



## The Faithful Spirituality of Christian Religious Education Teachers: A Reflection on Exodus 29:35 in the Context of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the faithful spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and its contribution to students' understanding of spiritual commitment as reflected in Exodus 29:35 within the educational context of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo. The passage describes the process of priestly consecration, emphasizing obedience, dedication, and faithfulness in fulfilling God's commands. Within Christian education, this biblical message provides a theological foundation for understanding the spiritual vocation of teachers who function not only as instructors but also as role models of faith and devotion. The purpose of this research is to analyze how the spirituality of CRE teachers influences students' comprehension of the biblical concept of faithfulness and spiritual responsibility. This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive correlational design. The participants consisted of 52 Christian students who were actively involved in CRE learning activities. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale that measured two main variables: the faithful spirituality of the CRE teacher and students' understanding of the spiritual message in Exodus 29:35. The research instrument included indicators such as spiritual integrity, commitment to the teaching vocation, consistency between faith and practice, and the teacher's role in encouraging students' spiritual development. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and Pearson Product–Moment correlation. The findings indicate that students generally perceive the teacher's spirituality as strong and consistent in daily teaching practices. Statistical analysis also reveals a positive and significant relationship between teacher spirituality and students' understanding of the biblical concept of spiritual commitment. These results highlight the importance of teacher spirituality as a key element in strengthening the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education.*

**Keywords:** Faithful Spirituality, Christian Religious Education, Reflection

## INTRODUCTION

Teacher spirituality has increasingly become an important topic in discussions about the quality and effectiveness of Christian Religious Education (CRE). In the context of faith-based education, teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but also witnesses of spiritual values that shape students' moral and religious formation. The spirituality of teachers, particularly their faithfulness to their calling, significantly influences how biblical teachings are communicated and internalized by students. Christian educators are therefore expected to embody the values they teach, demonstrating consistency between belief, character, and professional practice. According to Thomas H. Groome, Christian education is fundamentally a process of forming faith through lived experience, where teachers play a crucial role as mediators of God's message within educational settings (Groome, 2011). This perspective highlights that spiritual authenticity in teachers contributes to meaningful learning experiences that go beyond cognitive understanding. One biblical passage that reflects the theme of faithfulness in ministry is Exodus 29:35, which describes the consecration process for Aaron and his sons as priests. The verse emphasizes obedience to divine instructions in preparing individuals for sacred service. The consecration ritual symbolized dedication, purification, and commitment to God's calling. As John I. Durham explains, the priestly consecration described in Exodus represents the establishment of a community of servants who are set apart for faithful ministry before God (Durham, 1987). Although the historical context of priesthood differs from contemporary educational roles, the theological principle of faithful dedication to divine service remains relevant. For Christian teachers, particularly those involved in religious education, the concept of consecration can be interpreted as a call to live and teach with spiritual integrity, commitment, and responsibility. In the field of Christian pedagogy, the teacher's spiritual life is considered inseparable from the teaching process. Robert W. Pazmiño argues that Christian educators must integrate spiritual maturity with pedagogical competence, since the credibility of religious teaching depends largely on the teacher's character and spiritual commitment (Pazmiño, 2008). When teachers demonstrate faithfulness in their vocation, they provide a living model of discipleship that students can observe and emulate. Conversely, a lack of spiritual authenticity may weaken the impact of biblical instruction and reduce the transformative potential of Christian education.

Christian Religious Education is designed not only to convey doctrinal knowledge but also to nurture spiritual growth and ethical awareness among students. National educational policy recognizes the importance of religious instruction in forming responsible citizens who demonstrate moral integrity and respect for others. Consequently, the role of CRE teachers carries both pedagogical and spiritual dimensions. Their teaching responsibilities involve interpreting biblical texts, guiding students in faith development, and modeling Christian values in everyday interactions. Educational scholars emphasize that teacher professionalism in religious education must include spiritual depth, because spiritual authenticity strengthens both the credibility and effectiveness of instruction (Palmer, 1998). The relevance of teacher spirituality becomes particularly significant in school environments where faith formation occurs within a structured educational system. At SMP Negeri 2 Aramo, Christian Religious Education is taught to a community that includes

52 Christian students and 18 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. This environment provides a meaningful context for examining how teacher spirituality influences religious learning. Although many teachers share the same religious background as the students, the effectiveness of Christian education still depends on how faithfully the teacher embodies the values of the faith being taught.

