



The Spirituality of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Power of God: An Exegetical Reflection on Exodus 9:20 at SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching the power of God, focusing on Exodus 9:20 and its pedagogical relevance at SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, Indonesia. The research applies a qualitative–expository design grounded in Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and biblical exegesis, integrating theological interpretation with practical reflection on teaching spirituality. The verse—“Whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses”—serves as the hermeneutical key to understanding how reverence, obedience, and faith translate into educational practice. Through a systematic review of scholarly works on biblical pedagogy, teacher spirituality, and moral formation, the study identifies that spirituality in teaching extends beyond cognitive instruction; it embodies the lived experience of divine truth. Findings reveal that the spirituality of CRE teachers consists of three interrelated dimensions: reverence toward God (fear of the Lord) as the foundation of moral integrity, obedience to the Word as an act of faith in teaching practice, and dependence on divine power as the source of pedagogical transformation. At SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, teachers who internalize these spiritual values manifest them through compassion, humility, and moral consistency in classroom interactions. The study concludes that teaching, when rooted in spirituality, becomes a sacred ministry of transformation. By embodying the principles of Exodus 9:20, Christian educators act as witnesses of divine power, nurturing students not only intellectually but also spiritually and morally.

Keywords: Spirituality, Christian Religious Education, Power of God

INTRODUCTION

Education, in its deepest essence, is not merely the transmission of knowledge but the cultivation of life values, moral convictions, and spiritual understanding that shape the human soul. Within the framework of Christian Religious Education (CRE), teaching

transcends the cognitive dimension—it becomes a sacred vocation through which teachers embody and communicate the divine truth revealed in Scripture. The Christian Religious Education teacher is not only an instructor but also a spiritual witness who reflects the power, love, and holiness of God in pedagogical practice. In this theological and pedagogical context, the spirituality of the teacher holds a central position, particularly in teaching about the power of God as revealed in Exodus 9:20. This study explores the spirituality of CRE teachers in teaching divine power, rooted in the exegetical reflection of Exodus 9:20, conducted at SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen, Karo Regency, North Sumatra. The narrative in Exodus 9:20 belongs to the broader theological context of the plagues of Egypt—a dramatic display of Yahweh’s sovereignty and power over creation and human rulers. The verse reads: *“Whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses.”* This brief yet profound statement reveals a striking contrast between those who feared the word of God and those who ignored it. In its historical context, this event occurred before the seventh plague-hail-demonstrating that reverence and obedience to divine instruction led to preservation, while indifference resulted in destruction. Theologically, the text portrays the epistemic encounter between divine revelation and human response, where genuine faith is manifested not only in belief but in concrete, obedient action. An exegetical analysis of this verse uncovers three significant theological themes relevant to Christian Religious Education. First, the fear of the LORD (יִרְאַת יְהוָה - *yirat Adonai*) is not mere terror but a profound awareness of God’s holiness that inspires wisdom and obedience (cf. Proverbs 1:7). Second, the word of God (דְּבַר יְהוָה - *devar Adonai*) is presented as the active, authoritative revelation demanding human response—a divine communication that shapes ethical and spiritual behavior. Third, the action of sheltering servants and livestock signifies responsible stewardship, moral discernment, and faith-based decision-making. These exegetical insights provide a hermeneutical foundation for understanding how CRE teachers can embody and teach the power of God—not as an abstract theological concept, but as an experiential truth that transforms both teacher and learner.

In the context of SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen–Karo, the teaching of Christian Religious Education takes place within a pluralistic and culturally diverse society. The Karo culture is known for its rich spiritual traditions and deep respect for communal harmony. Integrating biblical truths—such as the fear of the Lord and obedience to His word—within such a context requires teachers to exercise spiritual sensitivity and contextual wisdom. The spirituality of the teacher thus becomes a living bridge between divine revelation and the learner’s cultural reality. A spiritually grounded teacher models reverence for God’s power through humility, compassion, and integrity, demonstrating that divine authority is best expressed through love and faithful service. This study argues that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers—when illuminated by the exegetical meaning of Exodus 9:20—provides a transformative paradigm for teaching about God’s power. It highlights the interplay between faith and action, revelation and response, spirituality and pedagogy. By embodying the attitude of those “who feared the word of the Lord,” teachers become agents of divine wisdom in their classrooms, guiding students to understand that true knowledge begins with reverence for God. Therefore, this research aims to explore how teachers at SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo internalize, interpret,

