

The Personal Integrity of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Truth: A Reflection on Exodus 1:12 at SDN 112155 Gunung Raya

Oloria Sinaga^{1*}, Haposan Silalahi²

¹Student, Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

²Lecturer, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: oloriasinaga86@guru.sd.belajar.id

ABSTRACT

This study, titled “The Personal Integrity of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Truth: A Reflection on Exodus 1:12 at SDN 112155 Gunung Raya,” explores how integrity shapes the spiritual and pedagogical identity of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, the research examines how teachers embody truth, faithfulness, and moral consistency in their educational practices. The exegetical analysis of Exodus 1:12 reveals that, despite oppression, the people of Israel grew stronger because of their steadfast faith and obedience to God. This biblical insight becomes a model for teachers who face moral and institutional challenges in modern education. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis, emphasizing the teachers’ ethical behavior, spiritual discipline, and consistency between belief and practice. The findings show that teachers at SDN 112155 Gunung Raya view their vocation as a divine calling, not merely as a profession. Their integrity is reflected in honesty, fairness, and the integration of faith into pedagogical methods. The study concludes that integrity is a spiritual foundation for teaching the truth, empowering teachers to be moral exemplars and agents of transformation. Ultimately, personal integrity enables educators to uphold biblical truth in the midst of a pluralistic society, making their teaching a living testimony of faithfulness and righteousness. This research contributes to the discourse on Christian pedagogy by linking biblical exegesis, ethical character, and professional practice into one coherent educational framework.

Keywords: *Personal Integrity, Christian Religious Education, Truth*

INTRODUCTION

Integrity stands at the heart of Christian Religious Education (CRE), shaping not only what is taught but also how it is lived and modeled before students. In the contemporary educational context, teachers are often measured by their mastery of pedagogy and content knowledge; however, from a Christian theological perspective, the foundation of effective teaching lies in moral and spiritual integrity. The Christian Religious Education

teacher serves not merely as a transmitter of biblical knowledge but as a living testimony of truth and righteousness. Within this framework, integrity becomes the essential virtue that integrates belief, word, and action-reflecting the teacher's alignment with divine truth as revealed in Scripture. Exodus 1:12 declares, *"But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites."* This verse, though often read within the broader narrative of Israel's suffering in Egypt, offers profound insights into the theology of integrity and resilience. The Hebrew term translated as "multiplied" (*parats*) denotes breaking through or flourishing despite constraint. The verse reveals a divine paradox: the people of God, when tested under oppression, do not lose their moral or spiritual identity but instead grow stronger in faith and commitment. This theme of steadfastness amid adversity serves as a biblical mirror for Christian teachers who, in the face of moral compromise or institutional pressure, are called to remain faithful to truth. Exodus 1:12 points to the integrity of the covenant community that refused to be assimilated by the oppressive structures of Egypt. The Israelites' endurance was not a product of human strength but the manifestation of divine fidelity. For Christian Religious Education teachers, this passage symbolizes the sacred duty to teach truth even when societal values contradict biblical morality. Integrity in teaching is thus an act of resistance against moral relativism—a declaration that truth, as grounded in the Word of God, remains unchanging despite cultural shifts. The narrative context shows that Pharaoh's attempts to suppress Israel only magnified God's purpose. Likewise, challenges faced by teachers in secular or pluralistic settings become opportunities to manifest unwavering integrity and faithfulness.

In the educational context of SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, located in a diverse and pluralistic region, Christian Religious Education teachers face the tension between moral conviction and social conformity. The school environment demands inclusivity and tolerance while teachers strive to uphold the biblical mandate of truth. Integrity, in this setting, is tested through daily interactions, ethical decision-making, and the teacher's consistency between personal faith and professional behavior. A CRE teacher's credibility is measured not only by theological understanding but by the authenticity of character that reflects Christlike truthfulness. The Exodus narrative portrays integrity as covenantal fidelity—faithfulness to God's truth despite external pressure. For Christian educators, this means embodying truth (*aletheia*) as a lived virtue, not merely a spoken doctrine. Jesus' declaration, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free"* (John 8:32), echoes the same principle evident in Exodus 1:12: freedom and growth come through steadfast adherence to God's truth. Thus, teaching in integrity is a spiritual act of liberation—forming students not only intellectually but morally and spiritually. This study seeks to explore the personal integrity of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching the truth, grounded in the exegetical reflection of Exodus 1:12. It examines how integrity shapes pedagogical practice and moral formation in the context of SDN 112155 Gunung Raya. By integrating scriptural exegesis and educational reflection, this research underscores that teaching truth requires not only intellectual competence but spiritual authenticity. Ultimately, it affirms that integrity in Christian education is not a theoretical ideal but a lived calling—a participation in God's redemptive work through truthful and faithful teaching.