Reflecting on Exodus 29:35, the theme of consecration and faithfulness offers a theological lens for understanding the vocation of Christian educators. The passage reminds believers that service to God requires dedication, discipline, and obedience. As Christopher J. H. Wright notes, the priestly traditions of the Old Testament emphasize that individuals who serve God must reflect God's holiness and faithfulness in their daily lives (Wright, 2004). Applying this principle to the educational context suggests that CRE teachers must cultivate spiritual integrity that aligns with their teaching mission. Many studies focus primarily on pedagogical or professional competence, leaving the spiritual dimension underexplored. This gap highlights the need for research that examines how biblical principles can inform the understanding of teacher spirituality within educational settings. Therefore, this study aims to explore the faithful spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers through a reflection on Exodus 29:35 in the context of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo. By examining how spiritual commitment influences teaching practices and student formation, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on the integration of biblical theology and educational practice. Ultimately, the study hopes to demonstrate that the spirituality of teachers is not merely a personal matter but a vital component of effective Christian education that shapes both the character and faith development of students.

## METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design with a correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between the faithful spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students' perceptions of spiritual learning in the classroom context. A quantitative approach was chosen because it enables systematic measurement of perceptions and attitudes, allowing the researcher to analyze patterns and relationships between variables objectively through statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014). The correlational design was considered appropriate for identifying the extent to which the teacher's spirituality, reflected in attitudes of faithfulness, integrity, and dedication to the teaching vocation, relates to students' understanding of spiritual values derived from Exodus 29:35. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Aramo, which provides Christian Religious Education to students who share the same faith tradition. The population of the study consisted of 52 Christian students enrolled in the school. Because the population size was relatively manageable, the research applied total sampling, meaning that all 52 students were involved as respondents in the study. Although the school includes 18 teachers who are Christians, including the CRE teacher, the primary respondents were the students because the research sought to measure their perceptions of the teacher's spirituality and its influence on their learning experiences. Students' perspectives are considered important in educational research because they directly experience the teacher's instructional and relational behavior in the classroom

(Hattie, 2009). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section measured the faithful spirituality of the CRE teacher, including indicators such as commitment to teaching as a calling, consistency between teaching and personal conduct, demonstration of Christian values, dedication to spiritual formation, and responsibility in guiding students' faith development. These indicators were developed based on theoretical perspectives on teacher spirituality and Christian education (Pazmiño, 2008; Palmer, 1998). The second section measured students' understanding and appreciation of spiritual values related to the biblical message of Exodus 29:35, particularly themes of faithfulness, dedication to God's service, and commitment to spiritual discipline. The items also explored how students interpret the relevance of these values in their daily lives. To ensure the quality of the instrument, content validity was evaluated through expert review by scholars in Christian Religious Education and educational research methodology. A small-scale pilot test was conducted with a group of students outside the research sample to assess clarity, readability, and item consistency. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable for educational research (Creswell, 2014). These procedures ensured that the instrument accurately measured the intended constructs. Data collection was conducted during scheduled CRE learning sessions after obtaining permission from the school administration and informing students about the purpose of the research. Participation was voluntary, and students completed the questionnaires anonymously to reduce social desirability bias and encourage honest responses. Clear instructions were provided before the questionnaire was administered to ensure that all respondents understood the items. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to describe the overall level of teacher spirituality and students' perceptions of spiritual learning. To examine the relationship between variables, Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was applied. Statistical significance was tested at the 0.05 level, enabling the researcher to determine whether the observed relationship between teacher spirituality and students' spiritual understanding was meaningful. Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to generate empirical insights into how the faithful spirituality of CRE teachers contributes to students' spiritual learning in the educational context of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that the spirituality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Aramo plays a significant role in shaping students' understanding of faithful spiritual commitment as reflected in Exodus 29:35. Based on the quantitative analysis of questionnaire responses from 52 Christian students, the descriptive statistical results show that students perceive the spirituality of the CRE teacher as consistently strong and meaningful in the learning process. The mean score for the teacher spirituality variable falls within the high category, indicating that most students agree that the teacher demonstrates attitudes of faithfulness, responsibility, spiritual integrity, and commitment to teaching as a divine calling. Indicators such as