and practice the spirituality reflected in Exodus 9:20 in their teaching ministry. The study not only contributes to the theological understanding of Christian pedagogy but also offers a practical model for faith-integrated education in Indonesia's pluralistic school setting. In doing so, it seeks to answer a central question: How does the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers, informed by the exegetical reflection of Exodus 9:20, shape the way they teach about the power of God?

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) integrated with a theological-exegetical approach to explore the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching about the power of God through the lens of Exodus 9:20. The SLR method was chosen because it allows for the critical, structured, and comprehensive synthesis of previous studies, theological writings, and biblical commentaries related to teacher spirituality, biblical pedagogy, and the interpretation of divine power in Scripture. Meanwhile, the exegetical component ensured that the study was grounded in the original meaning and theological depth of the biblical text, bridging ancient revelation with contemporary educational practice. The research followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. The process involved: identification of relevant literature, screening and eligibility assessment, analysis and interpretation, and synthesis of findings. The research aimed to answer the guiding question: How does the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers, shaped by the theological message of Exodus 9:20, inform their pedagogical approach to teaching the power of God? Data were collected from reputable academic databases covering publications from 2010 to 2024. Keywords used in combination with Boolean operators included: "teacher spirituality," "Christian Religious Education," "power of God," "biblical pedagogy," "Exodus 9:20," "fear of the Lord," and "faith-based teaching." The search yielded 122 articles, which were filtered based on relevance, quality, and theological significance, resulting in 35 primary sources for final analysis. In addition, key biblical commentaries (e.g., The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Word Biblical Commentary, and Anchor Bible) were consulted to ensure depth in the exegetical interpretation of Exodus 9:20. The inclusion criteria focused on sources that discussed: Christian spirituality in educational contexts, theological interpretations of divine power, and biblical exegesis of the Exodus narrative. Studies that were merely historical or sociological without theological orientation were excluded. Only peer-reviewed articles, theological books, and credible commentaries written in English or Indonesian were considered. This ensured both contextual relevance to the Indonesian educational setting and international scholarly validity. The collected literature was analyzed through qualitative thematic synthesis. The process involved identifying recurring theological and pedagogical themes-such as obedience to God's word, the fear of the Lord, faith-driven pedagogy, and the embodiment of divine power in teaching practice. The exegetical framework focused on interpreting key Hebrew terms in Exodus 9:20 (especially *yare'* - fear/reverence and *dabar* - word/command), and relating them to the concept of teacher spirituality. This integration of textual exegesis and educational theory formed the hermeneutical bridge connecting biblical theology with pedagogical praxis. Field relevance was established by

