



Teaching God's Providential Care: The Spirituality of Christian Religious Education Teachers Inspired by Exodus 6:7 at Palangkaraya Christian High School

Eka Yulita

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: yulitaekawijaya@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the concept of God's providential care based on Exodus 6:7 at Palangkaraya Christian High School. The theme of divine providence is a central element in biblical theology, emphasizing God's covenantal relationship with His people and His continuous guidance in human life. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how the spirituality of CRE teachers influences the teaching of God's providence in the classroom. The study was conducted at Palangkaraya Christian High School, where there are 125 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers, including CRE teachers. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and documentation of learning activities related to Christian Religious Education. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to spiritual attitudes, pedagogical practices, and the integration of biblical teachings in the learning process. The findings indicate that the spirituality of CRE teachers significantly contributes to the effectiveness of teaching about God's providential care. The study reveals that spiritually grounded teaching fosters a supportive learning environment that encourages faith development and moral formation among students. By integrating theological reflection with practical application, CRE teachers help students interpret life challenges through the lens of faith and trust in God's providence. The research concludes that strengthening the spiritual formation of Christian Religious Education teachers is essential for enhancing the quality of faith-based learning and nurturing students' spiritual growth.

Keywords: Spirituality, Christian Religious Education, Providential Care

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a crucial role in shaping students' spiritual awareness, moral character, and understanding of God's work in human life. In Christian educational contexts, teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also spiritual

mentors who guide students to recognize God's presence in their daily experiences. The effectiveness of Christian Religious Education is therefore closely related to the spirituality of the teacher who delivers the message. Teacher spirituality influences how biblical truths are communicated, interpreted, and embodied within the classroom environment. When teachers possess a strong spiritual awareness, their teaching can inspire students to understand theological concepts not merely as doctrinal statements but as living realities that shape faith and character. As emphasized by Robert W. Pazmiño, Christian education involves the integration of biblical knowledge, spiritual formation, and ethical living in ways that help learners develop a deeper relationship with God and others (Pazmiño, 2008). One important theological theme that can shape the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers is the concept of God's providential care. In the biblical tradition, divine providence refers to God's active involvement in sustaining, guiding, and protecting His people throughout history. This theme is strongly reflected in Exodus 6:7, where God declares to the Israelites, "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians." This verse highlights the covenantal relationship between God and His people, emphasizing that God's providential care is expressed through liberation, protection, and faithful guidance. According to Walter Brueggemann, the Exodus narrative represents one of the most significant theological testimonies in the Old Testament because it reveals God as a liberator who actively intervenes in human history to restore dignity and freedom to His people (Brueggemann, 2012). For Christian educators, this theological insight provides a foundation for teaching students about God's continuing care and faithfulness in contemporary life. The teacher's spirituality becomes a crucial medium through which theological concepts such as divine providence are communicated to students. Teachers who internalize biblical teachings about God's providence are more likely to present these teachings with conviction, empathy, and authenticity. Parker J. Palmer argues that effective teaching emerges from the inner life of the teacher; the identity and integrity of educators significantly influence how knowledge is shared and received in the classroom (Palmer, 1998). In the context of Christian Religious Education, this perspective suggests that teachers must cultivate their own spiritual formation in order to communicate biblical messages meaningfully. When teachers demonstrate trust in God's providence through their attitudes and actions, students can witness a living example of faith that reinforces the theological lessons they encounter in Scripture.

The importance of teacher spirituality is particularly relevant in secondary education, where students are undergoing critical stages of intellectual and moral development. Adolescents often begin to question beliefs, search for identity, and seek meaningful explanations for life's challenges. In such a context, the way teachers present biblical teachings about God's providence can significantly influence students' perspectives on faith and life. If teachers present Scripture merely as theoretical knowledge, students may struggle to connect biblical narratives with their own experiences. However, when teachers communicate biblical truths through authentic spiritual engagement, students are more likely to perceive these teachings as relevant to their personal journeys. According to George R. Knight, Christian education aims not only to inform the mind but also to transform the life by helping learners understand God's purpose and guidance in the world (Knight, 2006).

