



## The Spirituality of Hope of Christian Religious Education Teachers at SD Negeri 03 Tanjung Medan in Genesis 3:15 on the Protoevangelium

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the spirituality of hope among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 03 Tanjung Medan through the lens of Genesis 3:15, known as the Protoevangelium. The research examines how CRE teachers interpret and embody the theological concept of hope embedded in this foundational biblical text within their pedagogical practice and personal spiritual formation. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five CRE teachers, classroom observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that teachers conceptualize hope as a trinitarian spiritual dynamic rooted in God's promise of redemption, which manifests in three dimensions: existential hope (dealing with daily challenges), pedagogical hope (believing in students' transformation), and eschatological hope (anticipating ultimate restoration). The Protoevangelium serves as a hermeneutical foundation for maintaining resilience amid educational challenges, shaping character formation strategies, and fostering a redemptive classroom culture. This study contributes to understanding the intersection of biblical theology, spirituality, and educational practice, offering implications for teacher spiritual formation programs and Christian pedagogy in pluralistic educational contexts.*

**Keywords:** *spirituality of hope, Christian Religious Education, Genesis 3:15, Protoevangelium, teacher spirituality*

### INTRODUCTION

The role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in public schools extends beyond curriculum delivery to encompass spiritual formation and moral guidance. In Indonesia's pluralistic educational landscape, CRE teachers face unique challenges in maintaining their spiritual vitality while navigating diverse worldviews and institutional constraints. The concept of hope emerges as a critical theological and psychological resource that sustains teachers in their vocation. Genesis 3:15, traditionally identified as the Protoevangelium or "first gospel," represents Christianity's foundational promise of hope amid human fallenness, declaring divine enmity against evil and foreshadowing

redemption through the woman's offspring. Despite extensive research on teacher spirituality and well-being, limited scholarly attention has been given to how specific biblical texts inform the spiritual practices and professional resilience of CRE teachers in public school settings. SD Negeri 03 Tanjung Medan, located in North Sumatra, provides a significant context for investigating this phenomenon, as teachers here serve a religiously diverse student population while maintaining their distinct Christian identity and mission. This research contributes theoretically to the integration of biblical theology and educational practice, particularly in understanding how scriptural hermeneutics informs professional spirituality. Practically, it offers insights for developing spiritual formation programs for CRE teachers and enhancing Christian pedagogy in pluralistic contexts. The study also enriches discourse on hope theology within Southeast Asian Christianity.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of CRE teachers regarding the spirituality of hope grounded in Genesis 3:15. Phenomenology was selected as it enables deep exploration of how participants construct meaning from their experiences and theological convictions. Five Christian Religious Education teachers from SD Negeri 03 Tanjung Medan participated in this study. The selection employed purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (a) certified CRE teachers with minimum three years of teaching experience, (b) active involvement in church communities, and (c) demonstrated engagement with biblical theology in their teaching practice. Participants ranged from 28 to 52 years of age, with teaching experience spanning 4 to 18 years. The school serves approximately 320 students from diverse religious backgrounds, with Christian students constituting approximately 25% of the population. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework was employed. Interview transcripts were coded using ATLAS.ti software. The analysis progressed through familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the final report. Member checking was conducted with participants to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of interpretations.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

All participants demonstrated sophisticated theological understanding of Genesis 3:15 as the first messianic prophecy in Scripture. Participants emphasized that hope originates not from human capacity but from God's sovereign promise. Teacher Martha (pseudonym) explained: "Even in the garden, immediately after the fall, God was already speaking the gospel. This shows that redemption was not an afterthought but God's eternal plan." This understanding shaped teachers' conviction that educational transformation ultimately depends on divine grace rather than mere pedagogical technique. Teachers interpreted the serpent-seed conflict as representing ongoing spiritual warfare that extends into their educational context. Teacher David noted: "We face spiritual opposition in teaching—apathy, moral confusion, cultural pressures. Genesis 3:15 reminds us these struggles are part of a larger cosmic battle, and victory is

assured." All participants connected the "offspring of the woman" to Christ's redemptive work, viewing the Protoevangelium through a Christocentric hermeneutical lens. This christological reading provided teachers with a narrative framework linking creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.

