths" (KUB 35:25), and also the allegiance of Abdimilki, the king of Tyre, Etiopia, "I carry upon my belly and my back the words of the King" (*ana muhhi gabitija muhhi surija ubbal amatu sarri (El Amarna Letter no. 147:39)*). According to rabbinic tradition, a king has a strong obligation to read the *Torah* day and night (Deut. 17:19); it is to be dealt with as that of an amulet tied on the king's arm (*Sanh. 22a*).¹²

These phrases and those that follow are to be seen in the context of Mayes's Semitic idiom, which uses antonymic pairs to denote totality. All Israelites or people, even children, and families should discuss the commandments at all times. Here are Robson's observations on the word *snn*,"(a) the word *snn* is not found anywhere else in the context of teaching or reminding / instilling; (b) the parallel in 11:19 which uses

⁹ Ibid., 341.

¹⁰ A. D. H. Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan dan London: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company dan Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1991), 177.

¹¹ Moshe Weinfeld, *The Anchor Bible: Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: The Anchor Bible Doubleday, 1991), 341.

¹² Ibid., 341.

the *lmd Piel*, teach."¹³ However, Weinfeld states, "according to tradition, the term derives from a root word *sharpen-snn*."¹⁴ The "Ugarit also suggests that the root of the word means to *repeat, recount, recite*,"¹⁵ or "sharpen."¹⁶ Followed by "instructions."¹⁷ Understanding the word *snn* as Robson has suggested before we can relate it to Deut. 11:19 which uses the phrase *lmd-to teach*, then the phrase *למדו* and *למדו* mean to teach (them) with some exercise to deepen or to teach utilizing discussion dialogical pedagogy model "This connotes nuance of teaching it repeatedly-seems best to view this word as connoting repetitive teaching."¹⁸

¹ The focus for teaching children diligently is in the context of the family-at any time and place illustrating the pedagogical aims of the book of Deuteronomy. The contents of this book are the main curriculum for the continuous religious education programs in ancient Israel. "Pilakteris and mezuzoth is essentially a pedagogical tool, designed to keep the essential summary of 'the words of YHWH,' and occupies the central place for the experience of each member of the covenant community."¹⁹ It is done not only concerning one person on one side of Israel's life but all people in all parts of Israel's life, including children, as part of the covenant. Parents must instill God's commandments into their children as a contribution to the generation's attainment."²⁰ It is a continual responsibility (continuing pedagogy) from God-Moses-Parents-Children.

²⁵ Robson, *Deuteronomy 1-11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 216.

¹⁹ Weinfeld, *The Anchor Bible: Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 332-333. Weinfeld in Robson notes related the phrase *recite them*.

¹⁰ Robert H. O'Connell, *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren, 5th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), "שׁן".

¹⁶ I.J. Cairns, *Tafsiran Alkitab: Kitab Ulangan Pasal 1-11* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011), 134. Literally meaning of the phrase "teach them repeatedly" is *to make sharp or point*.

¹⁷ R. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster, 2002), 87. The word *snn* has its root word in Ugarit. See also Gibson in Grisanti, J. Gibson, ed., *Canaanite Myths and Legends*.

¹⁸ Michael A. Grisanti, *Deuteronomy: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 334.

¹⁹ Duane L. Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 145.

²⁰ Doug McIntosh, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Broadman Holman, 2002), 86.

Based on the literal meaning of *snn*, *to make pointed*, children are analogized as large, shapeless stones, and parents as teachers, teaching them Torah tirelessly. It is like a formless stone; it is carved in such a way as according to the art of sculpture; sculptors always sculpt and impart artistic ideas and values. The stone is so cut that it takes shape or form as the sculptor wishes. In that manner, also, the children in Deuteronomy 6:7 are meant to be like. The children were taught in such a way that they formed as lawgiver desires. "The picture to describe this process is that of a sculptor who has a hammer and chisel in his skillful hand and with meticulous care etched the surface of solid granite. This is daunting labor indeed, but once the message is well delivered, then future generations of Israelites will submit themselves and receive and transmit the words of God's covenant to the subsequent generation and on."²¹

