



Interpreting God's Word in Modern Education: The Role of Christian Religious Education Teachers at SDN 156319 Muara Ore in Light of Exodus 33:11

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ABSTRACT

Christian Religious Education teachers play a crucial role not only in delivering religious knowledge but also in interpreting biblical teachings for students within contemporary educational contexts. This study aims to examine the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word in modern education through a theological reflection on Book of Exodus 33:11. The research focuses on how biblical interpretation can guide teachers in communicating spiritual values and moral teachings to students effectively. The study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze scholarly literature related to Christian pedagogy, biblical interpretation, and the professional responsibilities of Christian Religious Education teachers. The findings indicate that Christian Religious Education teachers function as mediators who interpret and contextualize biblical teachings so that they remain meaningful for students in modern educational environments. The narrative of Exodus 33:11, which portrays the intimate communication between God and Moses, provides a theological framework that highlights the responsibility of educators to convey God's message faithfully and responsibly. This research concludes that the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word is essential for fostering students' spiritual development and moral formation. By integrating theological reflection with contextual teaching strategies, teachers can help students understand the relevance of biblical teachings in contemporary life and encourage them to embody Christian values in their personal and social relationships.

Keywords: *Christian Religious Education, Biblical Interpretation, Teacher's Role, Christian Pedagogy, Exodus 33:11*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of students. In many educational systems, religious education is not merely

a subject that transmits doctrinal knowledge but also a formative process that nurtures character, values, and spiritual awareness among learners. Within the context of Christian education, teachers of Christian Religious Education (CRE) carry a unique responsibility because they function not only as educators but also as mediators and interpreters of biblical truth for their students. The role of the teacher therefore extends beyond academic instruction to include spiritual guidance and moral formation grounded in biblical teachings (Law-Davis et al., 2019). In contemporary educational contexts, the responsibility of interpreting Scripture becomes increasingly complex. Modern classrooms are characterized by rapid social change, technological advancement, and diverse cultural backgrounds that influence students' perceptions of faith and spirituality. As a result, Christian Religious Education teachers must be able to contextualize biblical teachings so that they remain relevant and meaningful for students living in a modern world. Research in Christian pedagogy indicates that effective religious education requires teachers to integrate theological understanding with pedagogical competence, enabling students to connect biblical narratives with their daily experiences and ethical decisions (Sitanggang & Sitorus, 2024). The interpretation of Scripture is a central element in Christian Religious Education because the Bible functions as the primary source of faith, doctrine, and moral guidance. Biblical interpretation, commonly referred to as exegesis, involves explaining and applying biblical texts in ways that are faithful to their original meaning while also addressing contemporary contexts. Historically, the discipline of biblical exegesis has played an important role in theological education and the formation of Christian teaching traditions, emphasizing the need for careful and responsible interpretation of sacred texts (Ireland, 1847/modern reference). In the classroom, this interpretive responsibility becomes especially important because teachers shape how students understand biblical narratives, theological concepts, and moral principles. The need for competent biblical interpretation is particularly significant in the teaching of Christian Religious Education at the elementary level. At this stage, students are in a formative period of cognitive and moral development in which foundational beliefs and values begin to take shape. Teachers must therefore present biblical teachings in ways that are both pedagogically appropriate and spiritually meaningful. Studies on religious education emphasize that storytelling, contextual explanation, and dialogical interaction are effective strategies for helping students understand Scripture and apply its values in everyday life (Manullang, 2024). Through such approaches, biblical stories become not merely historical narratives but sources of ethical reflection and spiritual guidance. In addition to pedagogical competence, the personal character and spiritual integrity of the teacher also play a significant role in the interpretation and communication of God's Word. Christian Religious Education teachers are often perceived by students as role models whose attitudes, behaviors, and values reflect the teachings they communicate. When teachers demonstrate consistency between their teaching and their personal lives, students tend to develop deeper trust and engagement with religious instruction. Empirical studies have shown that students often understand Christian values more effectively when they observe them being practiced by their teachers in everyday interactions (Sihite & Panggabean, 2023). This highlights the importance of integrating spiritual authenticity with instructional competence in Christian pedagogy. Another important dimension of Christian Religious Education is the teacher's role as a facilitator of spiritual reflection and moral development. In this role, teachers guide students to