contextual reflection on SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, where CRE teachers operate within a multi-religious environment that challenges them to teach biblical truth with both conviction and compassion. The SLR findings were interpreted through this local lens to ensure that the insights derived from Scripture and global scholarship could meaningfully inform faith-based education in the Karo context. The exegetical interpretation was cross-checked with both conservative and critical biblical scholarship to maintain balance. Ethical considerations included respecting theological diversity and ensuring that scriptural interpretation served pedagogical edification rather than doctrinal bias.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study, drawn from a Systematic Literature Review and exegetical reflection, reveal that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers functions as the theological foundation for their pedagogical vocation, particularly in teaching about the power of God. Through a synthesis of theological, pedagogical, and biblical perspectives, it becomes evident that spirituality is not an abstract or mystical experience, but a conscious alignment of human life with divine truth. In the context of Christian education, teacher spirituality represents a holistic integration of faith, moral character, and pedagogical practice. The literature reviewed in this study, ranging from the works of Smith (2016) and Lovat (2021) to Dreyer (2022), consistently emphasizes that spirituality shapes the teacher's identity, ethics, and teaching style. It is the invisible force that gives coherence to what the teacher believes, how the teacher behaves, and what the teacher communicates to students. This integrative understanding of spirituality resonates with the biblical narrative of Exodus 9:20, where those who feared the word of the Lord responded with obedience and were thus preserved from destruction. The same principle applies to the teaching ministry: those who revere God's Word not only communicate truth but embody it, allowing divine power to manifest through their actions and attitudes. Exegetically, Exodus 9:20 emerges as a theologically rich text within the seventh plague narrative, a section of Exodus that portrays God's sovereignty and humanity's moral responsibility. The verse states: "Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside." This brief statement captures a profound intersection between revelation and response, between divine power and human obedience. The original Hebrew phrase "*hayyare' et devar Adonai*" ("those who feared the word of the Lord") reveals that the fear of God (*yare'*) is not synonymous with terror, but with reverent acknowledgment of divine authority that compels ethical action. The *dabar Adonai* (word of the Lord) represents the living, active, and creative voice of God that demands a faithful human response. The immediacy of the officials' reaction—"they hurried to bring their slaves and livestock inside"—demonstrates that genuine fear of the Lord manifests in practical obedience. This hermeneutical insight provides a paradigm for teacher spirituality: authentic faith must always express itself in concrete, life-preserving action. The verse underscores that God's power is not arbitrary; it is relational and moral, intended to preserve life and lead humanity toward wisdom and righteousness. Those who heed the divine word participate in God's saving work, while those who ignore it remain bound to destruction. Thus, in the pedagogical context, the spirituality of the CRE teacher can be understood as a continuous act of "fearing the word of the Lord"—a posture of humility, obedience, and attentiveness to divine revelation that

informs the entire process of teaching and learning. The SLR findings reinforce this exegetical insight by highlighting that spiritually grounded teachers perceive their role as a divine calling rather than a mere profession. Palmer (2007) describes this as “teaching from within,” where the teacher’s soul becomes the primary instrument of pedagogy. The CRE teacher, therefore, is not simply a transmitter of biblical knowledge but a living testimony of God’s transforming power. In contexts such as SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, where cultural plurality and interfaith dynamics characterize daily educational life, the spirituality of the teacher determines whether Christian education becomes an act of domination or a ministry of love. A spiritually mature teacher reflects the divine power through humility, compassion, and integrity—qualities that mirror Christ’s own attitude as the obedient servant of God (Philippians 2:5-8). The power of God that the teacher communicates is thus not the power to control, but the power to serve, heal, and enlighten. This pedagogical spirituality draws directly from the moral pattern embedded in Exodus 9:20: revelation evokes reverence, reverence leads to obedience, and obedience results in life and preservation.

The integration of exegetical insight and educational theory suggests that spirituality functions as the invisible curriculum of Christian teaching. The fear of the Lord, as expressed in Exodus 9:20, becomes the epistemological foundation of knowledge and moral discernment. Proverbs 1:7 declares that “*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,*” and this principle translates pedagogically into the idea that all true education begins with reverence for divine truth. In practice, this means that the spiritual atmosphere created by the teacher—through prayer, integrity, and genuine love for students—communicates more effectively than formal instruction. Studies by Francis and Astley (2020) confirm that students internalize faith values more deeply when they see them embodied in their teachers. Thus, spirituality becomes not only the foundation of pedagogy but also its most persuasive expression. In this sense, the CRE teacher resembles the Egyptian officials who, despite their context, recognized the authority of God’s word and acted accordingly; they represent those in any culture who hear and obey divine truth when it is presented with authenticity. Another result that emerged from the review and exegetical synthesis is the pneumatological dimension of spirituality. The Holy Spirit plays a central role in shaping teacher identity and empowering pedagogical ministry. According to 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, it is the Spirit who enables understanding of divine mysteries and equips believers to communicate spiritual truth in spiritual ways. In the educational context, this means that the act of teaching becomes a partnership between divine agency and human obedience. Dreyer (2022) and Tisdell (2018) argue that Spirit-led pedagogy transforms the classroom into sacred space—a place where intellectual growth and spiritual formation coexist. In the Karo context, where the social structure emphasizes community harmony and mutual respect, the Holy Spirit’s work resonates naturally with cultural values that uphold relational balance. Thus, teacher spirituality becomes both personal and communal: it is nurtured through private devotion but expressed through social engagement and moral witness. This dynamic relationship between the Spirit and culture allows CRE teachers at SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo to contextualize biblical truth within local wisdom, demonstrating that the fear of the Lord is compatible with cultural reverence for life, community, and creation. The results also highlight that teaching the “power of God” requires teachers to embody that power