This task must be carried out to safeguard the new generation of Yahwism; to your children, you must teach. This commandment served as a perpetual warning to Israel about her relationship with God. "An important request of the covenant relationship is that it be perpetuated outside the immediate generation of those with whom God made it because the promises and provisions are for the unborn generation (4:25, 40; 5: 9-10,29). Fathers must educate their sons and grandchildren so that the facts and characteristics of the covenant will never be forgotten."²² The inability to love God implies a disposition either to obey His commandments or to pass them to subsequent generations' children to maintain the love and obedience among God's people through the ages. "The book of Deuteronomy is essential for teaching the family to teach (4: 9; 6: 20-25; 11:19)."²³ "God intends that the instruction in faith be a central part in the families."²⁴ Making sure the instructions go according to God's appointment is equivalent to save Israel's future. "The whole purpose of this is that the next generation will know God's deeds and commands and that they will put their trust in Him (1:178: 1-8)."²⁵

This part, *when you sit in your house, when you are on the way, when you lie down and when you get up, is a merism*²⁶ (See Hall²⁷). Sitting and walking, lying

²¹ Eugene Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Broadman Holman, 1994), 167.

²² Ibid., 166.

²³ J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 123.

²⁴ Mark E. Braun, *Deuteronomy* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 70.

²⁵ Allan Harman, *Deuteronomy: The Commands of a Covenant God* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2001), 90.

²⁶ Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, 313.

down and going away, are "dual merisms indicating place (sitting at home vs. traveling) and time (resting night vs. waking up in the morning), etc., all places and always." "The law can be repeated wherever they are and wherever they go."²⁸ Repetitive teaching is a form of accompaniment utilizing helping ²⁶ children internalize the law. So as Proverbs 6:22 says, *if you walk, you will lead you, if you lie down, you will be guarded, if you get up, you will be greeted by them*. This section "speaks not only literally as written but also in general conversations."²⁹ "Instruction from parents to children is not only a 'lesson,' but a way of life that is sustainable."³⁰ The law "must be in the heart as well as in the head, in the home and the courts."³¹

The rabbis' interpretation is firm, that "whether it should be read every day or is it more important to consecrate oneself. Indeed it is explicitly said, you shall teach them and of course, must be recited, but for me to consecrate is unnecessarily not read."³² The teaching repeatedly is essential, but more important than that is to sanctify oneself. To purify oneself does not mean not to teach it over and over again. "The house is the center for preserving and spreading the truth. Home is where life shapes his thoughts. Moses understood that the greatness of the nation of Israel depends on the teaching of the commandments at home."³³ Moses puts the role for faith shaping on parents' side and home or family as the class where the process occurs. Teaching regulation begins in the family and the community to perform it (verses 7-9). Parents in the family play an essential role in shaping faith.

³ From the early years,³⁴ De vau is supposed to be taken care of by his mother or babysitter, even when he is weaned (2 Sam. 4: 4), and he learns how to walk. An Israelite child would spend his time playing on the street

or in the park with his peers, boys and girls (Jer. 6:11; 9:20; Zech. 8: 5; Matt. 11: 6). They sing and dance or play with dolls. That is what a mother gives to her children for their early education, specifically on their moral formation (Prov. 1: 8; 6:20). She will continually advise her children when they are developing, namely in adolescence (Proverbs 31: 1), ³ but for boys who are growing to adulthood, they are entrusted to their father. One of the most sacred duties of a father is to teach his son about the actual teachings of religion (Ex. 10: 2; 12:26; Ex. 4: 9; 6: 7,20; 32: 7, 46) and general education as well ¹⁶ (Prov. 1: 8; 6:20). The "rod" and the whip play a role in this training (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; Deut. 8: 5; Prov. 3:12). Most of the teaching is done in words. The teacher tells stories, provides explanations, and raises ³ questions; students retelling the story and ask or answer questions (Ex. 13: 8; Deut. 6: 7; Ps. 78: 3-4). It is the teaching method that took place during the time of the Rabbis.

⁴ Verse 8, "you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and as a frontlet (*ttpt*) on your forehead."³⁵ Compare with Exodus 13: 9, 6, 16, but this passage refers to the Passover ritual or first birth ritual, while Deuteronomy 6: 8 refers to the word of God. ⁴ The question is whether the author talks about this object (sign and frontlet) literally or figuratively. There is no doubt that Proverbs 6:21 quotes the text above (See Proverbs 3: 3 and 7: 3). The word "binding" has a symbolic meaning. It can deduce from Proverbs 4: 9, where the book of Wisdom "Wisdom" says: "she will give to your head a chaplet of grace, a crown of glory will she bestow upon you." The point is that wisdom will be added in your honor. "The LXX also grasps Deuteronomy 6: 8 metaphorically because it is translated *asaleuton* which is" *immovable*. "the implication is that the word of God is immovable, permanent and strong in a person."³⁶ Compare this with Philo's writing "Life of Moses 2:14: his (Moses) laws are firm, unshaken (*asaleuta*), immovable. The Samaritan also distinguishes the command to write on the doorpost (v.9), taken literally. And the verse regarding the sign and text, which is translated metaphorically."³⁷ Samuel ben Meir (*Rashbam*) says that "Exodus 13: 9: 'sign on your hand/arm', according to its plain meaning: it will always be remembered by you as if written on your hand...' on your forehead'-as the jewel and golden ornament which one puts on his forehead for beauty."³⁸ While Driver and

²⁷ Gary Harlan Hall, *Deuteronomy* (USA: College Press Publishing, 2000), 139. This is a dual merism.