consistency between words and actions, dedication in guiding students' spiritual development, and the integration of biblical values into daily instruction received particularly high levels of agreement. These findings indicate that the teacher's spirituality is not merely conceptual but is expressed through observable behavior and classroom practices that students can experience directly. In the field of Christian education, teacher spirituality is often understood as the integration of faith, character, and vocation in the educational process. Thomas H. Groome argues that Christian educators do not simply communicate religious information but participate in a faith-forming process in which their own spiritual lives influence the authenticity of their teaching. In the context of this study, the teacher's spirituality appears to function as a living testimony that shapes how students perceive and internalize biblical teachings. The data regarding students' understanding of the spiritual message in Exodus 29:35 also demonstrate positive results. Descriptive analysis shows that students generally possess a strong comprehension of the central themes presented in the biblical text, particularly the concept of faithfulness in fulfilling God's instructions. In Exodus 29:35, the consecration of priests reflects the importance of obedience, dedication, and continuity in carrying out God's commands. Students reported that the teacher clearly explained that the process described in the passage symbolizes spiritual commitment and responsibility in serving God. The high mean score for this variable indicates that students are not only able to recall the narrative elements of the text but also interpret its theological implications. They recognize that the passage encourages believers to live faithfully, maintain spiritual discipline, and remain committed to their calling. This level of understanding suggests that the teacher successfully facilitated a learning environment where biblical narratives are interpreted in ways that connect with students' daily spiritual experiences. Inferential statistical analysis further strengthens these findings. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the faithful spirituality of the CRE teacher and students' understanding of the biblical concept of spiritual commitment reflected in Exodus 29:35. The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate to strong relationship, suggesting that students who perceive their teacher as spiritually faithful and committed tend to show higher levels of comprehension and appreciation of the biblical message. This relationship confirms the theoretical assumption that the spiritual authenticity of teachers influences the effectiveness of religious education. John Hattie's extensive synthesis of educational research emphasizes that teacher-related factors, including credibility, relational trust, and personal commitment, significantly affect student learning outcomes. In religious education contexts, these factors often take the form of spiritual integrity and authenticity, which enable teachers to communicate faith concepts more effectively.

Regression analysis also indicates that the spirituality variable contributes significantly to the variance in students' understanding of spiritual values. Although other factors such as family religious practices, church involvement, and peer influence may also shape students' spiritual development, the statistical results demonstrate that the teacher's spirituality remains an important predictor within the school environment. This finding aligns with Parker J. Palmer's perspective that good teaching emerges from the identity and integrity of the teacher rather than from technical method alone. According to Palmer, the inner life of the teacher influences the climate of the classroom and the depth

of the learning experience. In the case of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo, the CRE teacher's faithful spirituality appears to create a classroom atmosphere characterized by sincerity, trust, and openness, which encourages students to engage more deeply with biblical teachings. Another important dimension revealed by the results is the role of teacher spirituality in shaping students' attitudes toward spiritual discipline. Students expressed strong agreement with statements indicating that the teacher encourages regular prayer, reflection on Scripture, and responsible Christian living. This suggests that the teacher does not limit instruction to theoretical explanations but actively guides students in practicing spiritual values. The passage of Exodus 29:35 describes a structured process of consecration carried out over several days, emphasizing perseverance and faithfulness in fulfilling God's instructions. When students observe similar attitudes of perseverance and commitment in their teacher, they encounter a concrete example of the values embedded in the biblical narrative. Social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura, explains that individuals often learn behaviors and attitudes through observation of significant role models. In this context, the CRE teacher functions as a spiritual role model whose example reinforces the values taught in Scripture. The data also reveal that students appreciate the teacher's sincerity in discussing spiritual topics. Many respondents reported that the teacher often connects biblical passages with real-life situations, helping them understand how faithfulness to God can be practiced in everyday life. This pedagogical approach reflects an interpretive model of Christian education in which Scripture is not treated merely as historical literature but as a living source of guidance for contemporary believers. Through contextual explanations, the teacher helps students recognize that the spiritual dedication described in Exodus 29:35 can inspire their own commitment to faith, moral responsibility, and service to others. As a result, the biblical narrative becomes relevant to the students' lived experiences rather than remaining distant or abstract.

