

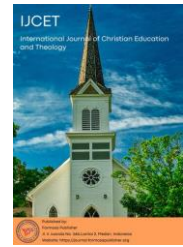


INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND THEOLOGY (IJCET)

Homepage: <https://traformosapublisher.org/index.php/ijcet/index>

ISSN: 2961-9300 (Online)

Research Article



Volume 4, No 4, November (2025) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijcet.v4i4.288> Page: 385-396

Reevaluating Sola Scriptura in Christian Religious Education: Theological Foundations and Contemporary Challenges

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ARTICLE INFO

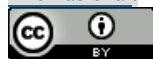
Keywords: Bible authority, Christian Religious Education, Sola Scriptura

Received : 20, September

Revised : 22, October

Accepted : 24, November

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the principle of *Sola Scriptura* as the foundational pillar of Reformation theology and its implications for Christian Religious Education (CRE), particularly amid the challenges of the postmodern era. *Sola Scriptura* affirms the Bible as the sole highest authority in Christian doctrine and practice, rejecting any equivalent authority from church tradition or subjective experience. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach through literature and document analysis related to the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* in CRE. The findings reveal that although *Sola Scriptura* has historically driven church renewal, education, and the growth of Christian communities, its application today faces serious challenges, including secularism, relativism, syncretism, denominational fragmentation, and the proliferation of heretical teachings.

INTRODUCTION

The principle of *Sola Scriptura*, meaning “Scripture alone,” is the foundational pillar of Reformation theology. It emerged as a response to doctrinal deviations, moral crises among clergy, and the dominance of church tradition over biblical authority during the Middle Ages (Napel, 2017). Reformers such as Martin Luther emphasized that Scripture not tradition or institutional authority is the supreme source of Christian doctrine and practice. This movement not only restored the central role of the Bible but also had a profound impact on church renewal, education, and the advancement of knowledge (Lumintang, 2017).

In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), *Sola Scriptura* carries deep implications. Scripture becomes the epistemological and curricular core, serving as the foundation for learning strategies and evaluative approaches (Selan, 1995). Christian education is not merely about transmitting moral values but about guiding learners to live according to biblical truth (Lebar, 2006). Biblical literacy and theological education are essential tools for shaping character and spirituality.

However, in the postmodern era, the application of *Sola Scriptura* faces serious challenges. Secularism, relativism, syncretism, and pragmatism have displaced Scripture’s central role in church life and Christian education (Lumintang, 2017). Denominational fragmentation and the rise of heretical teachings reveal that this principle is often misused in individualistic ways, disconnected from healthy faith communities and traditions. This has led to a hermeneutical crisis and weakened ecclesial authority within Protestantism (Mathison, 2001).

Most studies on *Sola Scriptura* focus on its historical and theological dimensions. Scholars such as Mathison and Lumintang have explored its role in shaping church identity and Christian education (Lumintang, 2017; Mathison, 2001). However, few studies have critically examined the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* in CRE curricula and pedagogy, especially in light of contemporary challenges. There is a lack of research that integrates evaluative approaches grounded in church councils, the canon of Scripture, and apostolic succession within educational contexts. There is an absence of critical evaluations of *Sola Scriptura* in today’s Christian education. Although this doctrine serves as a foundational element in curriculum and instructional design, there is no comprehensive evaluative model that addresses the hermeneutical, institutional, and cultural challenges faced by Christian educators. The lack of a contextual and theological framework has weakened the resilience of CRE curricula against the influence of contemporary ideologies.

The novelty of this study lies in its effort to develop an evaluative approach to the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* in CRE, aligned with church tradition, confessions of faith, and the principle of apostolic succession. This approach not only preserves biblical authority but also strengthens the unity of the body of Christ in Christian education. By integrating theological, pedagogical, and cultural dimensions, this study offers a new contribution to the development of relevant and transformative curricula and learning strategies.