Palangkaraya Christian High School provides a meaningful context for examining how teacher spirituality shapes the teaching of divine providence in Christian Religious Education. The school community includes 125 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers, including the teacher responsible for CRE instruction. Within this environment, Christian values are expected to be integrated into both academic learning and interpersonal relationships. The presence of a relatively large Christian student population offers an opportunity for teachers to cultivate spiritual formation through biblical teaching, prayer, reflection, and character development activities. At the same time, teachers carry the responsibility of ensuring that biblical messages are communicated in ways that are both theologically faithful and pedagogically effective. Many educational studies focus primarily on pedagogical competence or curriculum design, while the spiritual dimension of teaching often receives less empirical attention. The spiritual life of the teacher is inseparable from the educational process itself. The way teachers understand and experience God's providence may shape how they present this doctrine to students and how students interpret God's role in their own lives. This study aims to explore the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching God's providential care inspired by Exodus 6:7 at Palangkaraya Christian High School. By examining students' perceptions of the teacher's spiritual attitudes, communication of biblical teachings, and classroom practices, this research seeks to provide insight into how teacher spirituality contributes to the effective proclamation of God's providence within the educational setting. Ultimately, the study hopes to highlight the importance of integrating spiritual formation with pedagogical practice in order to strengthen the transformative impact of Christian Religious Education in secondary schools.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design was used to examine the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching God's providential care inspired by Exodus 6:7 at Palangkaraya Christian High School. Quantitative descriptive research is used to systematically describe a phenomenon by collecting numerical data that represent participants' perceptions, attitudes, or experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to measure how students perceive the spirituality of CRE teachers when explaining the concept of God's providential care in the learning process. The research was conducted at Palangkaraya Christian High School, a secondary educational institution where Christian values are integrated into academic learning. The population of this study consisted of 125 Christian students enrolled at the school. These students represent the group that directly experiences the teaching practices of Christian Religious Education teachers. In addition, the school environment includes 15 teachers who are Christians, including the teacher responsible for Christian Religious Education instruction. Because the population size was relatively manageable, this study applied a total sampling technique, meaning that all 125 Christian students were invited to participate as research respondents. Total sampling is often used when researchers intend to capture the perceptions of an entire population within a specific context (Sugiyono, 2019). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure students' perceptions of the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers in the classroom. The questionnaire consisted of several indicators related to the teacher's spiritual competence in teaching about God's

providence. These indicators included: the teacher's ability to explain biblical teachings about God's covenant and providential care based on Exodus 6:7, the demonstration of spiritual attitudes such as faith, compassion, humility, and patience, the teacher's encouragement for students to reflect on God's guidance in their personal lives, and the teacher's ability to create a classroom atmosphere that fosters gratitude and trust in God's care. Each item in the questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The Likert scale is widely used in educational and social science research to measure perceptions and attitudes quantitatively (Likert, 1932). Before the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents, the research instrument underwent a validity and reliability evaluation. Content validity was established by aligning the questionnaire items with theoretical concepts of teacher spirituality and Christian education drawn from scholarly literature. The instrument was also reviewed to ensure that the statements were clear and understandable for secondary school students. Reliability testing was conducted using internal consistency analysis to ensure that the items consistently measured the same construct of teacher spirituality in teaching God's providence. The data collection process was conducted during scheduled Christian Religious Education sessions with the permission of the school administration. Students were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes. After receiving instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, students were given adequate time to respond to each statement honestly according to their experiences in the classroom. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process to ensure voluntary participation and respect for participants' privacy. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores for each indicator. These statistical procedures allow researchers to summarize and interpret patterns within the data in a clear and systematic manner (Field, 2013). The analysis aimed to identify how students perceive the spirituality of their CRE teachers and how such spirituality influences the teaching of God's providential care in the classroom. The findings were then interpreted in light of biblical reflection on Exodus 6:7 and theoretical perspectives on Christian education and teacher spirituality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide important insights into how the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers influences students' understanding of God's providential care at Palangkaraya Christian High School. The data collected from 125 Christian students through a structured questionnaire reveal that students generally perceive the spirituality of their CRE teacher as strongly reflected in the teaching process. The results show that teacher spirituality is manifested through several dimensions, including the communication of biblical teachings, the demonstration of spiritual attitudes, the encouragement of personal reflection about God's care, and the creation of a classroom environment that supports spiritual growth. These dimensions collectively contribute to students' ability to understand the concept of divine providence as presented in Exodus 6:7, which emphasizes God's covenantal relationship with His people