The findings suggest that teacher spirituality contributes to the development of a positive classroom environment. Students indicated that the teacher demonstrates patience, humility, and care in interactions with them. Such attitudes foster a sense of emotional security that supports meaningful learning. Educational psychology research consistently shows that students learn more effectively in environments where they feel respected and supported. In religious education, this supportive climate also enables students to discuss spiritual questions openly without fear of judgment. The presence of a spiritually grounded teacher who communicates with empathy and sincerity helps create a learning space where faith exploration becomes both intellectually engaging and emotionally meaningful. The contextual setting of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo also contributes to the interpretation of these findings. With 52 Christian students and 18 Christian teachers, the school provides a community environment where Christian values can be reinforced through both formal instruction and social interaction. Nevertheless, the CRE teacher still carries a distinctive responsibility in guiding students' theological understanding and spiritual formation. The statistical evidence from this study suggests that the teacher fulfills this role effectively by embodying the spiritual values presented in Scripture. When students observe that their teacher's lifestyle reflects the message being taught, the credibility of the lesson increases significantly. This alignment between message and messenger strengthens the process of faith internalization. Some students reported

moderate levels of uncertainty regarding the deeper theological aspects of priestly consecration in Exodus 29:35. This indicates that while the teacher's spirituality contributes significantly to students' appreciation of spiritual values, further emphasis on biblical interpretation may enhance students' conceptual understanding. Integrating visual teaching aids, storytelling methods, or collaborative learning activities may help students grasp complex theological themes more effectively. Additionally, the relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the results. Since the research focuses on one school context, the findings should be interpreted as a contextual insight rather than a universal conclusion. Future research could expand the scope by examining multiple schools across different regions to determine whether similar relationships between teacher spirituality and student learning outcomes exist in diverse contexts. Qualitative approaches such as classroom observation or in-depth interviews could also provide richer insights into how teacher spirituality is expressed in daily teaching practice. Nevertheless, the present study provides valuable empirical evidence that teacher spirituality is a crucial dimension of effective Christian Religious Education. The results and discussion demonstrate that the faithful spirituality of the CRE teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Aramo significantly influences students' understanding of the biblical message of spiritual dedication found in Exodus 29:35. The positive correlation between teacher spirituality and student comprehension highlights the importance of integrating personal faith and professional responsibility in religious education. By modeling commitment, integrity, and spiritual discipline, the teacher becomes both an instructor and a living example of the biblical values being taught. This dual role enhances the effectiveness of the educational process and helps students internalize the principles of faithful service to God. Ultimately, the findings confirm that spirituality is not an auxiliary aspect of teacher competence but a central element that shapes the depth and authenticity of Christian learning experiences.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the faithful spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a meaningful role in shaping students' understanding of spiritual commitment as reflected in Exodus 29:35 within the educational context of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo. The quantitative findings demonstrate that students generally perceive their CRE teacher as spiritually committed, consistent in character, and dedicated to the vocation of teaching as a form of service to God. These perceptions are reflected in the high descriptive scores for the teacher spirituality variable, indicating that the teacher's attitudes of faithfulness, integrity, and dedication are clearly visible to students during the learning process. The statistical analysis further reveals a positive and significant relationship between the teacher's faithful spirituality and students' understanding of the biblical message of spiritual dedication presented in Exodus 29:35. Students who perceive their teacher as spiritually authentic and committed tend to demonstrate a stronger comprehension of the theological themes of obedience, faithfulness, and responsibility in serving God. This finding confirms that teacher spirituality is not merely a personal characteristic but a pedagogical factor that contributes to meaningful learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education. The teacher's example functions as a bridge that

connects biblical narratives with students' lived experiences, allowing scriptural teachings to be understood not only intellectually but also morally and spiritually. In the context of SMP Negeri 2 Aramo, where 52 Christian students receive religious instruction within a community that includes 18 Christian teachers, the presence of a spiritually faithful CRE teacher strengthens the process of spiritual formation in the classroom. By demonstrating sincerity, patience, and commitment in daily teaching practices, the teacher models the very values described in Scripture. As a result, students are encouraged to interpret the message of Exodus 29:35 as a call to personal faithfulness, spiritual discipline, and dedication in their own lives. Although this study is limited to a single educational setting and relies primarily on student perceptions, the findings provide important insights into the role of spirituality in teacher professionalism within Christian education. The results suggest that strengthening teacher spirituality should be considered an essential component of professional development for CRE teachers. When teachers embody the spiritual values they teach, they not only explain biblical concepts but also demonstrate their practical significance. The faithful spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers significantly contributes to students' understanding of biblical teachings related to commitment and service to God. By integrating spiritual authenticity with pedagogical practice, CRE teachers can foster deeper theological comprehension and encourage students to live out the values of faithfulness and dedication reflected in Exodus 29:35. Future research is recommended to explore this relationship in broader educational contexts and to incorporate qualitative approaches that can further illuminate how teacher spirituality shapes the dynamics of faith-based learning.

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