Therefore, this article aims to critically evaluate the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* in Christian Religious Education, identify the challenges it faces, and propose a contextual and theological evaluative framework. This research is expected to reinforce the foundation of Christian education in the face of global religious paradigm shifts and safeguard the authority and unity of the church amid the complexities of the present age.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, using literature review and document analysis methods from various sources concerning the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* in Christian Religious Education (CRE) and the challenges it faces. This study will examine the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* throughout the years. The qualitative literature review method involves collecting information or data by identifying and synthesizing materials from multiple sources. The research steps include data collection and analysis of the concepts of *Sola Scriptura*, its implementation, and the challenges encountered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theological Implications of Sola Scriptura: Scripture as the Supreme Authority

The theological implications of *Sola Scriptura* are both broad and profound. The principle of “Scripture alone” carries several key implications:

First, Scripture alone holds final authority in matters of Christian doctrine and practice (Long, 2018). Mathison asserts that the authority of Scripture is not contingent upon the endorsement of any institution, including the church (Mathison, 2001). Lumintang explains *Sola Scriptura* as the formal principle that serves as the primary guide in shaping Christian doctrine, ethics, and teaching (Lumintang, 2017).

Second, *Sola Scriptura* rejects the view that infallible interpretive authority is granted to the magisterium for interpreting Scripture and sacred tradition. In Roman Catholic tradition, church authority and Scripture are seen as complementary sources, with the magisterium holding final interpretive authority (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019). Martin Luther liberated biblical interpretation from the institutional control of the Roman Catholic Church, entrusting it to individual believers (Kirchberger, 2017). The Reformation elevated Scripture above tradition and institutional authority, laying the foundation for Reformed theology (Yusnita, 2024). The principle of *Sola Scriptura* affirms that Scripture alone is the highest authority

in all matters of faith and religious practice (Christi et al., 2024). Sproul notes that one way Scripture validates its own authority is through its coherence and symmetry (Sproul, 2011).

Third, *Sola Scriptura* does not dismiss the role of Christian history, sacred traditions, or the Church in understanding Scripture. However, these traditions do not possess equal authority with Scripture and must always be evaluated against biblical standards. Research by Dimas et al. indicates that churches oriented toward *Sola Scriptura* rigorously test every spiritual experience to ensure it is firmly grounded in Scripture (Dimas et al., 2022). Mathison also emphasizes that *Sola Scriptura* does not reject church history or sacred tradition, but positions them as servants that support biblical understanding (Mathison, 2001).

Fourth, *Sola Scriptura* affirms the principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture, meaning that clearer passages help interpret those that are less clear (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019). This hermeneutical principle underscores the internal integrity of Scripture as the coherent and non-contradictory Word of God.

Fifth, *Sola Scriptura* also affirms the clarity of Scripture. The Bible is clear and accessible (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019). Berkhof explains that although not every page of Scripture possesses equal clarity, the knowledge necessary for salvation is conveyed in a simple and complete form, understandable to all believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit without dependence on ecclesiastical authority as the sole interpreter (Berkhof, 2022).

Thus, *Sola Scriptura* is a principle that cannot be removed or ignored in the context of the church in general and Christian Religious Education in particular. It affirms Scripture as the supreme source of authority in understanding and practicing the Christian faith. Every teaching and experience must be tested against biblical standards. The entirety of Scripture is a unified whole, free of contradiction, and accessible to all believers through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Scripture serves as the epistemological, curricular, and ethical foundation for all aspects of CRE instructional design.

Challenges of Heretical Teachings Against Sola Scriptura in the Context of CRE

One of the most significant challenges to Reformation theology, which upholds *Sola Scriptura*, is the proliferation of heretical teachings that claim authority equal to or even greater than the Bible. In today's context, these challenges manifest in various forms:

First, there is a tendency to elevate subjective experiences to the same level of authority as Scripture (Pasang, 2021). From the perspective of *Sola Scriptura*, such experiences must always be tested and evaluated against the Bible, not the other way around.

