CHAPTER II

CREATIVE ARTS AND SONGS IN BUILDING CHARACTER IN

CHILDREN

2.1. Theological Background Of The Problem

Creative arts and songs by this essay are understood as kinds of arts and songs with a Christian nuance, as means for creative and effective Christian teaching. In addition to this, creative arts and songs also can become means of God’s adoration. Related to this, Robert W. Pazmino has said:

‘’The final lask of the church, which marks its distinctive role now through eternity, is that ‘of worship. Worship includes celebration and the expression of creativity that gives glory to God". z

Robert W. Pazmino said that persons are created by God, and because created in God’s image, they are themselves creative. So, people can be empowered by God to use their diverse creative abilities and energies for the glory of

God.

Character in this essay is understood as human nature, behavior, and the disposition of children who can be formed by many roles. One of these is creative arts and songs, with the hope that they will become learning and teaching devices for children to bring them up and make them to be faithful. [[1]](#footnote-1)

Ephesians 6: 4 says “Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead,

bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”. Children have to

get attention to be brought up by parents, especially by their father who gives

training and instruction. People can make training and instruction of God in

creative and effective methods of teaching. Masao Takenaka has said:

“Quiet often when the Gospel dwells among the people, it stirs up the minds of the people to bring forth their own expression of new being in Christ, both in music and the visual arts. There is an irrepressible creative urge among the people. People are not like stones or machines. Stones may be arranged to tell a massage; but the stone itself does not initiate creative formulation. Machine may be use to produce goods; but the machine itself does not create the original idea. It is people who speak through stones and people who use machines. People have intuitive initiative and freedom of creativity. But if people lose this gift of human creativity “the stones will ciy out” (Luke 19:40). And if people lose their courage, “Leviathan will rise up” (Job3:8)”. [[2]](#footnote-2)

For Takenaka, music and visual arts can help people to bring forth their own expression of new being in Christ. This means music, including songs, and visual arts need to be used and can play a strategic role in the teaching of Christians, especially children. The superiority of this method is that Christian education and teaching can be presented in the form of symbols, pictures, and songs which are easily understood by children; and by those means, the minds of children can be stimulated or excited to keep on asking questions about God. By those means also, parents and educators have opportunities of communicating with children by symbols.

Thus, creative arts and songs are important things for the teaching of children, especially for their character building.

According to the New Testament, Jesus taught creatively.

“Jesus used lecturers and storytelling. People listened as he told simple stories filled with eternal truths. He used object lessons. The fig tree withered, and His disciples understood. He used small groups to get His 12 involved in the realities of service. Out, they went, two by two, to share what they had learned, to experience rejection and success. He used inductive study. He didn’t just announce to His disciples, “Fellows, l am the Son of God. That’s it pure truth, and let’s get on with miracle of salvation. He let them hear and watch and come to the right conclusion for themselves.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Jesus is a creative teacher. He used many methods in teaching. Variation teaching is meaningful for His listener. So, creativity is important in Christian teaching. Although creativity is important in Christian teaching, creativity is not the same as unlimited freedom. The aspect of creativity is not new to Christians.[[4]](#footnote-4) “The Christian’s creativity is developed through discipline, not through a “ do what the mood dictates” process”.[[5]](#footnote-5)

So for Christians, creativity including creative arts and songs as a means in building character in children, is important because it is connected with spiritual discipline. Spiritual discipline is important in the Christian life because it is will materialize in the way of life. The character of people, especially children, is formed by the way of life.

According to Harold M. Faw, an associate Professsor of psychology and head of the psychology department at Trinity Western University,

“Throughout the life long process of growth, development of people is guided by two major factors those are genetic predispositions and opportunities to learn and interact with the world around”.[[6]](#footnote-6)

It means, in development of people, especially the in building character in children, there is a role for intervention from outside of themselves also. They have opportunities to learn and to interact with the world.