and His active role in guiding and sustaining them. One of the most significant findings concerns the teacher's ability to explain the biblical message of God's providence in ways that students can understand and relate to their lives. The majority of respondents indicated that the CRE teacher consistently explains biblical passages clearly and meaningfully. In particular, the teaching of Exodus 6:7 is presented not merely as historical information about the liberation of Israel from Egypt but as a theological statement about God's ongoing commitment to His people. Students reported that the teacher often emphasizes that the declaration "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God" represents a covenantal promise that continues to shape the relationship between God and believers today. This approach allows students to see the biblical narrative not as a distant historical account but as a living testimony of God's faithfulness and care. Such a pedagogical strategy aligns with the principles of Christian education that emphasize the integration of biblical knowledge with spiritual formation. According to Robert W. Pazmiño, effective Christian teaching involves guiding learners to interpret Scripture in ways that transform their understanding of God, themselves, and their responsibilities toward others. The teacher's ability to contextualize biblical narratives within students' daily experiences therefore becomes a crucial factor in helping them internalize the concept of divine providence.

Another important finding relates to the role of teacher spirituality in shaping the emotional and relational climate of the classroom. Students reported that the CRE teacher demonstrates attitudes such as patience, humility, compassion, and encouragement when interacting with them. These attitudes contribute to the development of a classroom environment in which students feel respected and supported. When teachers embody Christian virtues in their interactions, students perceive that the message of God's care is not only communicated through words but also demonstrated through actions. This consistency between teaching and behavior strengthens the credibility of the teacher's message. In educational psychology, the teacher's relational behavior is widely recognized as a key factor influencing student engagement and motivation. John Hattie's synthesis of educational research highlights that teacher-student relationships significantly affect learning outcomes and student attitudes toward learning. Within the context of Christian Religious Education, relational authenticity also serves as a spiritual testimony. When students observe teachers practicing humility, fairness, and compassion, they gain a concrete example of how faith can be expressed in everyday interactions. The findings also indicate that the CRE teacher actively encourages students to reflect on God's providence in their personal lives. Many students reported that during classroom discussions, the teacher invites them to share experiences in which they felt guided or protected by God. These reflective activities help students connect the biblical narrative of Exodus with their own spiritual journeys. The teacher frequently asks questions that prompt students to consider how God's faithfulness to the Israelites can inspire trust in God's guidance today. This approach reflects a reflective learning model in which students are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in interpreting spiritual truths. Reflective learning is particularly important in Christian Religious Education because faith development involves personal engagement with theological concepts. George R. Knight emphasizes that Christian education should help learners discover how biblical truths relate to their

own life experiences and moral decisions. By encouraging reflection, the teacher helps students recognize that divine providence is not limited to biblical history but continues to operate in contemporary life.