Second, theological relativism undermines the truth claims of Scripture. In the postmodern context, there is a growing inclination to view all religious texts, including the Bible, as culturally bound products without universal truth claims. This approach fundamentally contradicts the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which affirms that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and possesses universal authority. Biblical authority is increasingly being replaced by scientific knowledge as the primary source of truth. As Hinlicky notes, liberal thinkers have abandoned Scripture as the foundation for Christian thought and practice, shifting instead toward social knowledge (Hinlicky, 2016).

Third, religious syncretism attempts to merge Christian teachings with elements from other religious traditions. This practice often results in hybrid theologies that subordinate biblical authority to principles derived from non-Christian traditions. Such syncretistic approaches challenge the exclusivity of Scripture as the sole infallible source of authority.

Heretical teachings, along with secularism, pragmatism, and subjectivism, significantly impact the understanding and application of biblical authority in Christian life. These ideologies blur the line between biblical truth and human opinion, ultimately diminishing the role of Scripture as the primary standard for evaluating theological claims. They also foster selective hermeneutics favoring certain parts of Scripture while ignoring others and

create dual authorities, where sources outside the Bible, such as personal experience, tradition, or new revelations, are treated as equal to Scripture. This directly contradicts the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which emphasizes the uniqueness and supremacy of the Bible as the sole infallible source of authority.

Heretical teachings, which have threatened the Church since its inception, have become even more dangerous today due to easy access to the internet and the proliferation of social media platforms. Sitanggang observes that these teachings are increasingly difficult to distinguish from biblical truth because they use biblical language that has been distorted through incorrect and even deviant interpretations. Lumintang writes that secular strategies and general philosophies have infiltrated and become the standard by which many contemporary churches measure themselves (Lumintang, 2017).

The Principle of Sola Scriptura in Light of Church Councils, the Canon of Scripture, and Confessions of Faith

a. The Role of Church Councils in Upholding Biblical Authority

Throughout Christian history, church councils have played a vital role in defending the authority of Scripture against various heresies. The Council of Nicaea (325 AD) and the Council of Constantinople (381 AD), for example, affirmed the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit based on biblical testimony. Likewise, other ecumenical councils have sought to preserve biblical doctrine against distortion and deviation.

In the Reformed tradition, church councils are valued insofar as they remain faithful to biblical teaching. Unlike the Roman Catholic view, which considers certain councils infallible, the Reformed tradition emphasizes that all councils are fallible and must always be evaluated against the standard of Scripture. Martin Luther's stance at the Diet of Worms (1521 AD) became foundational for the Reformed conviction: "Unless I am convinced by the

testimony of Scripture or by clear reason for I do not trust either in the Pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves I am bound by the Scriptures (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019).”

Church councils play an important role in affirming biblical authority, but not as the highest authority. Mathison writes that Scripture is the final and infallible authority in matters of doctrine and faith practice, yet its interpretation must occur within and by the Church, including councils that remain faithful to the *regula fidei* (the rule of faith handed down from the early Church)(Mathison, 2001).

Thus, the role of church councils in upholding biblical authority is one of recognition, not conferral. Councils help identify and preserve teachings that align with Scripture, but the authority of Scripture derives from its divine nature, not from ecclesiastical decisions. This view aligns with the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which affirms that the Word of God is the supreme standard for Christian faith and practice.

There are several implications regarding the relationship between church councils and *Sola Scriptura* for the practice of CRE:

First, Balancing Biblical Authority and Community where CRE must teach students that biblical interpretation should occur within the context of a living community namely, the Church.

Second, Teaching Church History, where CRE curriculum should include studies of major church councils and their role in interpreting biblical doctrine, so students do not fall into *solo Scriptura* a view that neglects tradition and history in biblical interpretation (Mathison, 2001).

