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Sidi Catechization in The Mission of Transforming Children's Faith Teaching at Hkbp

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Abstract: This study examines sidi catechization as a church-based mission for transforming faith instruction among adolescents in Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP). It explores the teaching content and practices, the challenges encountered in implementation, and the opportunities that support the program. The study employed a qualitative approach, drawing on written information and verbal data, including interviews with relevant sources. The findings indicate that the program provides instruction in biblical knowledge, church history, the HKBP confession, Martin Luther's catechism, prayer, hymn singing, and leadership development. Catechization is conducted over approximately one year and is intended to strengthen adolescents' understanding of Christian faith and prepare them for responsible participation in church life. Participants' experiences suggest that the program contributes to spiritual encouragement, increased religious knowledge, confidence, leadership skills, and fellowship with peers. Face-to-face learning and communal practice were identified as important dimensions that cannot be fully replaced by online materials. However, implementation faces several challenges, including competing school and family schedules, inconsistent attendance, learner fatigue, the perception that the program is lengthy, and the limited availability of instructors when one pastor carries the teaching responsibility. The study also identifies supportive factors, such as accessible church facilities, parental and congregational support, and the close-knit community environment. Overall, sidi catechization represents an important opportunity for HKBP to nurture adolescents' faith and support their transition toward Christian maturity. Strengthening instructional variety, shared teaching responsibilities, and coordination with families may help sustain learners' engagement and improve the program's implementation.

Keywords: Sidi catechization; faith formation; adolescents; HKBP; church mission.

INTRODUCTION

HKBP strives to provide a catechism framework that not only teaches doctrine but also equips children within families for practical faith living in everyday life. By positioning the family as the unit of faith formation, this program seeks to transform children's faith teaching through an authentic, relevant, and contextual approach—connecting Bible stories, family prayer, and the practice of God's love in family life. Through this Catechism, we seek to examine whether every household is a laboratory of faith, a place where children learn to know God, understand His love, and build a solid Christian identity for the future of the church and nation.

Teaching children the faith is the responsibility of the church. The church, as the body of Christ, where everyone who confesses Christ as Lord and Savior is obligated to live out their faith in their daily duties and responsibilities. Parents are given the task and responsibility of teaching their children the faith, the Torah, and the Word of God. In Jewish tradition, the people of Israel were formed through rigorous teaching, with parental involvement in all circumstances (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). It is hoped that this teaching of faith will produce children who fear God and who can differentiate between good and bad. Loving God with all your heart is related to loving fellow humans and God's creation as well.

Teaching faith to children in their life as members of a congregation certainly has its own challenges for every family. Because not all families, parents are capable, have sufficient knowledge, sufficient opportunities to foster and discuss God's Word and Law for their children.

Teaching faith to children is the responsibility of parents and part of the responsibility is delegated to the church, namely by preparing and instructing teenage children approaching adulthood to receive teachings on faith. The teaching of the faith is called the "Sidi Catechism". Sidi catechism is a period given to children to experience education, teaching of the faith, which is organized by the church. The length and process of the teaching have been arranged in such a way.

The Sidi catechism is an inseparable link to the holy baptism administered to children. When a child is baptized in the name of the Triune God, parents are asked questions about their child's willingness to receive instruction in the faith according to Protestant Christian teachings. If the questions and answers of the parents who bring their child for baptism are internalized and

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implemented, is the task of teaching the faith truly complete and complete?

Research Methods

In this paper, the author used a qualitative research method, namely by collecting information received from sources in the form of written, verbal, or interview data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

HKBP services are tailored to the availability of full-time and part-time ministers, reaching all members of the congregation, including Sunday School children, youth, men, and women. The primary ministry involves preaching the Word, the Sacraments, routine Sunday worship, feasts and celebrations, sectoral/environmental prayer services, and categorical community development. Therefore, even routine services consume time and energy, with only one full-time minister available. The ministers who support the primary ministry, namely elders, Sunday School teachers, and choir teachers, need continuous guidance and mentoring to improve their service to the congregation. Regarding teaching youth, the church facilitates them through a forum called Punguan Remaja/Naposo, a youth/youth group.