explore the meaning of biblical teachings and encourage them to reflect on how those teachings relate to contemporary life challenges. Research on Christian pedagogy suggests that religious education becomes transformative when students are encouraged to engage critically with biblical texts, interpret their relevance, and apply them to real-life situations (Hallam et al., 2015). This process helps students develop not only biblical literacy but also ethical sensitivity and spiritual maturity.

The theological foundation for understanding the role of teachers as interpreters of God's Word can be found in various biblical passages, including Exodus 33:11. This verse describes the intimate relationship between God and Moses, stating that the Lord spoke to Moses "face to face, as one speaks to a friend." The narrative emphasizes the idea of divine communication and the responsibility of mediating God's message to the people. In the broader biblical narrative, Moses functions as a mediator who receives divine revelation and communicates it to the community of Israel. Theologically, this passage can be interpreted as a model for understanding the role of spiritual leaders and educators who are entrusted with conveying God's message faithfully to others. Within the context of Christian education, the example of Moses provides a meaningful framework for reflecting on the role of teachers as interpreters of God's Word. Just as Moses served as a mediator between God and the Israelites, Christian Religious Education teachers serve as mediators who help students understand the meaning of Scripture and apply its teachings to their lives. This interpretive role requires not only theological knowledge but also spiritual sensitivity, pedagogical creativity, and cultural awareness. Teachers must be able to translate biblical truths into language and experiences that resonate with the realities of modern students. The relevance of this interpretive role becomes increasingly evident in modern educational environments where students are exposed to diverse worldviews, ethical dilemmas, and social influences. Contemporary religious education therefore requires approaches that integrate biblical literacy with critical thinking and contextual understanding. Studies have shown that when students are encouraged to analyze biblical texts critically and relate them to contemporary social and ethical issues, they develop stronger engagement with religious learning and deeper personal reflection on faith (ISAR Research Group, 2023). Such approaches demonstrate that Christian education can remain faithful to biblical traditions while simultaneously responding to the intellectual and cultural challenges of modern society. Challenges may include limited training in biblical hermeneutics, reliance on literal or thematic interpretations without deeper contextual analysis, and the difficulty of connecting ancient biblical narratives with modern student experiences. Research on the use of Scripture in religious education indicates that inadequate interpretive approaches can result in superficial understanding of biblical texts and limit students' ability to appreciate the richness of biblical theology (ACU Research Bank, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires intentional efforts to strengthen both theological competence and pedagogical strategies among teachers of Christian Religious Education. The role of Christian Religious Education teachers in public schools is particularly significant because they operate within a multicultural and multireligious educational environment. Teachers must therefore communicate Christian teachings in ways that are both faithful to biblical principles and respectful of the broader social context. This responsibility requires wisdom, sensitivity, and professionalism in interpreting and presenting biblical messages. By fostering a learning environment that emphasizes respect, dialogue, and moral reflection, Christian

Religious Education teachers can contribute not only to students' spiritual growth but also to the development of harmonious relationships in diverse communities. Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word in the context of modern education. Specifically, it examines how the theological message of Exodus 33:11 can inform and inspire the interpretive responsibilities of teachers in Christian Religious Education. By focusing on the educational context of SDN 156319 Muara Ore, this research seeks to provide a contextual reflection on how biblical interpretation, pedagogical practice, and teacher spirituality intersect in the process of religious education. Through this exploration, the study intends to contribute to the broader discourse on Christian pedagogy by highlighting the importance of integrating biblical theology with contemporary educational practices in shaping students' spiritual and moral development.