Third, Critical Engagement with Tradition, where students should be taught to appreciate church tradition and history while having the courage to evaluate everything against Scripture.

Fourth, Anticipating Deviant Teachings, whereas councils were convened to preserve doctrinal purity, contemporary CRE must be responsive to modern theological deviations and equip students with doctrinal understanding and apologetics rooted in biblical truth.

b. The Formation of the Biblical Canon and its Relationship to Sola Scriptura

The formation of the biblical canon was a complex historical process that unfolded over several centuries. Zai and Sinaga write that only the books that were examined as bearing the truth of God could be responsibly affirmed through a long canonical process, ultimately unified and established as the standard of divine truth known as the Bible (Zai & Sinaga, 2022). In this regard, the principle of *Sola Scriptura* faces a fundamental question: if the Bible is the sole infallible authority, how can we trust a canonization process that involved decisions made by the Church?

Reformation theologians addressed this question by distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic authority. Scripture possesses intrinsic authority as the inspired Word of God, while the Church’s role is merely to recognize not to create that authority. In other words, the books now included in the biblical canon were accepted because they already possessed divine authority, not because they gained it through canonization. Mathison states that the canon was not determined by the Church but recognized by the Church as the inspired Word of God (Mathison, 2001). Geisler and MacKenzie explain that when God determines canonicity through prophecy, the people of God must discern which books are truly prophetic (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019). Thus, the Church did not create the canon but received and acknowledged the books that inherently carried divine authority.

Church councils such as the Council of Hippo (393 AD) and the Council of Carthage (397 AD), which affirmed the New Testament canon, are understood in Reformed theology not as conferring authority upon Scripture, but as formally recognizing the authority that these texts already possessed intrinsically. This view reinforces that biblical authority does not depend on ecclesiastical recognition but on the divine nature of the text itself (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019).

Therefore, *Sola Scriptura* maintains the authority of Scripture as the highest source of truth, while acknowledging the Church's role in recognizing the canon without granting it authority. This demonstrates that although the Church played a role in the history of canonization, the authority of Scripture ultimately derives from its divine origin, not from human decisions.

In relation to the Church's role in canonization, the implications of *Sola Scriptura* for Christian Religious Education (CRE) include the following:

First, the CRE curriculum must teach that the Bible is not merely a collection of texts, but a canon recognized by the Church as the authoritative Word of God.

Second, Biblical interpretation in learning must consider the historical-canonical context, not merely thematic or moralistic approaches.

Third, Learners must be guided to understand that biblical authority does not stand alone objectively, but is rooted in the living and historical witness of the Church.

Reformed Confessions as Articulations of the Principle of Sola Scriptura

Reformed confessions such as the Belgic Confession (1561) and the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) provide formal articulations of the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. The Belgic Confession, composed by Guido de Brès in 1561, stands as one of the key documents affirming the authority of Scripture in the context of persecution faced by the Reformed community in the Netherlands. This document clearly expresses the conviction that the Bible is the sole infallible source of authority in matters of faith and practice (McGrath & Marks, 2004). Mathison explains that confessions of faith are the Church's collective expression in interpreting Scripture historically and theologically, functioning as doctrinal boundaries to preserve the unity of faith and guard against heresy (Mathison, 2001).

Reformed confessions are not regarded as equal in authority to Scripture, but rather as systematic summaries of biblical teachings that serve as tools for understanding and defending biblical truth. These confessions are always subject to the authority of Scripture and may be revised if proven inconsistent with biblical teaching. Mathison emphasizes that *Sola Scriptura* does not mean "Scripture and me alone," but rather "Scripture as the highest authority, interpreted within a faithful community of faith (Mathison, 2001)."

In the context of *Sola Scriptura*, Reformed confessions help affirm that church authority is not an absolute source of truth, but must always be tested against biblical standards. This reinforces the conviction that Scripture is the supreme authority, while confessions of faith serve as systematic expressions of the teachings contained in the Word of God.