The material provided to the Sidi students includes Bible study, history, the Confessions, Martin Luther's Catechism, prayer, singing, and leadership training. The minister tasked and responsible for teaching the Sidi students is the congregation leader. The sources of this teaching are theological textbooks and the Malua Parguru Guidebook. The year-long series of lessons undoubtedly impacts the Sidi students in terms of spiritual experience, togetherness (koinonia), and increased growth.

A common challenge faced in implementing this catechism is that not all students can adhere to the timetable due to school programs, family, and environmental factors. Teenagers who are still students certainly have their own unique challenges, as schools vary. Another factor is the students themselves: their enthusiasm for the program can sometimes be tedious, boring, and feel time-consuming. There's also the perception that there's a special pathway without the one-year study, Malua Tarsosak-Catechization Sidi Darurat, for those who want to get married. This means that if they fail the one-year Sidi Catechization program, there are other alternatives. This understanding saps enthusiasm and leads reluctant teens to choose to remain lazy because of the opportunity for a special pathway.

The availability of teachers is limited to one congregational leader, namely the Pastor. This can also be tiring and boring for students, compared to other churches where teachers can rotate due to the availability of sufficient staff. The church has the strength to continue teaching through the Sidi Catechesis, which is located in a location relatively accessible to residents. The church building and facilities are adequate for teaching. The availability of competent ministers is guaranteed throughout the year. Parental support and a relatively supportive environment ensure that children's activities and companionship are monitored. Parents are generally supportive, but sometimes restrictive and obstructive. When parents have work to support their children, they are allowed to be absent or late.

The local teenagers are also still considered to be fearful and respectful of their parents and tend to obey their parents' instructions. Therefore, it is fitting that during their teenage years, living with their parents, they be guided, nurtured, and given spiritual nourishment to grow toward maturity in their faith.

The young students also admitted that there were positive impacts on them, including increased knowledge, strengthening their faith, and strengthening their faith in facing adolescence. Other benefits were also gained, such as training themselves to be more courageous, self-controlled in a group, understanding others, leading, praying, and singing in diverse community settings. Different teenagers also said that they didn't feel much of a difference, as they had been exposed to Bible reading, praying, and singing since Sunday School (ASM). Knowledge about the teachings of faith, the Bible, and readings that enrich knowledge and understanding of faith can be obtained through media. However, what cannot be obtained through online media is togetherness such as regular, face-to-face meetings, which have a different impact.

DISCUSSION

Understanding Sidi Catechism

Catechism comes from the Greek word "katekhein," meaning study. The term "katekhein" has long been used for anyone who wants to learn about God's word or for anyone who wants to receive guidance and profess the Christian faith (Confession of Faith). This Catechism program understands how to become a true Christian in accordance with God's will. Furthermore, in studying this Catechism, each person will hear

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about the path of salvation in and through Jesus Christ and become a follower of that path. The Bible is the primary source of Christian teaching, containing many things that need to be studied so that those who read it can better understand God's will and what should be guided by in real life (Roestiyah, 2012). From the time of creation until today, God has always been at work and working in the lives of every human being who asks for help from Him and who always has hope only in God. Every human being is given knowledge and wisdom. The Bible not only gives humans knowledge but also every person who wants to follow God's path must trust God completely as the only source of salvation (Porter, 2005).

Sidi Catechism in the Old Testament

In the Book of Deuteronomy 6:6-9, it is God's command to Israel that parents must teach the word of God to their children. Parents are asked to teach them about God's work and deeds in our lives as sinful people. All human beings deserve the love and mercy of God. The Jewish traditions at that time were very strict, contained in the Old Testament, which gives the sense that the Catechism was very strong in the history and traditions of the Israelite nation, there was also guidance and teaching for Jewish children. The first lesson they were taught was about their faith in God (confession of faith), as well as how to teach prayers of thanks for God's presence throughout human life and also teaching praise to God and the Jewish holidays (Widyapranawa, 2002).