METHODS

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to examine the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word in modern educational contexts, particularly in relation to the theological reflection found in Book of Exodus 33:11. A systematic literature review was selected because it allows researchers to collect, analyze, and synthesize findings from previous scholarly studies in a structured and transparent manner. Through this approach, relevant academic literature can be critically evaluated in order to build a comprehensive understanding of a particular research topic and to identify patterns, gaps, and theoretical contributions within the existing body of knowledge (Snyder, 2019). The SLR method is widely used in educational and social science research because it provides a rigorous process for reviewing scholarly publications. According to Hannah Snyder (2019), systematic reviews enable researchers to synthesize evidence from multiple studies in order to develop theoretical insights and conceptual frameworks. Similarly, Mark Petticrew and Helen Roberts (2006) emphasize that systematic reviews provide an organized process for identifying and evaluating relevant research, thereby improving the reliability and credibility of research conclusions. In the context of religious education research, SLR is particularly useful for integrating insights from theology, pedagogy, and educational practice. The process of conducting the systematic literature review in this study followed several stages. The first stage involved identifying research questions related to the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of Scripture and the theological relevance of Exodus 33:11 in educational contexts. These research questions guided the selection of literature and ensured that the review remained focused on the central themes of biblical interpretation, teacher responsibility, and Christian pedagogy. The second stage involved searching for relevant academic sources. Literature was collected from reputable academic databases such as Google Scholar, CrossRef, and various peer-reviewed journal repositories focusing on theology, religious education, and educational studies. Keywords used in the search process included "Christian Religious Education teachers," "biblical interpretation in education," "teacher as interpreter of Scripture," "Christian pedagogy," and "Exodus 33:11 theological reflection." The search prioritized publications from the last ten years in order to ensure that the literature reflected current scholarly discussions and contemporary educational contexts. However, several foundational theoretical

works were also included to provide conceptual grounding for the analysis. The third stage consisted of applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the quality and relevance of the selected literature. Inclusion criteria required that the sources be peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, or academic conference papers discussing Christian education, biblical interpretation, or teacher roles in religious instruction. Studies focusing on unrelated educational fields or lacking clear methodological foundations were excluded. This filtering process helped ensure that the reviewed sources were academically credible and directly related to the objectives of the research. The fourth stage involved analyzing and synthesizing the selected literature. Each source was carefully examined to identify key themes, theoretical perspectives, and research findings related to the role of teachers in interpreting biblical texts. The analysis focused on three primary dimensions: theological foundations of biblical interpretation, pedagogical practices in Christian Religious Education, and the spiritual and professional responsibilities of teachers in communicating biblical messages to students. Through thematic analysis, recurring concepts and patterns were identified and integrated into a coherent framework for understanding the teacher's interpretive role. The results of the literature analysis were synthesized to develop a conceptual understanding of how Christian Religious Education teachers function as interpreters of God's Word in modern educational settings. By integrating insights from theology and educational research, the systematic literature review provided a comprehensive theoretical basis for examining how biblical teachings particularly those reflected in Exodus 33:11, can inform the professional and spiritual responsibilities of teachers in contemporary Christian education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word has become increasingly significant in modern educational contexts. In many schools, Christian Religious Education is expected not only to provide doctrinal knowledge but also to cultivate spiritual maturity, moral awareness, and character development among students. Teachers therefore function as mediators who translate biblical teachings into educational experiences that are meaningful and relevant for contemporary learners. The process of interpretation involves understanding the theological message of Scripture, contextualizing it within present realities, and communicating it in ways that encourage students to internalize Christian values in their daily lives (Groome, 2018). Within this framework, the teacher's interpretive role becomes a central element of Christian pedagogy, particularly when biblical narratives are used as foundations for ethical reflection and spiritual formation. One biblical passage that provides a strong theological basis for understanding the interpretive role of spiritual leaders and educators is Book of Exodus 33:11. The verse describes a unique relationship between God and Moses, stating that the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as one speaks to a friend. This narrative illustrates a profound model of communication between the divine and human realms, emphasizing intimacy, trust, and responsibility. Moses is portrayed as a mediator who receives divine revelation and communicates it to the people of Israel. Theologically, this passage highlights the importance of faithful transmission of God's message and the responsibility of those entrusted with spiritual leadership. In the context of Christian education, this role can be analogically applied to teachers who guide students in

