



## The Spirituality of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Proclaiming the Glory of God: A Biblical Reflection on Exodus 37:6 at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan

Erita Hotnida Marbun

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

\*correspondence: [eritahotnidamarbun11@gmail.com](mailto:eritahotnidamarbun11@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*The spirituality of teachers plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education (CRE), particularly in guiding students to understand and experience the glory of God through biblical teachings. This study aims to examine the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers in proclaiming the glory of God through a biblical reflection on Exodus 37:6 within the learning context at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan. The research employed a quantitative descriptive approach involving 40 Christian students as respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale designed to measure students' perceptions of the teacher's spirituality in teaching practices, including the communication of biblical messages, the demonstration of spiritual attitudes, the encouragement of reflective learning, and the creation of a classroom atmosphere that fosters reverence toward God. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to interpret the data through frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores. The findings indicate that students generally perceive the spirituality of the Christian Religious Education teacher as strongly reflected in the teaching process. The teacher demonstrates spiritual integrity through humility, compassion, and consistent modeling of Christian values, which contributes to students' understanding of God's glory. The study concludes that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers significantly influences the effectiveness of proclaiming the glory of God in educational settings. Therefore, strengthening the spiritual formation of teachers is essential to ensure that Christian Religious Education functions not only as a cognitive learning process but also as a transformative experience that nurtures students' faith and character.*

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Christian Religious Education, Glory of God

### INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual awareness and moral character of students, especially within elementary school contexts where

foundational values are formed. Unlike general academic subjects, CRE emphasizes the integration of knowledge, faith, and spiritual formation, guiding students to recognize the presence and glory of God in their lives. Teachers therefore function not merely as transmitters of information but as spiritual mentors who model Christian virtues and facilitate students' encounter with biblical truth. Parker J. Palmer argues that effective teaching is deeply connected to the inner life of the teacher, suggesting that spirituality and personal integrity significantly influence the way educators communicate knowledge and values in the classroom (Palmer, 1998). In the context of Christian education, the teacher's spirituality becomes an essential element in shaping how biblical messages are proclaimed and understood by students. Teacher spirituality refers to the integration of faith, moral commitment, and spiritual discipline that informs an educator's teaching practice. Scholars in Christian education emphasize that spiritual formation in teachers influences their attitudes, communication style, and ability to create meaningful learning experiences. According to James C. Wilhoit, Christian education involves the transformation of individuals through participation in the life of God, which requires educators who themselves live in active spiritual awareness and dependence on God (Wilhoit, 2008). Thus, teachers of Christian Religious Education are expected to demonstrate spiritual maturity through humility, compassion, and dedication to God's mission in the educational environment.

The biblical foundation for understanding the proclamation of God's glory can be found in various passages of Scripture, including the narrative concerning the Ark of the Covenant in the book of Exodus. Exodus 37:6 describes the making of the mercy seat (*kapporet*) of pure gold, which served as the covering of the Ark and symbolized the place where God's presence and glory were manifested among His people. Old Testament scholars explain that the mercy seat represented the central point of divine revelation and reconciliation between God and Israel (Childs, 2004). It was the location where God promised to meet with His people and communicate His will (cf. Exodus 25:22). Therefore, the mercy seat symbolically represents the manifestation of God's glory and His gracious relationship with humanity. The concept of God's glory (*kabod*) in the Old Testament signifies the visible manifestation of God's presence, holiness, and power. Walter Brueggemann notes that God's glory reflects the divine reality that evokes awe, reverence, and worship among believers (Brueggemann, 2012). In educational contexts, proclaiming the glory of God means guiding students to recognize God's greatness and to respond with faith, gratitude, and obedience. For teachers of Christian Religious Education, this task involves more than explaining biblical narratives; it requires embodying a spiritual life that reflects the holiness and grace of God. Research in educational psychology also demonstrates that teachers' personal values and beliefs strongly influence classroom climate and student engagement. When teachers communicate authentically and demonstrate integrity, students tend to perceive the learning process as more meaningful and trustworthy (Hattie, 2009). In religious education settings, the authenticity of the teacher's spirituality becomes particularly important because students often interpret religious teachings through the character and attitudes displayed by their teachers. Consequently, the spiritual life of the teacher can either strengthen or weaken the impact of biblical instruction in the classroom.