According to psychological terms, “ learning has generally been defined as a process by which behavior, or the potentiality for behavior, is modified as a result of experience”.[[7]](#footnote-7) “Interaction is process by which an individual notices and responds to others who are noticing and responding to him or her”.[[8]](#footnote-8) Learning and interaction are two important things in human life. Learning and interaction both are needs and are connected. • Learning is the process of change in one’s knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, feelings, skills, or behaviors as a result of experience with the natural or supernatural environtment.[[9]](#footnote-9) That means that learning influences character. Character can be built by learning. Learning can be done by many methods. Creative and effective methods will meaningfully conform to the stages of age, and education of people especially for children. Meaningful learning and teaching will touch the hearts and minds of learners

“Pengembangan karakter yang sejali harus dimulai dari batin, dengan motifyang benar; has rat yang lidak mementingkan diri sendiri dan pikiran mu mi yang timbul dari hubungan yang akrab dengan Allah”.!l (Development of true character has to be started from the heart, with true motives, and desires which are not egoist, and from pure thinking which emerges from a relationship with God)

Character building in humans takes places in development of spiritual life. When the spiritual life is developed in children, parents have fewer worries when the children exist in a pluralistic society. Mental and spiritual healthy are logically related. Between biblical teachings and psychological evidence is a harmony.[[10]](#footnote-10) [[11]](#footnote-11) So, in Christian teaching it can be considered which method is more creative according to the situation and ages of those to be taught. Behaviors and beliefs are connected. Behaviors and beliefs can be influenced by arts. In arts many things can be found, those are physical appeal, emotional approach, the narrative factor, art as religious experience, arts as visual history, art as intellectual experience, art as symbolic experience, art as dramatization or reality.[[12]](#footnote-12)

1. Relationship Between Creative Arts And Songs

“Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things; His right

hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him ...” (Psalm 98)

Psalm 98 is the inspiration for the hymn “ Joy To The World “ and a statement about the relationship between music and worship.[[13]](#footnote-13) This Psalm indicates that without using music in Christian education programs, a vehicle for worship that God has given is being ignored.[[14]](#footnote-14) In addition to worship (as a means), songs also teach according to the content of the songs. Songs could tell Scripture story. Similarly, creative arts could also be used for teaching, for example drama in the class of children’s Sunday school. It also could be a praising of God if it is done as well as a witness to' others. Creative arts also could tell or remind children of Bible stories for example; comics which tell a Bible story. Using audio visual aids could help the children to remember the story told in class.

Thus, both creative arts and songs play important roles in Christian education or teaching. They are related. Both creative arts and songs are used to get in touch with spiritual life, and have religious meaning.

1. Spiritual Needs Of Children Ages 3 To 14

The parents who want to succeed in Christian education to educate their children or to bring them up in a family should understand the development psychologically, because children have general distinctive features in their ages both in growth of the body, distinctives of mental processes, conditions of emotion and association, and spiritual development. Mary Go Setiawani devides these ages into ten stages:

1. Masa lndria, usia 2-3 lahun (Age of sensation, 2-3 years )
2. Masa lantern kanak-kanak, usia 4-5 lahun (Kindergarten, 4-5 years)
3. Masa pratania, usia 6-8 tahun (Primary, 6-8 years)
4. Masa maciya, usia 9-11 tahun ( Pre-adolescent, 9-11 years)
5. Usia remaja, usia 12-14 tahun (Adolescent, in age 12-14 years)
6. Usia pra pemuda, usia 15-17 tahun (Age of older teens, in age 15-17 years)
7. Usia pemuda, usia 18-25 tahun (Age of youth, 18-25 years)
8. Usia deM'asa, 26-39 tahun (Age of adults, 26-39 years )
9. Masa setengah baya, usia 40-64 tahun (Middle age, 40-64 years )
10. Masa tua, di atas usia 65 tahun ( Old age, 65 years and up)[[15]](#footnote-15)

This essay is limited to children from the age of 3 to 14 years old or

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the age of sensation to the age of adolescence, in accordance with the sample or object of research which is children in Sunday school. In addition, during those ages the spiritual needs of children are appropriate with forms of Christian education in a family.