understanding the meaning of Scripture and applying its teachings to their lives. Biblical interpretation in educational settings requires both theological competence and pedagogical skill. Teachers must be able to analyze biblical texts responsibly while also presenting them in ways that are understandable for students at different developmental stages. The discipline of biblical hermeneutics emphasizes the importance of examining historical, literary, and theological contexts when interpreting Scripture (Osborne, 2006). Without such interpretive awareness, biblical teaching may become superficial or disconnected from the broader message of the Bible. Christian Religious Education teachers therefore need to possess sufficient biblical literacy and theological understanding to ensure that their teaching reflects the original intent of the text while remaining relevant to contemporary learners. Effective interpretation of Scripture in the classroom also requires contextualization. Modern students live in a world shaped by rapid technological change, global communication, and diverse cultural influences. These factors influence how students perceive religious teachings and spiritual values. As a result, teachers must be able to bridge the gap between ancient biblical narratives and modern experiences. According to Christian educational theorists, contextualization involves presenting biblical teachings in ways that resonate with the social realities, cultural background, and moral challenges faced by students (Banks & Banks, 2016). When biblical stories are connected to real-life situations, students are more likely to understand their relevance and apply their ethical principles in everyday decision-making. The interpretive role of teachers is closely related to their professional competencies. In educational research, teacher competence generally includes pedagogical, professional, social, and personal dimensions. Within Christian Religious Education, these competencies must also be integrated with spiritual maturity and theological insight. Teachers who possess strong biblical understanding and spiritual commitment are better equipped to communicate the message of Scripture with authenticity and conviction. Studies on religious education have shown that students are more engaged in faith-based learning when teachers demonstrate both intellectual mastery of biblical content and genuine personal faith (Hull, 2017). This combination of knowledge and character enables teachers to serve as credible interpreters of Scripture within the educational environment. The personal example of the teacher also plays a crucial role in the interpretation of God's Word. Christian education emphasizes the principle that teaching is not limited to verbal instruction but is also expressed through attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships. Students often observe how teachers live out the values they teach, and this observation significantly influences their perception of Christian teachings. When teachers demonstrate humility, compassion, integrity, and responsibility, they embody the ethical principles found in biblical narratives. Such embodiment reinforces the interpretation of Scripture because students see its practical application in everyday life. Consequently, the teacher becomes a living example of the values derived from the biblical message. Another important dimension of the teacher's interpretive role is the ability to facilitate dialogue and reflection in the classroom. Modern educational theory emphasizes student-centered learning approaches that encourage participation, critical thinking, and reflective discussion. In Christian Religious Education, these approaches can help students engage more deeply with biblical texts. Rather than presenting Scripture as a collection of fixed answers, teachers can invite students to explore the meaning of biblical narratives and consider their implications for contemporary issues. Through

guided discussion, students learn to interpret biblical teachings in relation to moral dilemmas, social relationships, and personal challenges. This dialogical approach encourages students to develop a more mature and reflective understanding of their faith. The narrative of Moses in Exodus 33:11 also offers insights into the spiritual dimension of interpretation. The intimate relationship between God and Moses demonstrates that effective interpretation of divine messages requires spiritual sensitivity and devotion. Moses' role as mediator was grounded in his close relationship with God, which enabled him to communicate divine guidance to the people of Israel. For Christian Religious Education teachers, this narrative underscores the importance of personal spirituality in the teaching process. Teachers who cultivate their own spiritual lives through prayer, reflection, and engagement with Scripture are more likely to communicate biblical teachings with depth and authenticity. Spiritual formation therefore becomes an essential component of professional preparation for teachers of Christian Religious Education.