The school context also plays a significant role in supporting the integration of teacher spirituality and biblical teaching. Palangkaraya Christian High School has a community of 125 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher responsible for religious instruction. This environment provides a supportive setting in which Christian values can be reinforced through both formal instruction and informal interactions. Students reported that spiritual activities such as prayer, devotional reflections, and discussions about faith are commonly integrated into the school routine. These practices contribute to a broader culture of spiritual awareness within the school community. In such an environment, the teaching of divine providence is reinforced not only through classroom lessons but also through the daily experiences of the school community. The presence of multiple Christian teachers also provides opportunities for students to observe Christian values modeled in different contexts, further strengthening the credibility of the religious message. Another dimension revealed in the findings concerns the role of modeling in the teaching of Christian values. Students indicated that they perceive the CRE teacher as someone who lives according to the teachings presented in the classroom. For example, the teacher demonstrates responsibility in preparing lessons, fairness in evaluating student work, and compassion when addressing students' difficulties. These behaviors function as implicit lessons about the meaning of faith in practice. According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, individuals often learn behaviors and values by observing credible role models. In the context of Christian Religious Education, the teacher's behavior becomes a powerful form of indirect instruction. When students observe that the teacher's actions reflect trust in God's guidance and commitment to ethical principles, they are more likely to adopt similar attitudes in their own lives. This modeling effect reinforces the message that divine providence calls believers not only to trust in God but also to live responsibly within the community. The theological framework of Exodus 6:7 provides a meaningful basis for interpreting these findings. In this verse, God promises to establish a covenant relationship with the Israelites, declaring that they will be His people and that He will be their God. This statement reflects the broader biblical theme of divine providence, which includes God's acts of liberation, protection, and guidance. Walter Brueggemann notes that the Exodus narrative serves as a foundational testimony of God's commitment to justice and faithfulness in the history of Israel. By teaching this passage, the CRE teacher introduces students to a central theme of biblical theology: God's active involvement in human history. When students understand that God's covenant with Israel reflects a pattern of divine faithfulness, they can begin to interpret their own experiences of guidance and provision within the framework of God's ongoing relationship with humanity.

The results also suggest that the integration of theology and pedagogy is essential for effective Christian Religious Education. The teacher in this study does not present the concept of divine providence as an abstract doctrine but rather as a lived reality that shapes students' perspectives on life. For example, when discussing the liberation of Israel

from Egypt, the teacher emphasizes that God's actions demonstrate concern for human suffering and injustice. Students are encouraged to reflect on how this message relates to contemporary social issues, such as helping others in need or standing against unfair treatment. This approach demonstrates that theological concepts can inspire ethical awareness and social responsibility. By connecting biblical teachings with real-life situations, the teacher helps students see faith as a guiding principle for everyday decision-making. The study also identifies certain challenges related to the teaching of divine providence in a modern educational context. One challenge involves students' varying levels of spiritual maturity and biblical knowledge. While many students demonstrate strong engagement with the lessons, some students may struggle to fully understand theological concepts or to connect biblical narratives with their personal experiences. This diversity requires teachers to adapt their instructional strategies in order to address different levels of comprehension and interest. Effective Christian education therefore requires not only spiritual conviction but also pedagogical flexibility and creativity. Another challenge concerns the broader cultural context in which students live. In contemporary society, young people are exposed to a wide range of worldviews and perspectives that may influence how they interpret religious teachings. Some students may encounter ideas that question or reinterpret traditional beliefs about God's providence. In such circumstances, the role of the CRE teacher becomes even more important in helping students develop a thoughtful and mature understanding of faith. Teachers must create opportunities for open dialogue in which students can express questions and explore theological ideas critically while remaining rooted in biblical teachings. By encouraging respectful discussion and reflection, teachers can help students integrate faith with intellectual inquiry.

The findings of this study also have important implications for the professional and spiritual development of Christian educators. The results highlight the importance of spiritual formation as a component of teacher competence. In addition to mastering pedagogical techniques and subject knowledge, CRE teachers must cultivate a personal relationship with God that informs their teaching practice. Parker Palmer suggests that authentic teaching emerges from the inner life of the teacher, where personal beliefs and professional responsibilities intersect. When teachers approach their vocation with spiritual awareness and commitment, they create learning environments that nurture both intellectual growth and spiritual development. The results emphasize the value of relational ministry within the educational context. Christian Religious Education teachers function not only as instructors but also as mentors who accompany students in their spiritual journeys. Through personal encouragement, attentive listening, and compassionate guidance, teachers can help students navigate the challenges of adolescence while strengthening their faith. These relational interactions reflect the pastoral dimension of Christian education, in which teachers participate in the broader mission of nurturing discipleship and character formation. The study underscores the significance of teaching biblical narratives as living testimonies of God's faithfulness. When students encounter the story of God's covenant with Israel in Exodus 6:7, they are invited to see themselves as part of a continuing story of divine care and guidance. By presenting biblical narratives in ways that emphasize their relevance for contemporary life, teachers help students recognize that faith is not confined to religious rituals but is