According to Mery Go Setiawani, the spiritual needs of children ages 3-14 years, which could be studied by parents in a family are:

1. Masa indria, usia 3 tahun (Age of sensation, 3 years)

Spiritual needs of children include :

1. Meniru tingkah laku orang dewasa, termasuk juga sikapnya lerhadap Tuhan (Imitate the behavior of adults including their attitudes toward the Lord).
2. Banyak kebenaran yang lidak da pat dipahami (Unable to understand much truth).
3. Tahu mengucap syukur kepada Tuhan (Know how to give thanks to the Lord).
4. Suka mendengar cerila Alkilab (Enjoy listening to Bible stories)
5. Dapat memahami hal-halyang berhubungan dengan Tuhan (Could understood things related to the Lord)
6. Masa kanak-kanak, usia 4-5 tahun (Age of kindergarten, 4-5 years) Spiritual needs of children include:
7. Dapat niengenal kasih Tuhan melalui kasih orang dewasa kepada tnereka (Can know the love of God through the love of adults to diem)
8. I man terhadap Tuhan dinyatakan melalui rasa percayanya lerhadap orang dewasa (Faith in the Lord is visible through their trust in adults)
9. Dapat belajar niengenal Allah melalui kebaktian (Can learn to know God dirough religious service)
10. Memi/iki kesadaran lerlenlu lerhadap ha I yang benar dan salah (Have certain awareness of right and wrong)
11. Dapal belajar berdoa (Can learn to pray)
12. Masa praiama, usia 6-8 tahun (Primary age, 6-8 years)

Spiritual needs of children include:

1. Jmannya rnurni, dan menaruh minal terhadap kebenaran (Their faith is pure and interested in truth and righteousness)
2. Da pat berdoa dengan kata-katanya sendiri secara sponlan (Can pray with their own words)
3. Mempunyai rasa ingin tahu ten tang sorga dan neraka (Want to know about heaven and hell)
4. Pada umumnya suka pergi ke sekolah Minggu (Generally like to go to Sunday school)
5. Belajar membedakan kisah nyata dalam Alkitab dengan dongeng atau mitos (leant to differentiate between real stories in the Bible and fairy tales or myths)
6. Mempelajari standar moral yang dipakai sebagai patokan benar atau salah (Learn about standards of morality which are used as criterion of right or wrong)
7. Semua pengalaman rohaninya adalah meniru tingkah laku dan te/adan orang dewasa (All of their religious experience imitates behavior and examples of adults)
8. Masa madya, usia, 9-11 tahun (Pre adolescent, 9-11 years) •

Spiritual needs of children include :

1. Sudah mulai matang untuk menerimah keselamatan (Beginning to be mature to accept salvation)
2. Memuja tokoh-tokoh pahlawan (Praise hero figures)
3. Suka membaca Alkitab dan berdoa (Like to read the Bible and pray)
4. Dapat menerimah pengajaran Alkitab yang agak mendalam (Able to receive rather deep Bible teaching)
5. Memperhatikan keselamatqn jiwa orang lain (Are interested in spiritual safety of other)
6. Masa remaja, usia 12-14 tahun (Adolescent, 12-14 years)

Spiritual needs of children include:

1. Siap seclia menerimah kese lama tan (Ready to accept
2. Tidak /agi beribadah karena paksaan orang lua, sudah mulai memiliki pendirian sendiri (Do not worship anymore because of compulsion of patents, already begin to have their own convictions).
3. Menerima pengalaman agama yang nyata (Accept real experience of religion).
4. Memiliki banyak pertanyaan ten tang agama (Have many questions about religion).
5. Sedang mencari kebenaran yang sejali (They are researching genuine truth).
6. Dapai mengalami kehidupan yang berpusal pada Yesus (Able to experience life centered in Jesus)[[16]](#footnote-16)

Thus, are the stages and spiritual needs of children which could be studied by Christian parents. It is important for them to know these characteristics of each stage and spiritual needs of children, so it can make them more easily approach the education of their children.