Evaluating *Sola Scriptura* in Christian Religious Education (CRE) in relation to Reformed confessions carries several implications:

First, Learners must be guided to understand that Christian faith is not shaped by personal interpretation detached from history and community.

Second, The CRE curriculum should introduce confessions of faith such as the Heidelberg Catechism or Westminster Confession as responsible theological learning tools rooted in the Church's heritage. The use of catechisms is a concrete form of education that remains faithful to Scripture and the Church's tradition of faith. Sualang explains that by reviving the use of catechisms in learning, CRE can maintain a balance between the authority of Scripture and the heritage of confessional faith, forming students who are rooted in a biblical, historical, and contextual faith (Sualang, 2021).

Apostolic Succession and Church Discipline

Lumintang states that one of the marks of a healthy church is its apostolic character. This apostolic character refers to a church that stands upon the teachings of the apostle's teachings rooted in Jesus Christ, the Old Testament, and guided by the Holy Spirit under divine authority. These teachings are embodied in Scripture (Lumintang, 2017). The true characteristics of the Church are unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and holiness, while the marks of a true church include the faithful preaching of the Word, church discipline, and the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.

The concept of apostolic succession represents a significant point of divergence between Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions. In Catholicism, the Church's teaching authority is understood as an unbroken continuation of apostolic authority passed down through the ordination of bishops. In this view, the Magisterium holds interpretive authority equal to Scripture (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019).

This debate has profound implications for the understanding of *Sola Scriptura*. In traditions that emphasize apostolic succession as a channel of authority, Scripture tends to be interpreted within the framework of ecclesial tradition, with the Magisterium holding final authority. In contrast, the Reformed tradition, which upholds *Sola Scriptura*, insists that church tradition and teaching must always be evaluated against biblical standards.

The principle of *Sola Scriptura* rejects the notion that interpretive authority belongs to the Magisterium over Scripture or sacred tradition. Misinterpretations of John 20:22–23 have led the Roman Catholic Church to claim that this passage confers special authority upon those ordained under true apostolic succession (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019). The Reformation movement affirms that while ecclesial offices hold functional authority in teaching and leadership, such authority is always subject to Scripture. In other words, church offices possess authority only insofar as they remain faithful to biblical teaching.

Regarding church discipline, the Reformed tradition developed the understanding that discipline is one of the marks of a true church, alongside the pure preaching of the Word and the proper administration of the sacraments. Church discipline is necessary to help congregants live according to biblical truth. Members who violate church regulations are given pastoral counsel and urged to repent. In cases of serious transgression, they may be barred from participating in the Lord's Supper (Napel, 2017). This differs from the Roman Catholic view, which sees church discipline as a manifestation of inherited apostolic authority. The Reformed tradition understands discipline as communal obedience to biblical authority. Thus, church discipline must always be grounded in and measured by Scripture.

Apostolic succession and church discipline, within the framework of Reformed theology, are always subject to biblical authority, consistent with the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which affirms Scripture as the highest standard for Christian faith and practice. Lumintang, Mathison, and Geisler & MacKenzie collectively emphasize that *Sola Scriptura* must be safeguarded through a faithful community of believers not through subjective interpretation or infallible office. Lumintang highlights the need for responsible ecclesial structures to prevent doctrinal abuse, while Mathison stresses the importance of *regula fidei* the apostolic rule of faith and the church community in interpreting Scripture. Geisler and MacKenzie underscore that although apostolic authority is not institutionally inherited, its teachings are preserved through Scripture and must be upheld collectively by the Church. In the context of CRE, these views suggest that Christian faith education must be rooted in Scripture, supported by church discipline, doctrinal heritage, and historical confessions to ensure fidelity and unity in teaching (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2019; Lumintang, 2017; Mathison, 2001).