In the Old Testament or the book of Proverbs there is also a strong basis for faith in the younger generation regardless of anyone. In Proverbs 22:6 it says, "Train up a young person in the way that is right for him, and when he is old he will not deviate from that way." The principle that the importance of education in faith must be carried out from an early age to children, especially teaching the Sidi Catechism to everyone without exception, especially to people with disabilities who were previously given less attention by their respective parents because they thought their children could not receive and do anything. The word "educate" in the verse means to train or shape the attitude and personality of someone who is obedient to God Almighty. This is in line with the purpose of the Sidi Catechism, which is to prepare individuals to become mature individuals in faith and able to take responsibility as members of the church so that through this Catechism, the teachings of faith can also be passed on to the younger generation so that they are able to live in fellowship with God and others.

Catechism in the New Testament

Catechism in the New Testament can be understood as Jesus calling his disciples. Jesus called and discipled people from various backgrounds to become faithful followers (Mark 3:13-19). Furthermore, the church carries out discipleship throughout life through teaching and guidance from childhood to adulthood for more mature growth in faith (Astuti, 2022). The Jewish tradition of teaching involves learning the Law and Word of God in the synagogue. Jesus also entered this tradition, receiving instruction at the age of twelve. Jesus went with his parents to Jerusalem and received instruction from the church elders. After Jesus grew up and learned much about the Word of God, he continued his ministry with his disciples to spread the good news of salvation from our Lord.

David J. Bosch defines discipleship as the process of forming Christlike character in a person's life through an ongoing relationship with the community of faith, the Word of God, and the world as a mission field. Discipleship is totally transformative, transforming knowledge into belief, belief into character, and character into concrete action in the world. There is a distinction between "conversion," which is the starting point of faith (repentance and baptism), and "discipleship," which is a lifelong journey (Bosch, 2005). Conversion is like the first step into becoming part of the Church, while discipleship is the process of becoming like Christ. He outlines four interrelated, cyclical stages of discipleship:

1. Calling: a personal response to Christ's invitation "Follow Me" (Mark 1:17).
2. Teaching: a systematic understanding of Christian doctrine, ethics, and practice.
3. Formation: the transformation of character from selfishness to humility.
4. Sending: active service and witness in the world as a witness for Christ.

This process is not linear but rather a lifelong process. A spiritually mature church leader becomes increasingly aware of his or her imperfection and increasingly dependent on God's grace. According to Bosch, a realistic timeframe for developing a mature church leader is 3-7 years, not the instant result of a weekend seminar.

In the New Testament, Jesus is open to ministering to children until they grow in Him. They deserve

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to be nurtured, equipped, and to express their faith. 1 Corinthians 12:22-23 states that even the seemingly weakest members of the body are the ones most in need of support and protection. "To those parts of the body that we consider less honorable, we give special honor, and to those parts of our body that are less worthy of attention, we give special attention" (Harun, 2017). In this case, Paul emphasizes that in the body of Christ (the church), no member is unimportant. Even those considered "weak" receive special attention.

Wide-reaching ministry and making disciples throughout the ages are the embodiment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The phrase "all nations" in the Great Commission does not limit who may be taught. Everyone, regardless of their status, has the right to receive instruction in the faith, including people with disabilities. Thus, teaching and the process of becoming a disciple of Jesus apply throughout life and throughout time.

Catechism According to Theologians

Church Father Augustine's ideas in his Confessions and De Doctrina Christiana provide profound philosophical insights into the importance of using reason and love in understanding the Bible to strengthen one's relationship with God. Augustine emphasized that Christian education must prioritize moral improvement and spiritual transformation, not merely intellectual understanding. The teacher's role as a role model and spiritual companion for students is no less important than the primary task of guiding students to divine truth (Augustine, 1997).

Based on the biblical foundation of Deuteronomy 6:7-8, the children of Israel were to receive instruction from their parents at all times and in all circumstances. Teaching God's Law is part of the church's duty and responsibility to raise obedient, God-fearing children, the hallmark of the chosen people. All instruction must return to the Bible; Sola Scriptura. The Bible is the supreme authority as the source of all Christian teaching. Assertio Omnium Articulorum (1520).

Raising children who obey the Torah and His Word requires a process, the availability of competent individuals who can carry out these commands by first studying, internalizing, and leading exemplary lives. Believers will surely return to God's path and follow the example and deeds of Jesus Christ. If faith is practiced earnestly, consciously, and develops over time, it will be guided by God's love for believers. With His love, believers can follow His will, carry it out, and spread God's work and deeds to all people without exception.