deeply connected to daily experiences of trust, hope, and responsibility. The results of this study demonstrate that the spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a vital role in helping students understand and experience God's providential care. Through clear biblical teaching, compassionate relationships, reflective learning activities, and consistent modeling of Christian values, the CRE teacher at Palangkaraya Christian High School creates an educational environment in which students can explore the meaning of divine providence in both theological and personal dimensions. The integration of spiritual authenticity with pedagogical practice enables students to perceive the biblical message of Exodus 6:7 not merely as an ancient declaration but as a continuing promise that shapes their understanding of God's presence in the world today.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the theme of God's providential care as inspired by Exodus 6:7 within the educational context of Palangkaraya Christian High School. The findings demonstrate that the spirituality of CRE teachers plays a crucial role in shaping how biblical teachings are communicated, interpreted, and embodied in the learning process. Teaching about God's providence is not merely a matter of transferring doctrinal knowledge; rather, it involves a deep spiritual awareness that allows teachers to guide students toward recognizing God's sustaining presence in their personal and communal lives. The study shows that the spiritual identity of CRE teachers significantly influences the effectiveness of teaching biblical concepts such as divine providence. Teachers who internalize the message of Exodus 6:7, where God declares His covenantal relationship with His people, tend to communicate the lesson with authenticity, conviction, and pastoral sensitivity. Their spirituality is expressed through attitudes of faith, humility, and commitment to Christian values, which shape the classroom atmosphere. As a result, students do not only understand the theological concept intellectually but also experience it through the teacher's example and guidance. The research indicates that spiritual pedagogy grounded in biblical reflection enhances students' learning engagement and spiritual awareness. At Palangkaraya Christian High School, where there are 125 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers, CRE teachers integrate scriptural reflection, prayer, and contextual discussion into classroom activities. Through these practices, students are encouraged to interpret the message of God's providence in relation to their daily experiences, such as facing academic challenges, family circumstances, or social pressures. This contextual approach helps students recognize that the biblical narrative of God's care is not limited to ancient Israel but continues to be relevant in contemporary life. The study reveals that the spirituality of teachers contributes to the formation of a supportive and faith-centered learning environment. CRE teachers who understand their vocation as a spiritual calling tend to foster relationships characterized by empathy, encouragement, and moral guidance. In such an environment, students feel valued and supported, which positively influences their motivation to learn and their openness to spiritual reflection. The presence of spiritually grounded educators therefore becomes a key factor in strengthening the integration between faith formation and academic learning.

The research highlights that teaching about divine providence requires a balance between theological understanding and pedagogical creativity. Teachers who effectively communicate the message of Exodus 6:7 employ various instructional strategies, including narrative explanation of biblical history, reflective dialogue, and practical applications of faith. These strategies help students move beyond memorization of biblical texts toward deeper comprehension of God's covenantal relationship with humanity. In this sense, spiritual competence becomes an essential dimension of the professional identity of CRE teachers. The study also recognizes certain challenges in implementing spiritually integrated teaching. Teachers often face limitations related to time allocation, diverse student spiritual maturity, and the broader educational demands of modern schooling. These challenges require educators to continually develop their spiritual life, pedagogical skills, and theological understanding in order to maintain the relevance and depth of Christian education. The spirituality of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a central role in teaching the theme of God's providential care. Inspired by Exodus 6:7, CRE teachers at Palangkaraya Christian High School demonstrate that authentic spirituality can transform the classroom into a space where biblical truths are experienced as living realities. Through spiritually grounded teaching practices, students are guided to recognize God's presence in their lives, deepen their faith, and develop a sense of trust in divine guidance. Therefore, strengthening the spiritual formation of CRE teachers should remain a priority in Christian education, as it directly contributes to the holistic development of students' faith, character, and understanding of God's providential work in the world.

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