Implications of Evaluating *Sola Scriptura* in CRE and its Relationship to Apostolic Succession are as follows:

1. CRE must avoid individualistic approaches to interpreting Scripture and emphasize the importance of faith communities and church confessions.
2. Discipline and structured teaching are essential tools for maintaining fidelity to the principle of *Sola Scriptura*.
3. Apostolic succession, in Reformed theology, is not about office succession but the faithful and historical transmission of teaching, which must be preserved through education and confessional heritage.
4. The challenge for contemporary CRE is to form students who not only know Scripture but also understand that Christian faith lives within a community rooted in robust historical and theological foundations.

Challenges in Implementing Sola Scriptura in the Context of CRE

The implementation of the *Sola Scriptura* principle in contemporary Christian Religious Education (CRE) faces several significant challenges. These challenges complicate the application of *Sola Scriptura* within educational settings. The key issues include:

First, there is a tendency in CRE practice to adopt various pedagogical approaches that sometimes place the authority of Scripture in a secondary position beneath subjective experience, cultural preferences, or pragmatic methods. While such approaches may be methodologically effective, they risk displacing Scripture from its role as the final authority in shaping faith.

Second, the development of postmodern hermeneutics, which relativizes truth and obscures textual authority, has influenced how Scripture is understood and interpreted even within CRE. This interpretive relativism contradicts the Reformation conviction that Scripture contains a clear message accessible to all believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Third, subjectivism in biblical interpretation. Mathison refers to this distortion as *solo Scriptura*, which deviates from *Sola Scriptura*. While *Sola Scriptura* emphasizes Scripture as the supreme authority interpreted within the light of the faith community and the church's rule of faith, *solo Scriptura* reduces the principle to "Scripture and me alone." This implies that individuals feel free to interpret Scripture without regard for confessions of faith, church history, or the wisdom of the Christian community (Mathison, 2001). Such a view may lead students to believe their personal interpretation of Scripture is equal to or even more valid than the teachings of the church or their educators.

Fourth, the emergence of various heretical or heterodox teachings that claim authority equal to or greater than Scripture poses a serious challenge to CRE grounded in *Sola Scriptura*. These teachings include unverifiable claims of personal revelation, experience-based spirituality, or contemporary religious writings that assert canonical status.

Fifth, ongoing debates about apostolic succession among Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions continue to influence understandings of authority in faith education. In Catholic and Orthodox traditions, teaching authority derives not only from Scripture but also from Church Tradition preserved through apostolic succession. In contrast, the Protestant tradition emphasizes that Scripture alone holds the highest authority.

Implications of Reformation Theology in Christian Religious Education (CRE)

- a. Strategies for Addressing Challenges in Implementing *Sola Scriptura* in CRE

In the context of CRE, Christian educators must develop effective strategies to confront the challenges posed by heretical teachings. First, strengthening biblical literacy is essential to enable students to understand and interpret Scripture accurately. This includes equipping them with skills in exegesis, historical cultural context, and sound hermeneutical principles. Biblical truth must be taught in accordance with the

original intent of the biblical authors. As Richards and Bredfeldt emphasize, effective Bible teaching is only possible when educators build a bridge between the biblical world of the past and the students' present lives (Richards & Bredfeldt, 1998).

Second, a strong understanding of the history and development of Christian doctrine is necessary. This knowledge helps students identify theological innovations that may deviate from historical orthodoxy. Third, cultivating a learning community that is both critical and faithful allows students to discuss and evaluate theological claims in an environment that fosters spiritual growth and understanding. Such communities provide a meaningful context for practicing *Sola Scriptura* through dialogical engagement.

In CRE, the concepts of apostolic succession and church discipline must be taught within the framework of *Sola Scriptura*. Students should understand that authority in the church always derives from and is subject to Scripture. They must also be equipped with the understanding that every believer bears responsibility for interpreting Scripture within the faith community and with regard to the church's historical teachings.

