

# INTEGRATING THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION (CREATIO EX NIHILIO) IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS IN INDONESIA: A BIBLICAL-PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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**Abstract:** The teaching of scientific theories of origins, such as the Big Bang and evolution, in primary education often creates epistemological tension with biblical teaching, particularly within Christian school contexts. In Indonesia, this tension is frequently addressed without a clear pedagogical framework that integrates faith and learning coherently. This study aims to develop a biblical-pedagogical framework for integrating the doctrine of creation (creatio ex nihilo) within Christian Religious Education (CRE) for primary students. Employing a qualitative research design through literature analysis and classroom-based case studies in Indonesian Christian primary schools, this study examines how the doctrine of creation can be taught as divine revelation rather than as a competing scientific explanation. The findings indicate that when creation is presented theologically as an act of God's sovereign will, students engage scientific knowledge critically while maintaining biblical authority as the foundation of learning. This study proposes a biblical-pedagogical framework that positions Christian teachers as facilitators, reconcilers, and transformers in guiding students toward an integrated understanding of faith and knowledge. The framework contributes to Christian education by offering a coherent model for faith-learning integration that supports intellectual formation and spiritual growth among primary students in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Christian Religious Education; Doctrine of Creation; Creatio ex Nihilo; Biblical-Pedagogical Framework; Faith-Learning Integration; Primary Education in Indonesia.*

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## 1. Introduction

Contemporary education increasingly exposes students to scientific theories concerning the origin of the universe and life, particularly the Big Bang theory and evolutionary theory. These theories are commonly presented within formal science curricula as authoritative explanatory frameworks for understanding reality. Georges Lemaître originally proposed the Big Bang idea. It is based on two main ideas: first, that the theory of relativity accurately describes how all matter interacts with gravity; and second, the



cosmological principle, which says that an observer's view of the universe doesn't depend on direction or position. This indicates the scale of the cosmos is unbounded and that cosmic history can be reconstructed following the Planck era. This training is important for helping students develop scientific literacy. However, in Christian education it often creates epistemological problems. These problems appear when students understand scientific explanations as complete explanations of life and reality, and they no longer see the need for theological perspectives.<sup>1</sup>

In cosmological discussion, Darwin's theory of evolution states that life changes slowly through natural selection from simple organisms to complex ones. This idea has a strong influence on biology teaching today.<sup>2</sup> If scientific hypotheses are taught without proper context, they may weaken students' understanding of the Creator, particularly in religious schools. As a result, students may begin to treat scientific knowledge and faith as belonging to separate and unrelated areas of understanding. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), the subject of origins transcends simply scientific investigation, including theological and pedagogical dimensions as well.

The Bible clearly states that the existence of the universe is due to the existence of the Triune God who created something from nothing. This concept is called *creatio ex nihilo*. This Christian teaching is based on the belief that creation through His word is His will. From the beginning, the Bible clearly reveals that the Triune God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all that exists (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16–17; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 21–22).

In Reformation theology, creation and creatures are completely dependent on the nature, attributes, and decrees of the Triune God. This perspective shows the separation between the Creator and creation, as well as the sequential relationship between the creator and the created. This principle is the foundation of theology for Christian religious education. At the same time, it directs students to investigate the universe without disregarding the existence of the Triune God. Therefore, the investigation of the origins of the universe, humanity, and the earth is important to integrate into classroom pedagogy starting in elementary school. Students should not take a dualistic position in investigating and integrating faith and science. If there is a separation between the two, Christian religious education will not be holistic and epistemological. Such conditions will make it difficult for students to integrate their faith, knowledge, and life experiences.

Empirical studies in science and religion education show that students often separate scientific explanations from religious beliefs in a rigid way. Consequently,

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<sup>1</sup> W. Ruslan dan M. Dua, *Terjadinya Alam Semesta Perspektif Teori Big Bang* (Jakarta: Unika Atma Jaya, 2019), 7–10.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859), 84–109.

students could find it challenging to comprehend the meaningful relationship between faith and scientific understanding. Billingsley and her colleagues demonstrate that many students regard scientific explanations of origins as more credible than religious accounts, while others struggle to adequately integrate the two domains.<sup>3</sup> When this kind of integration is not intentionally developed, the sense of contradiction between science and faith can become more visible in Christian institutions. This problem becomes more evident when Christian Religious Education does not provide a common interpretive lens for understanding scientific knowledge in relation to a biblical worldview. In such contexts, students may struggle to affirm God as Creator while at the same time engaging seriously and critically with scientific inquiry. The challenge is particularly evident in primary education, since students at this level are still developing their fundamental beliefs on authority, truth, and the interplay between faith and academic learning.<sup>4</sup> Initially, the efforts presented by science slowly impacted the position of faith and science as two different worldviews for understanding and interpreting the reality of the universe, the earth, and all its contents.