rather than merely describe it. In biblical theology, divine power (*koach Elohim*) is creative, redemptive, and moral. It liberates rather than oppresses, restores rather than destroys. The plagues in Exodus were not acts of random violence but pedagogical signs revealing Yahweh's sovereignty and calling humanity to repentance. In the same way, CRE teachers must help students understand that the power of God is revealed not only in miracles but in moral transformation. The power that once divided the Red Sea is the same power that enables forgiveness, integrity, and perseverance today. Therefore, the spirituality of the teacher becomes a living interpretation of divine power—a visible theology embodied in action. At SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, this is seen when teachers exhibit patience toward struggling students, justice in evaluation, and compassion toward those of different faiths. These are contemporary expressions of fearing the Word of the Lord—concrete acts of obedience that reveal divine authority in love. The exegetical framework also clarifies that obedience is central to both faith and pedagogy. The officials in Exodus 9:20 responded to revelation with immediate action, and this same immediacy should characterize the teacher's response to God's calling. A teacher who delays obedience risks losing moral authority, just as Pharaoh's indifference led to destruction. Spiritual teachers, however, demonstrate their faith through prompt and consistent alignment with Scripture. This obedience gives credibility to their teaching and coherence to their lives. As Lovat (2023) observes, the most effective teachers are those whose moral integrity authenticates their words. For the CRE teacher, this integrity flows from a disciplined spiritual life—daily prayer, scriptural meditation, and reflection on God's presence in the classroom. These disciplines correspond to the Egyptian officials' "hurried" response; they reveal a sense of urgency to live faithfully under the Word. Thus, spirituality is not static devotion but dynamic responsiveness to divine guidance.

Within the context of SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, where education unfolds amid cultural diversity, the spirituality of the teacher also functions as a model for peaceful coexistence. The fear of the Lord produces humility and respect for others, qualities essential in a pluralistic society. Teachers who embody reverence for God's power cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and moral clarity among students. Their classrooms become spaces of moral dialogue rather than doctrinal conflict. This aligns with the broader biblical vision that those who fear the Lord bring peace and wisdom to their communities (Psalm 25:12–14). Thus, the spirituality described in Exodus 9:20 has profound social implications: obedience to God's word not only preserves life but also sustains harmony within the community. For Karo society, this harmony mirrors the local concept of *adat beru*—a moral code that ensures justice, respect, and peace. When Christian teachers integrate biblical reverence with local wisdom, they demonstrate that divine power unites rather than divides. The synthesis of SLR findings and exegetical insight leads to a deeper understanding of spirituality as a triadic dynamic of reverence, obedience, and transformation. Reverence corresponds to the recognition of God's holiness; obedience reflects the moral response to divine revelation; and transformation represents the result—life preserved, character renewed, and community strengthened. In the case of CRE teachers, this triadic spirituality manifests as the integration of theological conviction, ethical practice, and pedagogical creativity. The fear of the Lord becomes not a passive feeling but an epistemic posture—a way of knowing and teaching that acknowledges divine authority as the ultimate source of truth. Teachers who operate