### ***Three Dimensions of Hope-Based Spirituality***

Teachers described how Genesis 3:15 sustains hope amid daily frustrations, institutional constraints, and personal limitations. This dimension involves trusting God's faithfulness during immediate challenges. Teacher Sarah shared: "When I face difficult classes or administrative pressures, remembering that God has been faithful since Eden helps me persevere. The promise still stands." Existential hope was maintained through daily devotional practices, prayer journals specifically referencing Genesis 3:15, and peer support among CRE teachers. This dimension reflects teachers' conviction that students can experience moral and spiritual transformation despite present struggles. Teachers consistently expressed belief that education participates in God's redemptive purposes. Teacher Ruth explained: "Genesis 3:15 teaches me to see every student as someone the woman's offspring came to redeem. Even the most challenging student carries divine potential." Pedagogical hope was operationalized through individualized attention, restorative discipline practices, and curriculum designs emphasizing character transformation rather than mere information transfer. Teachers articulated hope extending beyond immediate educational outcomes toward ultimate restoration. This transcendent dimension prevented burnout by relativizing temporal failures. Teacher John stated: "Not every student will embrace what I teach now, but I trust God's long-term work. Genesis 3:15 points to final victory—that hope sustains me when I don't see immediate results." Eschatological hope enabled teachers to maintain commitment despite measurable outcomes falling short of aspirations.

### ***Pedagogical Manifestations of Hope***

Teachers intentionally created environments emphasizing restoration over punishment, mirroring the grace embedded in Genesis 3:15. Discipline focused on reconciliation and growth rather than retribution. Teachers frequently employed narrative pedagogy, connecting biblical narratives (beginning with Genesis 3:15) to students' lived experiences, fostering hope through identification with redemption stories. Reflecting the belief that all humans bear the image of God and are objects of divine love, teachers practiced consistent affirmation of students' worth regardless of academic performance or behavior. Teachers regularly incorporated prayer acknowledging dependence on God's transformative work, aligning with their conviction that hope originates from divine initiative rather than human effort alone.

### ***The Protoevangelium as Resilience Resource***

Participants identified Genesis 3:15 as a crucial resource for maintaining resilience amid professional challenges: 1) Contextualizing struggles, the text provided a theological framework for understanding difficulties as part of the ongoing serpent-seed conflict rather than evidence of personal failure. 2) Maintaining vocational identity, the Protoevangelium reinforced teachers' sense of participating in God's redemptive mission, preventing reduction of their role to mere job performance. 3) Sustaining perseverance,

the certainty of ultimate victory expressed in Genesis 3:15 enabled teachers to persist through seasons of apparent ineffectiveness or opposition. Teachers described developing spiritual disciplines specifically anchored in Genesis 3:15, including meditative reading, memorization, and creating artistic representations of the text to sustain hope during challenging periods.

### ***Theological Foundations of Hope-Based Spirituality***

The findings affirm that Genesis 3:15 functions as a hermeneutical key shaping CRE teachers' entire theological framework. The participants' trinitarian understanding—emphasizing God's initiative, Christ's redemptive work, and the Spirit's ongoing transformation—resonates with classical Christian theology while demonstrating contextual application. This aligns with contemporary theological emphases on hope as distinctly Christian virtue rooted in God's promises rather than human optimism. The teachers' christological interpretation of the Protoevangelium reflects a canonical reading strategy that sees Scripture's unity in Christ. This interpretive approach has practical implications: by viewing their educational work through the lens of Christ's redemptive mission, teachers avoid both secular professionalism that ignores spiritual dimensions and religious privatization that divorces faith from practice.