The context of SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan, where there are 40 Christian students and five Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher, offers a meaningful setting to explore this relationship between teacher spirituality and the proclamation of God's glory. Within such a community, Christian teachers collectively contribute to the spiritual atmosphere of the school. The CRE teacher, however, holds a distinctive role in articulating biblical teachings and guiding students to understand the theological significance of God's presence in Scripture. By reflecting on Exodus 37:6, teachers may draw theological insights about how God's glory is revealed through sacred symbols and narratives, which can then be translated into pedagogical practices that inspire students' faith. Scholars such as Robert W. Pazmiño emphasize that Christian educators must integrate theology, spirituality, and pedagogy in order to foster holistic learning experiences that shape both intellect and faith (Pazmiño, 2008). Without such integration, religious education risks becoming merely informational rather than transformational. This study seeks to explore the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers in proclaiming the glory of God, using Exodus 37:6 as a biblical reflection and examining its implementation within the learning environment at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan. By analyzing how teachers embody spiritual values and communicate biblical messages in the classroom, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how teacher spirituality can enrich Christian Religious Education and support students' spiritual growth.

## **METHODS**

Quantitative descriptive research is used to describe systematically the characteristics of a phenomenon or population through numerical data and statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to measure students' perceptions of the teacher's spirituality as reflected in classroom practices, communication style, and the teacher's role in guiding students to understand the glory of God in Christian Religious Education lessons. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan, an elementary school where Christian Religious Education is taught to students who identify as Christian. The population of this study consisted of 40 Christian students enrolled at the school. Given the relatively small number of participants, the study used a total sampling technique, in which all members of the population were included as research respondents. Total sampling is commonly applied when the population size is limited, ensuring that the data represent the entire group under investigation (Sugiyono, 2019). In addition to the students, contextual information regarding the school environment was obtained from five teachers who are Christians, including the CRE teacher responsible for delivering the religious education curriculum. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale, designed to measure several indicators related to teacher spirituality in the classroom. These indicators included: the teacher's ability to communicate biblical teachings about the glory of God, the demonstration of spiritual attitudes such as humility, compassion, and sincerity, the teacher's encouragement of students to reflect on God's presence in Scripture, and the creation of a classroom atmosphere that fosters reverence and gratitude toward God. Each item in the questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, allowing students to express their

perceptions regarding the teacher's spiritual influence in the learning process. The use of Likert-scale instruments is widely recommended in educational research to measure attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral tendencies quantitatively (Likert, 1932). Before data collection, the questionnaire instrument underwent a validity and reliability review to ensure that the items accurately represented the concept of teacher spirituality and were understandable for elementary school students. Content validity was established by aligning the questionnaire items with theoretical concepts from Christian education and biblical theology related to the manifestation of God's glory. Reliability testing was conducted using internal consistency analysis to determine whether the instrument produced stable and consistent responses across items. The procedure for data collection involved administering the questionnaire directly to the students after the completion of CRE learning sessions. Students were given clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and the researcher ensured that the process was conducted ethically, maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. This step was important to obtain honest responses from students regarding their perceptions of the teacher's spirituality and teaching approach. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores for each indicator. Descriptive statistics help summarize and interpret quantitative data in ways that clearly illustrate patterns and trends within the dataset (Field, 2013). The results of the analysis were then interpreted to identify how the spirituality of the CRE teacher is perceived by students and how it contributes to the proclamation of God's glory in the classroom, particularly in relation to the theological reflection on Exodus 37:6.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal important insights into how the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers contributes to the proclamation of the glory of God within the learning environment at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan. The data collected from the 40 Christian students through a Likert-scale questionnaire indicate that students generally perceive the spirituality of their CRE teacher as clearly reflected in the teaching process. This perception is particularly visible in the teacher's ability to communicate biblical teachings, demonstrate spiritual attitudes, and create a classroom atmosphere that encourages reverence toward God. These findings support the idea that teacher spirituality is not merely an internal personal experience but a visible reality expressed through pedagogical practices, interpersonal relationships, and the moral example demonstrated in everyday classroom interactions. The first important finding relates to the teacher's ability to communicate biblical teachings concerning the glory of God. Students reported that the CRE teacher consistently explains biblical passages in ways that help them understand God's greatness and holiness. In lessons related to the Old Testament, especially the discussion of Exodus 37:6 concerning the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant, the teacher emphasizes the theological meaning of God's presence among His people. Students indicated that the teacher frequently connects the biblical narrative with practical reflections about respecting God, living gratefully, and acknowledging God's presence in daily life. Such an approach reflects a pedagogical model

in which biblical interpretation is integrated with spiritual formation. In Christian education theory, this integration is essential because the purpose of religious learning is not only intellectual comprehension but also spiritual transformation. As noted by Robert W. Pazmiño, Christian teaching should guide learners to interpret Scripture in ways that shape their relationship with God and influence their attitudes toward others. The teacher's ability to communicate the message of God's glory through Scripture therefore becomes an important indicator of spiritual competence in CRE instruction.