²⁸ Hall, *Deuteronomy* ¹³.

²⁹ Reuven Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, ed. Leon Nemoy, XXIV (New Heacen and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 65.

³⁰ John Maxwell, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Nelson, 19¹⁰), 119.

³¹ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: B¹³ Books House, 1996), 100.

³² Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, 63.

³³ Maxwell, *Deuteronomy*, 119.

³⁴ Noh Ibrahim Boiliu et al., "Tinjauan Sosio Kultur Tentang Posisi ⁶ anak Dalam Keluarga Israel Kuno" 4, no. 2 (2020): 1-11, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.33991/epigraphe.v4i1.195>.

³⁵ ² Weinfeld, *The Anchor Bible: Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 341.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Dillmann see "verse 9 refers to real writing. Therefore verse 8 is translated literally."³⁹

Verse 9. *You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and your city gates.* The ancient Egyptians used writing on doorposts, which are sacred or sacred words. Over a dozen Samaritan plaques have the Decalogue inscribed on them, placed at the entrances or gates. Like *phylacteries* (scrolls made of leather), thus the *mēzuzah* (ject's names written on doorposts) is its development. *At the end of the Second Temple period, the "Word was not inscribed in stone, but on parchment, which then being put into rock and attached (added) to the very top of the right doorpost in every house."*⁴⁰ The ancient Near East's background was scattered all around, and the inscriptions were considered a good sign and so attached them to the front on the house's doorposts. In Israel's context, this commandment was an addition that the god of household associated with the door (Ex. 21: 6; Isa. 57: 8). Therefore, the command implicitly reinforces the previous claim (v. 7), that Israel must submit all of its loyalty to YHWH only."⁴¹

It is demonstrated in the obedience to the commandments, where also is an essential part of the didactic in Biblical literature (21: 18-21; see Prov. 23:20; 28: 7). The word סור is more or less means סור and found in wisdom literature (see Jer. 6:28) as well as in *Deuteronomic* literature, which denotes deviations from the right path. This word's idiom reveals the act of turning in the right way or turning from sin or turn left or turn right. It is a phrase by the author of Deuteronomy (Deut. 5:29; 17:20; 28:14; Josh. 1: 7; 23: 6; 2Ki 22: 2) and wisdom literature (Prov. 4:27). The right path is the golden path towards prosperity (Prov. 3:16).⁴² Unlike doorposts, the reference should be an entrance to a village or city, rather than into the door of a private house.⁴³ So, "the essence of this law is that wherever one travels-either back home or away from the house - the Torah is the center of one's life."⁴⁴

The problem of verse 8,9 demands adequate theological understanding for easier understanding of

verse 8,9. Patrick D. Miller⁴⁵ sees *mezuzot* as appropriation. Verses 8 and 9 can be understood as easily as indicative of external allocation. Still, those verses' symbolic act is in a context with a nuance of internal appropriation, making this instruction secondary or not a primer. Instead, what is more, important is the commandment to teach the Torah to children. These words are to be kept as signs on the body, dwelling place, and city. In verse 11, placing it on one's body is seen as a simultaneous act of putting it into the heart; appropriation and external symbols are held tightly together (11:18).

Practically, in verses 7-9, parents are commanded to teach the faith to their children. It must be done diligently. *The future of a family and nation hinges on moral education* for future generations. God leads His people out of love, and the failure in teaching the true faith to our children reveals a lack of healthy love.⁴⁶ To be proud of our children is one thing, but ensuring that they are brought up in the care and counsel of God is a whole different thing. "For "the failure to teach and educate the faith, the law of God to the children often lies in the implicit humanism."⁴⁷ So, in this modern era, parents are entrusted with children who are naturally good. If so, parenting becomes a pleasure. The reason is "because the child is considered to be the reflection of the beautiful perfection of a natural state rather than have stained with original sin, the child is then given the freedom to express himself and his desires."⁴⁸ Therefore, the task must be "repeatedly done."⁴⁹

Discussion

Family as the Main Place of Education (comparing Butler⁵⁰ and Vaux⁵¹ Family being the smallest locus)

⁴⁵ Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy: Interpretation a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 104-105.