METHODS

The methodological approach (Scriptural Literature Review combined with Exegetical Qualitative Analysis) is rooted in the conviction that biblical interpretation and educational reflection must coexist harmoniously to provide theological depth and pedagogical relevance. Therefore, the study integrates theological exegesis, hermeneutical reflection, and contextual application in the educational environment of SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, a public elementary school where Christian Religious Education is implemented within a multicultural and pluralistic society. The Scriptural Literature Review method was applied to gather and synthesize previous theological, pedagogical, and ethical literature related to teacher integrity, moral formation, and biblical truth. Sources included scholarly commentaries on the Book of Exodus, theological dictionaries, journal articles on Christian pedagogy, and educational ethics studies. The literature review was guided by thematic keywords such as integrity, truth, faithfulness, and Christian teaching. The purpose of this process was to establish a theological framework that connects the biblical message of Exodus 1:12 with the lived reality of Christian teachers in contemporary education. Exegetical Qualitative Analysis was employed to interpret Exodus 1:12 both in its immediate literary context and its canonical theological significance. The verse was analyzed using three interpretative stages: Examining the Hebrew text (*waye'anū otōm kēn yirbeh wakēn yiphrōts*) to uncover nuances of growth, perseverance, and divine favor amid oppression. This stage identified how the verb *parats* (to break forth, spread, or increase) symbolically reflects integrity and faithfulness under pressure. Situating the verse within the broader narrative of Israel's enslavement in Egypt and their preservation of faith identity despite systemic dehumanization. This provided an interpretative bridge between ancient faithfulness and modern pedagogical steadfastness. Linking the biblical concept of integrity with the moral and spiritual vocation of the Christian teacher, emphasizing how divine truth manifests in ethical teaching and character formation. The locus of the study SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, served as a contextual case illustrating how CRE teachers embody biblical integrity within real classroom dynamics. Observations and informal dialogues with teachers were used to understand how personal faith informs teaching practices, moral discipline, and truth-centered pedagogy. These qualitative insights were interpreted not as empirical data but as illustrative reflections supporting the exegetical findings. The goal was not to evaluate individual morality but to reflect the theological implications of integrity as a professional and spiritual virtue. Through the integration of scriptural interpretation and educational analysis, this method allowed the study to construct a holistic understanding of teacher integrity grounded in biblical truth. The SLR provided theoretical depth, while the exegetical approach ensured theological fidelity. Together, they offered a robust framework for interpreting Exodus 1:12 as a divine call for Christian Religious Education teachers to live and teach with unwavering integrity-mirroring the faithfulness of God's people who, even under pressure, multiplied in truth and righteousness.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that personal integrity, as reflected in Exodus 1:12, is not merely a moral virtue but a spiritual identity deeply rooted in divine faithfulness and truth. The verse, "*But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so*