Key Strategies for Implementing *Sola Scriptura* in Contemporary CRE:

1. Integration of Catechisms and Confessions of Faith, as these serve as normative guides that bridge biblical texts and student understanding.
2. Developing Ecclesial Hermeneutics
Students should be trained to interpret Scripture in light of apostolic tradition and the faith community. Scripture remains the highest authority, while tradition and community assist in interpreting biblical truth.
3. Christian Educators as Bible Learners and Guides
Educators are not merely discussion facilitators but bridges connecting students to biblical truth.

- b. Applying the Principle of *Sola Scriptura* in the CRECurriculum

The principle of *Sola Scriptura* has profound implications for CRE curriculum development. First, a curriculum grounded in *Sola Scriptura* places biblical study at its core not merely as one subject among many. This means that all curricular components, including ethics, spirituality, and mission, must be based on and evaluated by biblical standards. As Benson states, the Bible is the primary reference framework for Christian educators (Benson, 2017). CRE must be a Bible-centered curriculum (Selan, 1995).

Second, the curriculum must be designed to develop comprehensive biblical literacy. This includes understanding the overarching biblical narrative, literary genres, historical-cultural contexts, and sound hermeneutical principles. The goal is to equip students with the ability to interpret Scripture accurately.

Third, the curriculum should introduce students to the history of interpretation and doctrinal development, always within the framework of biblical authority. Historical confessions of faith, writings of the church fathers, and key theological documents are studied not as equal authorities to Scripture but as aids in understanding biblical teaching (Mathison, 2001).

- c. Teaching Methods That Emphasize Biblical Authority

Teaching methods in CRE must reflect a commitment to *Sola Scriptura*. Several practices should be implemented:

1. Exegetical Approach as Central
Students must be trained to read Scripture carefully, understand its context, and draw meaning from the text rather than impose meaning onto it (Richards & Bredfeldt, 1998). Lumintang writes that because Scripture is the Word of God, its truth is absolute and must be understood through biblical exegesis grasping the author's intended meaning (Lumintang, 2017).

2. Direct Engagement with Scripture
Students should not merely learn about the Bible but study the Bible itself. This approach honors Scripture as the living and active Word of God, not merely an academic object. Tung affirms that the Bible is the primary source for seeking knowledge and truth (Tung, 2013).
3. Practical Application of Biblical Truth
Teaching must connect biblical truths and doctrines to everyday life, helping students live out their faith meaningfully (Mary et al., 2022).
- d. Evaluating CRE Practice Based on Sola Scriptura
Evaluating CRE practice through the lens of *Sola Scriptura* involves several key criteria:
 1. Extent to Which Scripture Is the Final Authority
This includes not only the content taught but also the methodology, objectives, and evaluation standards.
 2. Development of Students' Independent Biblical Interpretation
Effective CRE does not merely transmit ready-made interpretations but equips students with hermeneutical skills to study Scripture independently.
 3. Preparation for Theological Discernment
CRE must prepare students to critically evaluate theological claims and religious practices based on biblical standards. In the digital age, where students are exposed to diverse theological perspectives online, they must be equipped to discern teachings aligned with *Sola Scriptura* from those that deviate.

CONCLUSION

Sola Scriptura is a central principle of Reformation theology, affirming Scripture as the highest authority in Christian faith and practice. This principle has profoundly impacted church renewal, educational development, and the global growth of Christianity. However, in the context of Christian Religious Education in the postmodern era, *Sola Scriptura* faces serious challenges such as secularism, relativism, syncretism, and denominational fragmentation, which threaten to obscure biblical authority and provoke crises of validity and relevance. The misuse of this principle in individualistic ways, detached from the faith community, exacerbates the crisis of authority within Protestant churches. Therefore, the implementation of *Sola Scriptura* in CRE must be critically and contextually evaluated, considering church councils, the canon of Scripture, confessions of faith, and the principle of apostolic teaching succession, to preserve the authority and unity of the body of Christ in facing the challenges of our time.

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