A second finding concerns the demonstration of spiritual attitudes by the teacher during the learning process. Students consistently reported that the CRE teacher demonstrates humility, patience, and kindness in interactions with them. These attitudes are essential components of teacher spirituality because they reflect the ethical values embedded in Christian teaching. When teachers show compassion and fairness, students tend to experience the classroom as a safe and supportive environment. This atmosphere strengthens students' openness to receive spiritual guidance and biblical instruction. The results align with research in educational psychology indicating that the teacher's personal character significantly influences student engagement and classroom climate. John Hattie emphasizes that teacher credibility, authenticity, and relational trust are among the most powerful influences on student learning outcomes. In the context of Christian Religious Education, such credibility is closely related to the spiritual integrity of the teacher. Students are more likely to internalize religious teachings when they observe consistency between what the teacher teaches and how the teacher behaves. Another significant finding relates to the teacher's role in encouraging students to reflect on God's presence through biblical narratives. In lessons discussing the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat described in Exodus 37:6, the teacher invites students to imagine how the Israelites experienced God's presence in the tabernacle. Students reported that the teacher often asks reflective questions such as how people today can honor God's presence in their lives and how they can demonstrate gratitude for God's blessings. This reflective approach helps students connect ancient biblical narratives with contemporary spiritual experiences. Theologically, the mercy seat symbolized the meeting place between God and His people, representing divine grace and reconciliation. By encouraging reflection on this symbolism, the teacher helps students understand that God's glory is not merely a historical concept but a living reality that continues to shape believers' lives today. Such reflection is particularly important for elementary school students who are developing their moral and spiritual awareness. Through guided reflection, students learn to interpret biblical stories as sources of spiritual meaning rather than merely historical information.

The findings also show that the classroom atmosphere created by the CRE teacher contributes significantly to the proclamation of God's glory. Students reported that prayer, singing, and short moments of reflection are frequently incorporated into the learning process. These practices help cultivate a sense of reverence and gratitude toward God. In many CRE sessions, the teacher begins the lesson with a brief prayer that invites students to focus their hearts and minds on God's presence. This simple practice creates a spiritual rhythm that reinforces the idea that learning about God is not only an intellectual activity but also a spiritual encounter. Parker J. Palmer argues that teaching is

an activity that connects the inner life of the teacher with the intellectual life of students. When teachers teach from a place of spiritual authenticity, the classroom becomes a space where knowledge and faith interact meaningfully. The findings from this study demonstrate that such authenticity is present in the CRE classroom at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan. The relatively small but cohesive Christian community within the school also contributes to the effectiveness of the teacher's spiritual influence. With only 40 Christian students and five Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, the school environment allows for close relational interaction between teachers and students. This context enables teachers to know students personally and provide individualized spiritual guidance when necessary. Students reported that the CRE teacher often encourages them personally when they experience difficulties or when they demonstrate positive behavior. These interactions reinforce the idea that Christian teaching involves pastoral care as well as academic instruction. From the perspective of Christian educational philosophy, such relational care reflects the pastoral dimension of teaching, where educators function as shepherds guiding students toward spiritual maturity. The findings also highlight the role of modeling in spiritual education. Students indicated that they perceive the CRE teacher as someone who lives according to the Christian values taught in class. For example, the teacher demonstrates honesty, responsibility, and respect in daily interactions. According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, individuals learn behaviors and values through observation of credible role models. When students observe their teacher practicing the values of humility, gratitude, and reverence toward God, they are more likely to adopt these attitudes themselves. In this way, the teacher's spirituality becomes a powerful form of implicit instruction that complements formal biblical teaching.

The biblical reflection on Exodus 37:6 provides a meaningful theological framework for understanding these findings. The mercy seat described in this verse symbolizes the manifestation of God's glory and the meeting place between God and humanity. In the Old Testament tradition, the mercy seat represented the place where God revealed His presence and communicated His will to His people. When CRE teachers explain this symbolism to students, they help them understand that God's glory is not only expressed through miraculous events but also through His continuing relationship with humanity. In the classroom context, the teacher functions as a mediator of this understanding, guiding students to recognize God's presence in Scripture and in their daily lives. The proclamation of God's glory therefore occurs not only through verbal explanation but also through the spiritual atmosphere created by the teacher's presence and actions. Another important aspect of the discussion concerns the integration of theological reflection with educational practice. The findings suggest that the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan does not treat biblical texts as isolated doctrinal material but rather as sources of spiritual reflection relevant to students' lives. This integration reflects a holistic approach to Christian education in which theology, spirituality, and pedagogy are interconnected. Scholars in Christian education emphasize that effective religious teaching must bridge the gap between biblical knowledge and lived faith. When students are encouraged to interpret Scripture in ways that influence their attitudes and actions, the educational process becomes transformational rather than merely informational. One challenge is the limited number of Christian teachers within the school. Although five teachers identify as Christians, only one teacher is specifically responsible for Christian