the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites,” encapsulates a profound biblical paradox: oppression did not destroy God’s people but rather strengthened them. This divine pattern-growth through adversity-serves as a theological foundation for understanding the integrity of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in contemporary educational settings. At SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, this insight becomes especially relevant as teachers face social, ethical, and spiritual challenges that test their faith, honesty, and moral consistency in a pluralistic learning environment. Exodus 1:12 emerges as a narrative of resilient righteousness. The Israelites’ ability to flourish under persecution is symbolic of the teacher’s calling to remain faithful to truth even amid systemic pressures such as moral relativism, institutional demands, or socio-religious plurality. The Hebrew phrase *ken yirbeh waken yiphrōts* (“the more they were oppressed, the more they spread”) reveals a theological rhythm of divine empowerment-integrity that is sustained not by human willpower alone, but by participation in God’s sustaining grace. This dynamic of divine-human cooperation parallels the role of the CRE teacher: to be steadfast in character, teaching, and moral witness, even when the surrounding culture promotes compromise or spiritual indifference. At the level of personal spirituality, the text challenges teachers to cultivate an inner life anchored in truth. The Israelites’ growth amidst suffering represents an inward growth of faith that precedes outward success. Likewise, the integrity of the teacher begins not in public reputation but in private devotion and alignment with God’s truth. Interviews and reflections from the locus indicate that teachers who regularly engage in prayer, Scripture meditation, and moral reflection demonstrate higher resilience in upholding Christian values in the classroom. Their faith practices foster consistency between what they teach and how they live, which is the essence of biblical integrity.

Integrity (*tom* in Hebrew) denotes wholeness, completeness, and congruence between inner conviction and outer behavior. Within the educational context, it refers to the alignment of pedagogical actions with Christian ethical values. The CRE teacher embodies integrity when teaching truthfully, treating students justly, and modeling moral consistency. Exodus 1:12 reinforces this by portraying how faithfulness to God results in enduring fruitfulness. Just as Israel multiplied because of divine favor, a teacher who walks in truth experiences the multiplication of spiritual influence-shaping not only minds but hearts toward righteousness. The ethical dimension of integrity is illuminated through the metaphor of Egypt’s oppression. Egypt represents environments of constraint-contexts that test moral stamina. In today’s schools, teachers face ethical pressures such as favoritism, administrative bias, or societal indifference toward moral education. Yet, the text invites them to remain truthful and principled, trusting that integrity leads to divine vindication. The Israelites’ growth “in spite of” Egyptian oppression mirrors the moral paradox in education: that truth and goodness often thrive most authentically when tested. At SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, CRE teachers demonstrated this integrity by refusing unethical shortcuts and maintaining fairness in grading, counseling, and classroom management. Their faithfulness not only upheld their credibility but also inspired students to respect truth as a spiritual discipline.

In pedagogical application, the verse implies that integrity is the soil of transformative education. When a teacher lives by truth, students perceive authenticity and are drawn

to emulate it. Biblical education is not transmitted through lectures alone but through the moral coherence of the teacher's life. In Genesis and Exodus alike, divine truth is relational and incarnational—it is seen, experienced, and embodied. Thus, the CRE teacher's personal integrity becomes a living exegesis of Scripture, translating theological ideals into educational practice. For example, teachers at Gunung Raya described how they integrate truthfulness into lesson planning, emphasizing moral reasoning, ethical dilemmas, and reflection exercises based on biblical narratives. This pedagogical integrity fosters holistic learning that unites faith, knowledge, and moral formation. Another dimension emerging from the study is the interrelation between integrity and faith under pressure. Just as Israel's oppression led to multiplication, challenges in teaching can refine and deepen a teacher's faith. Integrity does not avoid conflict; it transforms it into a means of spiritual growth. When Christian teachers face misunderstanding, lack of resources, or cultural indifference, their perseverance becomes a testimony of divine faithfulness. This theological reflection reframes adversity not as a deterrent but as a crucible of character. Teachers who embody integrity amidst difficulties mirror the biblical Israelite community, becoming signs of God's steadfast truth within secular educational systems.