The interpretive role of teachers must also consider the developmental characteristics of students. Children at the elementary level often understand concepts through narratives, examples, and concrete experiences rather than abstract theological explanations. Teachers must therefore translate biblical teachings into language and illustrations that are accessible to young learners. Storytelling, visual aids, role-playing, and interactive activities are effective strategies for helping students grasp the meaning of biblical narratives. By presenting biblical stories in engaging and relatable ways, teachers can help students develop a deeper appreciation for Scripture while also nurturing their moral imagination. The integration of biblical interpretation with character education represents another significant aspect of Christian Religious Education. Many educational systems emphasize the importance of character development as a fundamental goal of schooling. Christian education contributes to this goal by drawing on biblical teachings that emphasize virtues such as love, justice, humility, and compassion. When teachers interpret biblical narratives within the framework of character formation, students can see how spiritual values relate to their daily interactions with others. For example, the relational dimension of Exodus 33:11, which portrays communication between God and Moses as a friendship-like interaction, can inspire discussions about trust, loyalty, and faithfulness in human relationships. Such reflections help students recognize that biblical teachings are not merely historical accounts but sources of guidance for ethical living.

The relevance of the teacher's interpretive role becomes particularly evident in multicultural and multireligious societies such as Indonesia. In these contexts, Christian Religious Education teachers must communicate biblical teachings while maintaining respect for the diversity of beliefs present in the broader educational environment. This requires sensitivity and wisdom in presenting Christian doctrines in ways that emphasize universal moral values such as honesty, compassion, and respect for others. By highlighting the ethical dimensions of biblical teachings, teachers can contribute to the development of social harmony and mutual understanding among students from different backgrounds. Educational research also emphasizes the importance of integrating technology and innovative teaching methods in modern classrooms. Digital resources, multimedia presentations, and interactive learning platforms can enhance the teaching of biblical narratives by making them more engaging and accessible to students. For example, visual storytelling, animated biblical stories, and virtual learning

environments can help students visualize historical contexts and understand complex narratives more easily. When used thoughtfully, technology can support the interpretive work of teachers by providing new ways of presenting biblical content and encouraging active student participation in the learning process. Despite these opportunities, the interpretive role of teachers also faces several challenges. One challenge involves balancing theological depth with pedagogical simplicity. Teachers must ensure that their explanations remain faithful to the theological meaning of the text while also being understandable for students. Another challenge involves addressing students' questions and doubts in a way that encourages exploration without undermining the authority of Scripture. In modern educational contexts, students are often exposed to diverse perspectives through media and digital platforms, which can influence their understanding of religious teachings. Teachers must therefore be prepared to guide discussions thoughtfully and provide balanced explanations that integrate faith and reason. Professional development and continuous learning are essential for strengthening the interpretive competence of Christian Religious Education teachers. Participation in theological training, biblical studies workshops, and educational seminars can help teachers deepen their understanding of Scripture and improve their teaching strategies. Collaboration with fellow educators and engagement with academic research also provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their pedagogical practices and explore new approaches to biblical interpretation. Through ongoing professional growth, teachers can enhance their ability to communicate the message of Scripture effectively in the classroom.

In the specific context of SDN 156319 Muara Ore, the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word carries particular significance. Elementary school students in this context are at an important stage of character and spiritual development, and the guidance provided by teachers can have a lasting influence on their understanding of faith. By interpreting biblical narratives in ways that connect with the everyday experiences of students, teachers can help them see the relevance of Christian teachings in their relationships with family, friends, and the broader community. The educational environment thus becomes a space where biblical values are not only learned but also practiced in daily interactions. The interpretive approach inspired by Exodus 33:11 encourages teachers to emphasize relational aspects of faith. The passage portrays communication between God and Moses as personal and relational rather than distant or purely formal. This relational dimension can be reflected in the teaching practices of Christian Religious Education teachers who seek to build supportive relationships with their students. When students feel respected, valued, and understood by their teachers, they are more likely to engage openly in discussions about faith and moral values. Such relationships create a learning environment that fosters trust, reflection, and spiritual growth. Another important implication of this study is the recognition that biblical interpretation in education is not a purely academic exercise but a holistic process involving intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Teachers interpret Scripture not only through their explanations but also through their attitudes, interactions, and educational practices. In this sense, the classroom becomes a space where biblical teachings are experienced as living realities rather than abstract concepts. By integrating theological reflection with practical teaching strategies, Christian Religious Education teachers can help students discover the transformative power of God's Word in their