⁴⁶ Edward J. Woods, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed. Tremper Longman III, 5th ed. (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 275.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 276.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Donald J. Butler, *Religious Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 6-8. From all the period ever exist, there is no formal school. So education takes place in daily life and family has always been its institution. The act of teaching is performed as early as possible.

⁵¹ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 48-49. from the early years, a child is supposed to be taken care of by his mother or babysitter, even when he is weaned (2 Sam. 4: 4) and learns how to walk. An Israelite child would spend his time playing on the street or in the park with his peers, boys and girls (Jer. 6:11; 9:20; Zech. 8: 5; Matt. 11:

³⁹ S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 178.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 343.

⁴¹ A. D. H. Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 178.

⁴² Weinfeld, *The Anchor Bible: Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 304.

⁴³ A. D. H. Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 178.

⁴⁴ John D. Currid, *A Study on Deuteronomy* (Webster, New York: Evangelical Press, 2006), 174.

Family as the smallest locus in the tribe (see Kaiser⁵²) and the contemporary family must be the proper place to present Biblical truth (compare Jack dan Judith, the current Christian family⁵³). The family can play a role in helping family members, and others find better ways of living and identify oneself as mentally healthy (see Jack and Judith, family functions as a social system⁵⁴) is to maintain a harmonious relationship, such as "God's relationship with Israel as his son."⁵⁵ God holds Israel accountable in two ways: inward and outward. Inward, Israel must ensure that the teaching assignment has properly conducted and treated primarily as the foundation (Deut. 6: 6-9). The outward task, namely preaching or witnessing. It can be achieved if family harmony is maintained so that the teaching can be well conducted at the family level. "Keeping a commitment to demonstrate God's love,⁵⁶ care, responsiveness, discipline,

6). They sing and dance or play with dolls. That is what a mother gives to her children for their early education, specifically on their moral formation (Prov. 1: 8; 6:20). She will continually advise her children when they are developing, namely in adolescence (Proverbs 31: 1), but for boys who are growing to adulthood, they are entrusted to their father. One of the most sacred duties of a father is to teach his son about the true teachings of religion (Ex. 10: 2; 12:26; Ex. 4: 9; 6: 7,20; 32: 7, 46) and general education as well (Prov. 1: 8; 6:20). The "rod" and the whip play a role in this training (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; Deut. 8: 5, Prov. 3:12). A father is supposed to guide the son on the matters of national tradition (in this case "religious tradition") as well as all divine commandments given to their ancestors (Ex. 10:2). A father is also obligated to provide professional education for the children; in practical, either all inherited profession or handy crafts. A rabbi once said that those who do not train his child for a particular profession, that will make the child a thief.

⁵² Kaiser Jr Walter C., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 2000), 39.

⁵³ Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1989), 11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁶ Noh Ibrahim Boiliu et al., "Pendidikan Humanis Sebagai Pendekatan Pembelajaran Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," in *Sosial, Pendidikan Dan Agama Sebagai Pondasi Dalam Mewujudkan "Maju Bersama Kita Berjaya"* (Riau: Marpoyan Tujuh, 2020), 741–58.

giving, respect, knowledge, and forgiving" are the features in maintaining harmonious relationships."⁵⁷

Technically the Torah (in Christian tradition² as the Word of God) is considered "knowledge" and authoritative teaching. Today's Christian Family occupies the first locus. Being successful at the family level becomes a power that forces the teaching assignments. Christian religious education (with family as the scope) is an approach for teaching duties and building and maintaining the faith from within. In this perspective, the family becomes the basis for scholastic theology (Christian religious education). The family is one of Christian religious education (Christian Religion education in the family).

Family as Locus for Building and Developing Children's Faith

Faith development is part of a section that can be categorized as an 'appeal of the Law' or 'Shema.' It is noteworthy that this passage (Deut. 6: 4-9) begins in Deuteronomy 5 where it states that Moses called 'לְיִשְׂרָאֵל' (all of Israel). The reason for this calling of all Israelites is to teach them the "statute of God" (Deut. 5: 1) so that the Israelites can organize their communal life (including the family) according to God's purposes. In Deuteronomy 6: 7, the Israelites were commanded to teach the faith to the children diligently -sinantam, since the future of the family and nation hinges on the religious education of future generations, it also highlights the importance of the pedagogical aims of family religious education 'related to significant aspects of life that are most significant to all Israelites: blessings and economic viability, on the one hand, and health and descendants' (see Christensen⁵⁸).