Serving God is not just about preaching from the pulpit, but also through our daily actions towards others without discrimination and our surroundings, which also constitute serving God (Luthern, 2022).

The Catechism aims to guide Christians toward maturity in the faith by studying and understanding the teachings of the Bible. In this process, all believers in God, without exception, are taught to recognize and live the way of salvation offered by Jesus Christ. In addition to being a means of spiritual education, the Catechism also serves as a guide to help each individual, without exception, develop a deeper understanding of God's love and Christ's role in their lives, and to apply Christian spiritual values in their daily lives.

Martin Luther stated that the idea of the image of God and the perfect state of man before the fall into sin is part of the natural theology of man. Luther argued that salvation is obtained through faith followed by good works and that every mistake has consequences. According to Martin Luther, faith restores the essence of God's image in humans, gives hope for eternal life, and unites believers with God (John 17:21). Luther also stated, "original truth shows that humans are true, honest and upright creatures, not only in body, but especially in soul who know God, obey Him, and understand His works." Luther concluded that humans were created in the image and likeness of God. Humans not only resemble God in creativity, but within humans are the ability to think, intelligence and will, possessing reason that enables them to understand God's will.

Catechism in the Protestant Batak Christian Church

In its Basic Rules, the HKBP emphasizes the importance of teaching the faith to all members of the congregation (HKBP, 2023). Catechesis is part of the church's mission. Every member has the right to receive instruction, from childhood to adulthood. Special instruction in the faith follows

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on from the baptism of children, where parents are responsible for raising their children with love and encouraging them to receive instruction after they reach adulthood (HKBP, 1982). This special instruction is carried out by the church by preparing a special program for these adolescents. The church conducts a one-year program of teaching, education, and mentoring, after which they are confirmed as Catechesis Sidi.

The general content of catechesis includes teaching about the faith; biblical knowledge, Martin Luther's Catechism (Sacraments, Torah, Prayer), Christian history or Church history, the HKBP Confessions, the Hymnbook, teaching about Christian duties and responsibilities, etc. (HKBP, 1982). The goal of this teaching is for each child to internalize their faith, grow in their faith, and live as obedient, God-fearing children.

How this is taught and who teaches it depends on the circumstances of each congregation. Generally, the teachers are ordained ministers assigned by the congregational leadership. The duration of the education is adjusted to the curriculum established by the HKBP, which is one year.

CONCLUSION

The Sidi Catechism Program (Katekisasi Sidi) is one of the HKBP's transformational missions, nurturing and developing the faith of the younger generation as preparation for maturity in faith and church life. The program's implementation is supported by the availability of competent instructors, learning materials aligned with HKBP guidelines, adequate church facilities, and support from families and the congregation. The teaching materials include Bible knowledge, church history, the HKBP Confessions, the Martin Luther Catechism, prayer, hymns, and leadership training, provided in a structured manner throughout the catechism period.

The Sidi Catechism program benefits participants, both in enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the faith and in their spiritual experiences and shared life. Through direct encounters and learning, participants have the opportunity to build camaraderie, develop courage, learn leadership skills, understand others, and develop an awareness of their duties and responsibilities as church members. Thus, the Sidi Catechism program serves not only as a process for imparting religious knowledge but also as a platform for character formation and ongoing faith strengthening from Sunday School through adolescence and adulthood.

However, the implementation of this program still faces several challenges. School schedules, academic assignments, distance from the school, and family responsibilities can impact participants' attendance and concentration. Furthermore, limited instructors and a less varied learning pattern can potentially lead to boredom during the program. Therefore, the development of more varied learning methods, better coordination with families, and the involvement of other church ministers are needed to support the continuity and quality of teaching.

Overall, the Sidi Catechesis program holds significant potential in supporting the HKBP's transformational mission through faith formation, character development, and preparing young people to play an active role in church life. The success of this program depends not only on the materials and instructors, but also on the collaboration between the church, families, and the congregation. With this strengthened support, it is hoped that the Sidi Catechesis program will continue to be a relevant and sustainable faith formation process that can help participants grow toward maturity.

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