1. Character Variations Of Children

In a family, parents always will come upon distinctive features of children which show the differences between one child and the others. Children do not have the same character exactly even though they live together in a family. In general these characteristics can be identified throughpsychology especially Child Psychology. Understanding learner’s characteristics is important for teaching, particularly Christian teaching.

Robert W. Pasmino, a professor of religious education at Andover- Newton Theological School, has said:

Teaching is a matter of style. Learning is a matter of style. Style is what one is, and in the Christian faith, what one is in Christ. Style is the image of one’s character, which for the Cliristian is to reflect die character of Christ. Thus die development of the art of teaching must be seen in relation to personality and character as well as to the explicit content of teaching, teaching techniques, and teaching skills.[[17]](#footnote-17)

For Pazmino, the image of one’s character for the Christian is to reflect the

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character of Christ. “A working knowledge of students age, development, needs, expectations, and goals contributes to decisions about methods”.[[18]](#footnote-18) [[19]](#footnote-19)

H. Norman Wright divides the character of children into three general types, which have individual peculiarities and ways of approaching each other:

1. Anak Yang Keras Kepala (Stubborn)

The way of dealing with this kind of child is clear. "Pendekalan tegas yang berorientasi pada pemberian tugas berguna bagi anak keras kepala tetapi tidak cocok dilerapkan pada anak pemimpi”.19 (“A

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firm approach oriented to the distribution of task is useful for stubborn children but it does not match dreamer children4\*). Children who are stubborn sometimes annoy their parents. They are mostly undisciplined, disobedient, contrary.”...Kelika ia dengan sengaja menantang, sebenarnya ia tidak menyadari tindakannya sebagai suatu tindakan yang menentang, paling tidak menurut logokanya sendiri".[[20]](#footnote-20) [[21]](#footnote-21) (“...When he or she deliberately rebels, actually he or she is not aware of his or her action as a contrary action, at least according to his or her own logic”).

1. Anak Yang Penurut (Docile Or Obedient Children)

It is easy to describe those who are docile or obedient. They are always obedient or docile to each suggestion and command, so the approach to this kind of child is not so hard.

1. Anak Pemimpi (dreamer Children)

Tendencies of the dreamer children are thinking, feeling, action, in a different way from stubborn and docile or obedient children. ” Seorang anak pemimpi biasanya paling penuh imajinasi, peka dan idealis

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dibandingkcin semua jenis anak yang yang lain ” (A dreamer child is often full of imajination, sensitive, and idealist compared with other types). ”Anak pemimpi sangal menyenangkan unluk diajak bergaul karena mereka sering melakukan hal-hal yang tidak terpikirkan oleh anak-anak yanglain”.[[22]](#footnote-22) (""Dreamer children bring pleasure in relationships because they always do

things which are unthought of by others”). The way to approach them is to accept their existence, not to change them and to help them face the ups and downs of life.

Stubborn, obedient and dreamer children all need creative and innovative approaches and teaching. ’’Effective teaching requires a variety of methods, depending on the content, the student, and the situation”.[[23]](#footnote-23)

1. Forms And Kinds Of Creative Arts And Songs In Building Character In Children

According to Marlene D. Lefever, there are many kinds of 0

creative arts and songs in building character in children, some those are:

1. Reading Plays

Through this method, self confidence of children can be built. All of students can take part through the readings, and the situation could be more alive and not monotonous. It can be done in many ways, through the songs, creative litugy, Bible stories. It will be interesting if it is done for special occasions like Christmas Day or Easter. Children will enthusiastically do it. By this method, students will look at familiar truths in new ways.[[24]](#footnote-24)

1. Biblical Drama

Through this method, children can review the Bible stories with their actions, so they are exposed to the content of the teaching, and it can helps students look at familiar material in new ways also. It can be done in the way of choosing a familiar story from Bible, for example story about Jesus’ birth. A student can play role as Jesus, and the other as Mary or Josep, etc. This method can be used in youth group meetings, Sunday school classes, prayer groups and other classes of Christian teaching.[[25]](#footnote-25) [[26]](#footnote-26)

1. Mime

This method can help motionless and shy children if it is often done. Children who play mime use their mbtions rather than words and the power of imagination can be stimulated, both for the player and viewer.[[27]](#footnote-27) Creativity of children in action, can be built. Mimes, through their art can present political, social, environmental, and spiritual messages.[[28]](#footnote-28) Symbol and massage can be found in mime. So, mime also can play a role in Christian teaching.