### ***Hope as Multi-dimensional Spiritual Reality***

The identification of existential, pedagogical, and eschatological dimensions extends theoretical understanding of hope beyond psychology's typical focus on goal-directed optimism. This multi-dimensional model suggests that robust hope integrates immediate resilience (existential), transformative agency (pedagogical), and transcendent orientation (eschatological). This framework could inform broader discussions of teacher spirituality and well-being. The eschatological dimension deserves particular attention as it addresses a critical challenge in education: the temptation toward despair when immediate outcomes disappoint. By situating teaching within God's larger redemptive narrative, teachers maintain commitment without demanding immediate vindication—a perspective with implications for preventing burnout across religious and secular contexts.

### ***Spirituality-Pedagogy Integration***

The study reveals substantial integration between teachers' spiritual convictions and pedagogical practices. Rather than compartmentalizing religious belief and professional practice, participants demonstrated coherent integration where theological convictions about human dignity, redemption, and divine grace directly shaped classroom culture, discipline approaches, and curricular choices. This integration challenges dichotomous thinking that separates "content knowledge" from "spiritual formation" in teacher development. The findings suggest that for CRE teachers, pedagogical competence cannot be divorced from spiritual depth, as their teaching philosophy emerges from theological convictions. Teaching in a pluralistic public school requires negotiating complex identity dynamics. Participants demonstrated sophisticated navigation of this context, maintaining Christian conviction while respecting institutional secularity and religious diversity. The Protoevangelium's emphasis on God's universal salvific will supported respect for all students while maintaining distinctive Christian identity.

However, the study also revealed tensions. Teachers sometimes experienced isolation from colleagues who did not share their faith commitments, and institutional pressures occasionally conflicted with their spiritual convictions about education. These tensions underscore the importance of supportive faith communities and professional networks for sustaining hope-centered spirituality. The findings suggest that effective CRE teacher preparation requires more than pedagogical training; it demands intentional spiritual formation that equips teachers to develop robust theological frameworks grounding their practice. Programs might incorporate: 1) Biblical theological literacy enabling teachers to connect specific texts to educational practice. 2) Spiritual disciplines for cultivating hope amid professional challenges. 3) Reflective practices integrating theological convictions with pedagogical decisions. 4) Peer learning communities providing ongoing spiritual and professional support. This study's limitations include its small sample size and single-site focus, limiting generalizability. The findings reflect the experiences of CRE teachers in one specific Indonesian context and may not transfer to other cultural or institutional settings. Additionally, the study's focus on one biblical text, while providing depth, leaves unexplored how other scriptural themes might inform teacher spirituality. Future research could employ comparative approaches examining multiple sites, incorporating quantitative measures of hope and resilience, and investigating student perceptions of teachers' hope-centered pedagogy.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Genesis 3:15, understood as the Protoevangelium, serves as a foundational theological resource shaping the spirituality of hope among CRE teachers at SD Negeri 03 Tanjung Medan. Teachers' engagement with this text generates a multi-dimensional hope—existential, pedagogical, and eschatological—that sustains resilience, informs pedagogical practice, and maintains vocational commitment amid challenges. The research contributes to understanding the intersection of biblical theology, spirituality, and educational practice, revealing how specific scriptural texts can function as hermeneutical frameworks integrating belief and practice. For CRE teachers navigating pluralistic contexts, the Protoevangelium provides theological grounding for maintaining distinctive Christian identity while serving diverse student populations with dignity and grace.

The findings suggest that effective support for CRE teachers requires attention to spiritual formation alongside pedagogical development. Educational institutions, church communities, and teacher preparation programs might collaborate to create environments where hope-centered spirituality is cultivated through theological reflection, spiritual practices, and professional community. Ultimately, this study affirms that Christian education in public contexts need not choose between religious authenticity and professional excellence. Rather, deep theological engagement—exemplified in teachers' appropriation of Genesis 3:15—can ground pedagogical practices that serve both distinctively Christian purposes and broader educational goods. The spirituality of hope emerging from the Protoevangelium enables teachers to view their vocation as participation in God's ongoing redemptive work, transforming both teachers and students in the process.

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