from this posture become mediators of grace, translating theological truths into pedagogical experiences that nurture spiritual growth. The power of God, therefore, is revealed not through intellectual superiority but through humble faithfulness. The data suggest that spirituality contributes directly to educational outcomes. Schools where teachers demonstrate strong spiritual leadership tend to produce students with greater moral awareness, empathy, and discipline. Studies by Francis (2021) and Van Brummelen (2019) confirm that spiritual modeling influences not only students' religious understanding but their overall moral resilience. In line with Exodus 9:20, these outcomes represent the "preservation" that follows obedience. When teachers fear the Lord, their students find moral shelter in their example. This metaphor of shelter is central to the Exodus narrative—those who sought refuge under God's word were saved from destruction. In the same way, students under the guidance of spiritually mature teachers are protected from moral confusion and cynicism. The classroom becomes an ark of wisdom amid the storms of secularism and relativism. The results of this study affirm that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers, when rooted in the exegetical truth of Exodus 9:20, transforms teaching into an act of divine participation. It shifts the teacher's identity from mere professional to covenantal servant, called to mediate God's truth in word and deed. In this view, teaching about the power of God is not an intellectual exercise but a sacramental vocation—a means through which the presence of God is made visible in the world. The spirituality of the teacher thus stands as the living echo of the ancient officials who "feared the word of the Lord." Their example invites every educator to respond with similar faith and urgency, bringing life, protection, and wisdom to those under their care. The integration of theological exegesis and educational reflection reveals that spirituality is the core energy of Christian pedagogy: it is what enables teachers to translate divine revelation into transformative learning, to turn knowledge into discipleship, and to make every classroom a place where God's power is known and His word is feared in love.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is both the foundation and expression of their vocation as educators who reveal the power of God in the learning process. Through a systematic literature review and exegetical reflection on Exodus 9:20, it has become evident that the spirituality of the teacher is not a peripheral aspect of pedagogy but its spiritual core, shaping both purpose and practice. The verse—*"Whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses"*—captures the essence of true spirituality: reverence, obedience, and responsible action in response to divine revelation. The first key conclusion is that the fear of the Lord (*yirat Adonai*) forms the moral and theological foundation of teacher spirituality. A CRE teacher who lives in reverence toward God teaches not from self-assumed authority but from humility and devotion. This reverence generates integrity, compassion, and moral consistency, which are the cornerstones of authentic Christian teaching. In the educational environment of SD Negeri 040564 Keriahen-Karo, where teachers engage with a multicultural and multireligious community, this fear of the Lord provides both ethical clarity and spiritual resilience. It anchors teachers in faith while equipping them to respect and serve others in love.

Second, obedience to the Word of God is the visible fruit of a teacher's inner spirituality. The Exodus narrative shows that those who heard and acted upon God's command experienced preservation and blessing. Likewise, teachers who live in obedience to God's word become instruments of life and transformation in their classrooms. Their actions-guided by truth and love-become testimonies of faith that inspire students to respond to divine truth in their own lives. Obedience here is not mere rule-following; it is the joyful alignment of one's life with the divine will, which gives meaning and coherence to educational practice. Third, the Word of God (*devar Adonai*) remains the central source of transformation. The study reveals that when teachers internalize Scripture as living revelation rather than abstract doctrine, they transmit not only knowledge but spiritual wisdom. Teaching the power of God then becomes more than cognitive explanation-it becomes participation in God's ongoing communication of grace and truth. In this way, teachers become mediators of divine encounter, inviting students to experience God's power as a reality that restores, liberates, and renews. Fourth, the power of God as revealed in Exodus 9 carries profound pedagogical implications. Divine power is not coercive but redemptive-it corrects to heal and disciplines to save. Teachers who understand and embody this power exercise authority as service. They guide with conviction yet nurture with compassion, modeling Christ's own approach to teaching as both prophetic and pastoral. Such pedagogy reflects the heart of Christian spirituality: strength expressed through humility, and truth conveyed through love. This study underscores that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers must be contextual and incarnational. In the Karo setting, teachers who integrate biblical truths with cultural values demonstrate how the Word of God becomes flesh within local wisdom and communal life. By embodying reverence, obedience, and compassion, teachers become living reflections of God's power within their own culture. The spirituality of CRE teachers-rooted in the fear of the Lord, obedience to His Word, and dependence on divine power-transforms education into a sacred ministry. Their teaching becomes an act of worship, their classrooms become spaces of divine encounter, and their students become witnesses of God's transformative grace. The study invites Christian educators everywhere to rediscover teaching as a spiritual calling-one that mirrors the movement of Exodus 9:20: hearing the Word of the Lord, fearing it with reverence, and acting upon it in faith. When teachers teach from such spirituality, they do not merely instruct minds; they awaken souls to the living power of God.

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