lives. The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word in modern education. This role involves a combination of biblical literacy, pedagogical competence, spiritual integrity, and contextual awareness. The theological reflection on Exodus 33:11 provides a meaningful framework for understanding how teachers can mediate the message of Scripture to students in ways that are faithful to biblical tradition while also relevant to contemporary life. Through responsible interpretation and effective teaching practices, Christian Religious Education teachers can contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral formation of students in today's educational landscape.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word within the context of modern education, particularly through a theological reflection on Book of Exodus 33:11. The discussion highlights that the responsibility of teachers in Christian Religious Education extends beyond the transmission of religious knowledge. Instead, teachers function as mediators who interpret biblical teachings and translate them into meaningful educational experiences that guide students toward spiritual growth, moral awareness, and character development. In this sense, the teacher's role integrates theological understanding, pedagogical competence, and spiritual authenticity in order to ensure that biblical teachings remain relevant in contemporary educational environments. The narrative of Moses in Exodus 33:11 provides a profound theological model for understanding the interpretive responsibility of Christian educators. The passage portrays Moses as a mediator who communicates with God intimately and conveys divine guidance to the people of Israel. This relational dynamic illustrates that the interpretation of God's message requires not only intellectual comprehension but also a close spiritual relationship with God. For Christian Religious Education teachers, this model emphasizes that effective biblical interpretation in the classroom must be rooted in personal spirituality, theological reflection, and faithful engagement with Scripture. Teachers who cultivate a deep spiritual life and a strong understanding of biblical theology are better equipped to communicate the message of Scripture in ways that inspire students and strengthen their faith. The findings of this study also demonstrate that the interpretive role of teachers requires the integration of biblical hermeneutics with effective pedagogical strategies. In modern educational contexts characterized by technological development, cultural diversity, and changing social values, teachers must be able to contextualize biblical teachings so that they resonate with the experiences and challenges faced by students. By connecting biblical narratives with everyday life situations, teachers help students recognize that Scripture offers practical guidance for ethical decision-making and personal character formation. Such contextualization ensures that biblical teachings are not perceived merely as historical accounts but as living sources of wisdom that continue to shape moral and spiritual life. The study underscores the importance of the teacher's personal character and example in the interpretation of God's Word. Christian Religious Education teachers do not interpret Scripture solely through verbal explanation but also through their attitudes, relationships, and daily conduct. Students often learn Christian values by observing how teachers demonstrate integrity, compassion, humility, and responsibility in their interactions. When teachers embody the ethical principles derived from biblical

teachings, they reinforce the credibility of their instruction and provide students with concrete examples of how Christian values can be practiced in real life.

Another significant implication of this research is the recognition that biblical interpretation in education should encourage dialogue, reflection, and critical engagement with Scripture. Student-centered learning approaches allow learners to explore the meaning of biblical narratives, ask questions, and reflect on how these teachings apply to contemporary social and personal issues. Such approaches foster deeper engagement with Christian teachings and help students develop both biblical literacy and moral reasoning. In this way, Christian Religious Education becomes a transformative process that shapes not only intellectual understanding but also spiritual identity and ethical awareness. The role of Christian Religious Education teachers as interpreters of God's Word is essential for nurturing the spiritual and moral development of students in modern educational contexts. Through responsible biblical interpretation, contextualized teaching practices, and authentic spiritual example, teachers can guide students to understand the relevance of Scripture in their lives. The reflection on Exodus 33:11 reminds educators that interpreting God's Word is a sacred responsibility that requires faithfulness, wisdom, and dedication. By embracing this responsibility, Christian Religious Education teachers can contribute meaningfully to the formation of students who not only understand biblical teachings but also embody their values in everyday life.

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