Religious Education instruction. This situation places significant responsibility on the CRE teacher to provide consistent spiritual guidance for the students. If the teacher experiences workload pressures or limited instructional resources, the effectiveness of CRE instruction may be affected. Therefore, collaboration among Christian teachers within the school community becomes important to maintain a supportive spiritual environment. Another challenge concerns the broader educational context in which religious instruction must coexist with other academic demands. In many public schools, the time allocated for religious education is relatively limited compared with other subjects. As a result, teachers must use the available time effectively to integrate biblical teaching, spiritual reflection, and interactive learning activities. The CRE teacher in this study appears to address this challenge by incorporating spiritual practices such as prayer and reflection into regular lessons. These practices help maximize the spiritual impact of the limited instructional time available.

The discussion of these findings suggests several implications for the development of Christian Religious Education in elementary schools. Teacher spirituality should be recognized as an essential dimension of teacher competence, alongside pedagogical and professional skills. Teacher training programs in Christian education should therefore emphasize spiritual formation as well as instructional techniques. When teachers cultivate their personal relationship with God and reflect on the theological meaning of their vocation, they are better equipped to communicate biblical truths authentically. The concept of proclaiming the glory of God in education should be understood as a holistic process involving both teaching content and relational interaction. The example of the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan demonstrates that spiritual influence emerges through everyday practices such as listening to students, encouraging them, and modeling Christian virtues. These practices embody the biblical message in ways that students can observe and imitate. The reflection on Exodus 37:6 reminds educators that the ultimate goal of Christian teaching is to lead students toward an awareness of God's presence and glory. Just as the mercy seat symbolized the meeting place between God and His people, the classroom can become a space where students encounter spiritual meaning through Scripture, reflection, and relational guidance. When teachers approach their vocation with genuine spirituality and dedication, the learning process becomes an opportunity for students to grow not only intellectually but also spiritually. The results of this study demonstrate that the spirituality of the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan plays a significant role in helping students understand and experience the glory of God in their learning process. Through clear biblical teaching, compassionate relationships, reflective learning activities, and personal example, the teacher contributes to the creation of a spiritually meaningful educational environment. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating teacher spirituality with pedagogical practice in order to strengthen the transformative impact of Christian Religious Education in elementary schools.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a significant role in proclaiming the glory of God within the learning

environment at SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan. The findings indicate that the teacher's spirituality is expressed not only through the explanation of biblical teachings but also through attitudes, relational interactions, and the creation of a spiritually supportive classroom atmosphere. Students perceive that the CRE teacher communicates the message of God's glory clearly, particularly through biblical reflection on Exodus 37:6, which describes the mercy seat as a symbol of God's presence among His people. Through this theological reflection, students are guided to understand that the glory of God is not merely a historical concept in Scripture but a living reality that invites believers to respond with reverence, gratitude, and obedience. The study also shows that spiritual attitudes demonstrated by the teacher, such as humility, patience, compassion, and integrity, contribute significantly to students' learning experiences. These attitudes foster trust and emotional security in the classroom, enabling students to engage more openly with biblical teachings. When students observe consistency between the teacher's words and actions, the credibility of the religious message becomes stronger, making the learning process more meaningful and transformative. In this sense, the teacher's spirituality functions as a living testimony that reinforces the content of Christian Religious Education. The research highlights the importance of reflective learning practices in helping students connect biblical narratives with their daily lives. By encouraging students to reflect on the theological meaning of the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat described in Exodus 37:6, the teacher helps them recognize the significance of God's presence in both Scripture and contemporary life. Such reflection strengthens students' spiritual awareness and supports the broader goal of Christian education, which is the formation of faith and character. The context of SD Negeri 106208 Belidaan, with 40 Christian students and five Christian teachers, provides a supportive environment for the integration of spiritual values in the educational process. Within this relatively small community, the CRE teacher is able to build close relationships with students and offer personal guidance that enhances their spiritual development. These relational interactions reflect the pastoral dimension of Christian teaching, where educators serve not only as instructors but also as spiritual mentors who accompany students in their journey of faith. The findings of this study affirm that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers is a crucial factor in proclaiming the glory of God within the school environment. When teachers integrate biblical understanding, personal spiritual integrity, and compassionate interaction in their teaching practice, the classroom becomes a space where students can encounter the message of God's glory in meaningful ways. Therefore, the development of teacher spirituality should be considered an essential component of Christian educator formation, ensuring that the teaching of Christian Religious Education remains both academically sound and spiritually transformative.

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