1. Simulation Games

This method is more matched to adolescent and pre adolescent children. It can be done by dividing student in many groups, with different

roles, for example a group of docters, medical patients, priests, visitor, etc. Students can feel free to participate and learn through these roles, because they realize the situation is not real life with them, and it can lead students to think deeply about issues that were previously only words[[29]](#footnote-29).

1. Parable

Parables can be used to illustrate a Bible story, or the reality of Christian life. For example, the parable of the good Samaritan in the New Testament can help students to understand that all people are their neighbours. The aim of teaching can be achieved with parable, because it can be easier for students or children to understand the teaching if it is simple, and connected with the main point of teaching. Parables can help students see a spiritual truth in a.new way[[30]](#footnote-30).

1. Discussion

Discussions enable children to think more deeply about a topic of the teaching, and by their owns words, they can analyze, and observe that. In Sunday school classroom, discussion is a lot more than just talking[[31]](#footnote-31). Students can be stimulated in their assumptions and thinking. They are helped to create ideas. It helps passive student to be active in talking.

1. Cartoons Of Bible C oncepts

Cartoons which contain Bible concept, are useful in Sunday school teaching. Most children have fun with cartoons. It is natural and appropriate for their age and development. Through cartoons of Bible concept, children are familiar with Bible stories. Their memory will be filled with Bible heroes. Children have increased interest in God’s Word through the Bible.

1. Creative Writing

Creative writing can help students to express theirselves. They can express their creativity of writing as one means of communication. They can write a poem based on the Bible, a story about their Bible hero, etc. Students can communicate truth to others through this method31.

1. Watercolor Study

This can be done by giving blank paper to the students. Then they draw the color of the picture in Christian nuance. Children will learn respect for esthetic values. Their creativity can be built. Imagination of children can be stimulated.

1. Teaching With Music

Music is one of many teaching tools. Music including songs is part of Christian learning and teaching. Every one can participate in music as a form of dialogue. ’’There is no reason that children should not do all these things to the praise of God in their worship”[[32]](#footnote-32). Children have fun with the music especially songs. Without teaching being ignored.

“Nyanyian merupakan alat mengajar yang sangat baik. Karena biasanya setelah anak prasekolah ilu mempelajari salu nyanyian; ia mungkin menyanyikannya berulang-ulang di rumahnya, dan dengan demikian mengulangi dan menekankan kebenaran Alkitab yang terdapat di dalam nyanyian /ft/”[[33]](#footnote-33). (“Songs form a very good teaching tool. Because sometimes after the preschool children have studied a song, he or she would repeat singing it at her or his house, and so repeat and stress Scripture’s truth which is found in that song”).

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6. Harold W Faw, Psychology In Christian Perspective, Baker Books, Michigan, 2000, Page 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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10. H. Norman Wright & Gary J. Oliver, Raising Kids To Love Jesus, Gloria Graffa, Yogvakarta, 2003, Page IS. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
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12. Bernard S. Myers, Understanding The Arts,Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. New York, 1962, Page 17-67 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Marlene D. Lefever, Op.Cit. , Page 291. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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16. See, Ibid, Page 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
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18. See, I bid, Page 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. H. Norman Wright, Op.Cit, Page 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See, Ibid Page 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See, Ibid, Page 184. \* [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
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25. See, I hid,? age 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See, Ibid,Page 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See, Ibid,Page 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. 2S See, Ibid,Page 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Seejbid. Page 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See, I bid, Page, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
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32. Wayne R. Rood, 17^ Art Of Teaching Christianity, Abingdon Press Nashville & New York, 1968, Page 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
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