In the exegetical reading, the verbs *yirbeh* ("to increase") and *yiphrōts* ("to spread or break forth") are significant. They connote not only numerical growth but also moral and spiritual expansion. The use of *parats* in the Hebrew Bible often carries connotations of divine blessing breaking through human limitation. Thus, Exodus 1:12 can be interpreted as a divine endorsement of integrity-driven perseverance. For CRE teachers, this implies that moral steadfastness, though often invisible, leads to spiritual fruitfulness. Their impact may not always be immediate but manifests through transformed students, improved ethical climates, and a culture of mutual respect. Integrity involves truth-telling as a sacred act. The Israelites' faithfulness to their covenant identity amidst Egyptian lies symbolizes the teacher's duty to uphold truth in education. In a time when misinformation and relativism are widespread, the CRE teacher's role as a truth-bearer becomes prophetic. Teaching the truth of Scripture and modeling it through transparent communication restores credibility to Christian education. This moral clarity, reflected in teachers' honesty and consistency, builds trust with students and colleagues. The integration of truth and pedagogy thus becomes a form of worship—aligning the educator's vocation with God's mission of truth in the world. A deeper theological insight is that integrity is rooted in divine presence. Exodus portrays God as invisibly present with His people, sustaining them in hidden ways. A teacher's integrity is nourished by awareness of God's indwelling Spirit. Without this spiritual consciousness, moral consistency becomes a mere ethical performance. Teachers at Gunung Raya testified that prayer before class and reflection on God's Word fortified their patience and sincerity when handling classroom challenges. Their experiences affirm that integrity is sustained not by human strength but by communion with the Holy Spirit. This spiritual dependency transforms teaching from a profession into a vocation of faith. Integrity also involves justice and empathy. A teacher who teaches truth must also live compassionately. Exodus 1:12's reference to suffering under Egyptian cruelty recalls that integrity includes moral courage to defend the oppressed. In the school setting, this translates into advocacy for students' well-being, fair treatment, and inclusivity. Teachers' commitment to equality, regardless of socioeconomic or religious differences, becomes a reflection of divine

justice. Observations from Gunung Raya revealed that teachers who demonstrate fairness and empathy gain profound respect from students, creating an environment where truth and love coexist harmoniously. Integrity, when internalized as a spiritual discipline, shapes curriculum design, classroom management, and teacher-student relationships. The CRE teacher who embodies truth encourages students to think critically, act morally, and discern spiritually. This holistic pedagogy aligns with the biblical principle that truth sets people free (John 8:32). Thus, teaching with integrity fosters liberation-freeing students from ignorance, fear, and moral confusion. Integrity functions as the foundation for professional credibility. Teachers who maintain ethical transparency gain the trust of the school community. Their integrity enhances collaboration among peers and models professional ethics for other disciplines. At SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, this was observed in the way CRE teachers became moral references in intersubject discussions, promoting values of honesty and respect across the curriculum. Their conduct illustrated that integrity is not confined to religious instruction but permeates all educational interactions. The biblical narrative structure of Exodus 1:12 also suggests a cyclical pattern of testing and triumph. This motif mirrors the ongoing journey of teachers toward spiritual maturity. Integrity is not static but continually forged through experiences of conflict, reflection, and renewal. The CRE teacher's professional development, therefore, must include spiritual formation, ethical reflection, and biblical engagement. Schools that nurture these dimensions cultivate educators who teach from the heart of faith rather than mere technique. The discussion reveals that integrity is transformative both personally and communally. On the personal level, it refines the teacher's conscience and deepens their relationship with God. On the communal level, it creates a ripple effect of trust and moral strength that influences students, colleagues, and the broader educational culture. Exodus 1:12 reminds us that growth amid adversity is not accidental but divine-it is the outcome of God's favor upon those who remain faithful to truth. For the Christian Religious Education teacher, this integrity becomes the visible mark of divine blessing in their vocation. The exegesis and contextual reflection on Exodus 1:12 reveal integrity as a spiritual power that transforms oppression into fruitfulness and difficulty into devotion. The CRE teacher who lives by truth participates in this divine pattern-becoming both a bearer of God's Word and a living witness to His faithfulness. Within the classrooms of SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, this integrity manifests not through perfection but through consistency, humility, and perseverance. It is the quiet strength that sustains Christian education in a world of moral complexity, reminding both teachers and learners that truth, when lived with integrity, will always multiply and endure.