When using the term 'family' in the context of ancient Israel, it does not refer to the core family as understood in the 21st century; this refers to the so-called בית אב (Father's house. See Stagger,⁵⁹ Glanville,⁶⁰ Eisikovits,⁶¹ Gerstenberger⁶²). This same core group

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy 1: 521:9*, 143.

⁵⁹ Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260, no. 260 (2014): 1–35.

⁶⁰ Mark R. Glanville, "'Festive Kinship': Solidarity, Responsibility, and Identity Formation in Deuteronomy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 1 (2019): 133–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089218778582>. Kinship is a significant idea in the Bible especially in Deuteronomy.

⁶¹ Rivka A. Eisikovits, "Children's Institutions in Israel as Mirrors of Social and Cultural Change," *Child and Youth*

(kinship group) gives children a social, cultural, and faith identity (see Fernando⁶³). Instead, this **בית אב** refers to the extended Family in Israelites society, which are a collective society, just as these other ancient Mediterranean. On the one hand, family-centeredness makes it possible for social interaction within the family for its members. But on the other hand, it is a 'value system' as well from which the collective groups understand the world. Thus, the responsibility of parents to educate children is not an individual duty but is part of **כלישראל**. The focus on teaching the children these words, in a family context, always and everywhere, illustrates Deuteronomy's pedagogical aims. Deuteronomy's content is the primary curriculum in ancient Israel's religious education (see Christensen⁶⁴).

In the context of the nature of Christian religious education, the act of educating is not limited only to memorizing all the books in the Bible, the ten commandments, the seven sayings of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Or it even knows the exact position of the for easy access. No, it is not as limited as such actions, but Christian educators' involvement in bringing maturity in Christ (Compare with the section on faith development in James Fowler's Faith Development Theory, reviewed by Groome); or in Groome's point of view, "the kingdom of God as the goal of Christian religious education; which aims at the human ability to live as believers (not just as religious men) or in other words to lead people out into the Kingdom of God."⁶⁵

It is appropriate to place the family as the central locus of children's faith development in the perspective of Deuteronomy 6: 7-9. No other place suitable to support child development. Parents can teach the knowledge of faith to children. In line with that, children can imitate their parents because they are an adequate and close

⁵ *Services* 7, no. 3-4 (1986): 21-29. https://doi.org/10.1080/J024v07n03_02. Analyzing the social function of israelites children can be helpful in framing this perspective to comprehend the urban children who up to 20% being raised and educated in clustered house.

⁶² Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Theologies in the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 19-20. The private houses in the cluster makes it possible for the family member to interact with each other.

⁶³ Ajith Fernando, *Deuteronomy: Loving Obedience to a Loving God*, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 748.

⁶⁴ Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy 1:1-9:19*, 143.

⁶⁵ Thomas H. Groome, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen: Berbagi Cerita Dan Visi Kita*. Terj. Daniel Stefanus (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011).

model for faith development. Herein lies the family's role in developing children's faith, and family is its good starting point. (See James Fowler, *Perspective on the Family from the standpoint of Faith Development Theory*. Understand the relationship between family and faith development, and the family must be seen as ecology for Christian Consciousness⁶⁶).

Conclusion

COVID 19 is not only affecting the parent's role in accompanying children when learning nonreligious education from home. This problem is also shared by parents who serve as Sunday school teachers. This situation profoundly emphasizes the role of parents in the family. This crucial parental role is firmly emphasized in Deuteronomy as a whole and specifically chaptered 6: 7-9.

Metaphorically and epistemologically, God is the main subject of Christian religious education. Parents are the second subject on earth and explicitly refers to the family as the first locus of Christian religious education. In the tradition of Christian religious education in the family, parents can play their role as subjects, models, and figures to build and develop children's faith (according to Christian values⁶⁷). It means that parents should not be shy and doubtful about their roles. This confusion will only cause the parents to give up their primary parental role to another party. The results of the survey released by BRC show that parents are nervous about their roles. Therefore, the results of the textual analysis of Deuteronomy 6: 7-9 confirms that parents have a central role in the family as the first locus in building and developing children's faith.

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⁶⁷ Noh Boiliu, Christina Samosir, and Andreas Nugroho, "Human Value in the Disruption Era: Analysis of the Paulo Freire Education Philosophy and Genesis 1:26,27," 2020, <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.11-12-2019.2302086>.

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