CONCLUSION

The study on "The Personal Integrity of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Truth: A Reflection on Exodus 1:12 at SDN 112155 Gunung Raya" reveals that personal integrity is not merely a professional attribute but a spiritual identity rooted deeply in one's relationship with God. The findings affirm that Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers are called to embody truthfulness, consistency, and moral courage in their vocation, especially within pluralistic educational settings. Integrity in teaching is not limited to moral correctness; it represents a holistic integration of faith, thought, and action that aligns with biblical truth. The exegetical foundation of this study, drawn from

Exodus 1:12, illuminates how God's people, despite oppression, continued to flourish because of their unwavering faith and obedience. This passage symbolizes the endurance of truth under pressure and the triumph of moral steadfastness in the face of adversity. For CRE teachers, this scriptural reflection becomes a spiritual mirror: just as the Israelites multiplied under affliction, so must teachers of faith persevere and remain fruitful in their mission, even amid challenges such as secularism, moral relativism, and declining ethical standards in education. Personal integrity, therefore, becomes both a testimony and a transformative force within the school community. Teachers at SDN 112155 Gunung Raya demonstrated integrity through their consistent moral example, honesty in communication, fairness in assessment, and spiritual authenticity in teaching. Their faith-based actions were not confined to the classroom but extended into their relationships with students, colleagues, and the broader community. They viewed teaching as a divine calling, not simply as a profession. This awareness helped them align their pedagogical practices with biblical truth, transforming their role from mere knowledge transmitters to moral shepherds guiding students toward righteousness. Such integration of spirituality and pedagogy reflects the biblical ideal of integrity - a harmony between what one believes, says, and does. The research also highlights that personal integrity in Christian educators functions as a moral anchor amid societal and institutional pressures. When external systems prioritize performance, testing outcomes, or administrative conformity, teachers with spiritual integrity remain guided by eternal principles rather than temporary standards. This distinction is crucial in an era where truth is often relativized and values are negotiated. The Christian teacher's steadfastness, modeled after the faithfulness of God's people in Exodus, provides a living witness to students of what it means to walk in truth and righteousness. Their presence within public schools becomes an implicit proclamation of God's truth through character and action.

The study suggests that cultivating integrity requires spiritual formation, biblical reflection, and ethical mentoring. Institutions preparing CRE teachers should therefore include spiritual disciplines, theological understanding, and reflective practices in their training programs. When educators are spiritually grounded, they can more effectively embody and transmit the truth of Scripture. Integrity, as shown in this research, is sustained not by external enforcement but by internal conviction - a heart transformed by God's Word. The reflection on Exodus 1:12 affirms that personal integrity is the fruit of faithfulness under pressure. Just as the Israelites grew stronger through adversity, Christian Religious Education teachers strengthen their witness by remaining truthful and consistent amid challenges. At SDN 112155 Gunung Raya, this integrity manifests through faithful teaching, honest relationships, and a commitment to biblical truth. Such teachers exemplify how integrity can serve as both a moral compass and a spiritual testimony, shaping not only the character of their students but also the moral climate of the school itself. Therefore, the integration of faith, truth, and pedagogy remains a sacred responsibility - one that calls every Christian teacher to stand firm, teach faithfully, and live truthfully in the light of God's enduring Word.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barclay, W. (2001). *The Daily Study Bible: The Book of Exodus*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (2003). *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers.
- Dockery, D. S. (2018). *Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Christian Academy*. B&H Academic.
- Knight, G. R. (2006). *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* (4th ed.). Andrews University Press.
- Lewis, C. S. (2009). *Mere Christianity*. HarperOne.
- Nouwen, H. J. M. (2006). *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Image Books.
- Palmer, P. J. (2017). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (20th Anniversary ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Pazmiño, R. W. (2008). *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective* (3rd ed.). Baker Academic.
- Ryken, L., Wilhoit, J. C., & Longman, T. (Eds.). (1998). *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. InterVarsity Press.
- Van Brummelen, H. (2009). *Walking with God in the Classroom: Christian Approaches to Learning and Teaching* (3rd ed.). Purposeful Design Publications.
- Vanhoozer, K. J. (2015). *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Walton, J. H. (2016). *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*. Zondervan.
- White, E. G. (2002). *Education*. Review and Herald Publishing Association.
- Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Delivered: Finding Freedom by Following God*. David C. Cook.
- Wilkins, M. J. (2004). *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. Zondervan.