In Indonesia, Christian schools implement the national curriculum, which places strong emphasis on scientific competence and critical thinking, while at the same time seeking to preserve their Christian identity and biblical values. Classroom practices in Indonesian Christian primary schools demonstrate that scientific explanations of origins are often portrayed as neutral or devoid of values, with limited theological engagement in Christian Religious Education (CRE). Although educators may doctrinally support biblical creation, the instructional strategies for reconciling this belief with students' engagement with scientific explanations remain insufficiently refined. Research on Christian education in Indonesia has mostly focused on apologetics or on general models of faith-learning integration. As a result, there is limited research that specifically examines how the concept of creation is pedagogically framed in Christian Religious Education at the primary level.<sup>5</sup> This gap matters because the way creation is taught at an early stage plays an important role in shaping how children later relate scientific knowledge, biblical teaching, and their understanding of what counts as authoritative truth.

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<sup>3</sup> Berry Billingsley et al., "How Students View the Boundaries Between Their Science and Religious Education Concerning the Origins of Life and the Universe," *Science Education* 100, no. 3 (2016): 468–472.

<sup>4</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Science and Religion: A New Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 89–94.

<sup>5</sup> F. Christofer dan W. Irawati, "Peran Guru Kristen dalam Membentuk Pemahaman Siswa tentang Penciptaan Alam Semesta yang Bersumber pada Alkitab," *Didache: Journal of Christian Education* 3, no. 2 (2022): 177–197.

Christian educational philosophy understands education as something that is always shaped by underlying worldviews and never fully separated from religious influence. In this view, teaching does not only affect students' cognitive abilities, but also shapes their emotions, beliefs, and deep personal convictions. For this reason, Christian Religious Education should function as a formative learning space in which biblical truth gradually informs how students understand reality as a whole. Within such an approach, faith and learning are not treated as separate elements, but are brought together so that students learn to see knowledge as rooted in God's redemptive purposes rather than in autonomous human reasoning alone.<sup>6</sup> From this perspective, the task of Christian education is not merely to transmit religious content, but to cultivate an integrated way of knowing in which intellectual formation, spiritual understanding, and moral orientation develop together within the horizon of God's truth.

This study identifies an important research gap, namely the lack of a unified biblical-pedagogical framework that can assist Christian educators in teaching the concept of creation (*creatio ex nihilo*) within Christian Religious Education while still engaging critically and ethically with scientific theories. In many cases, biblical creation is implicitly treated as if it were a competing scientific explanation, rather than as a theological claim grounded in divine revelation. For this reason, CRE requires an educational approach that presents creation as a foundational way of knowing, through which students' epistemological assumptions and broader worldviews are gradually formed and oriented toward God's truth. This methodology aligns with Christian apologetic traditions that encourage scientific investigation but rejecting naturalism as a conclusive explanatory paradigm.<sup>7</sup>

This study seeks to develop a biblical-pedagogical framework that can be used to introduce the concept of creation (*creatio ex nihilo*) within Christian Religious Education for elementary students in Indonesia. A qualitative approach is adopted, using literature analysis together with classroom-based case studies, in order to explore how CRE operates in practice as a formative space for connecting faith and learning. Through this process, the study intends to contribute to the development of Christian education by proposing a conceptual and pedagogical framework that supports students' intellectual growth, deepens their theological understanding, and encourages spiritual formation,

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<sup>6</sup> Cornelius Van Brummelen, *Walking with God in the Classroom: Christian Approaches to Teaching and Learning* (Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Design Publications, 2009), 45–48; Mark A. Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 59–63.

<sup>7</sup> M. Y. Matalu, *Apologetika Kristen* (Malang: Gerakan Kebangunan Kristen Reformed, 2018), 139–140; Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 167–173.

particularly through insights drawn from Reformed perspectives on creation and contemporary discussions on faith-learning integration.<sup>8</sup> By paying close attention to what happens in the classroom, this study also considers how teachers make sense of theological ideas and bring them into daily teaching practices in ways that are understandable and meaningful for young learners.

## 2. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore how the doctrine of creation (*creatio ex nihilo*) is pedagogically integrated into Christian Religious Education for primary students in Indonesia. A qualitative design is appropriate since this research seeks to explore meaning, interpretation, and instructional practice rather than quantify variables or test hypotheses. Qualitative inquiry allows researchers to investigate complex educational and theological phenomena within their natural contexts and to understand how meaning is constructed by educators and learners.<sup>9</sup>

The research design integrates a literature review and a classroom-based case study. The literature survey in this study draws on theological, philosophical, and pedagogical writings that discuss the idea of creation, the relationship between faith and learning, and Christian approaches to teaching. These sources are used to build the theological and philosophical grounding for the proposed biblical-pedagogical framework. This study pays particular attention to Reformed perspectives on creation and to interdisciplinary discussions between science and religion, as these areas are closely connected to the epistemological challenges encountered in Christian Religious Education.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, this study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine pedagogical practices within selected Christian primary school settings in Indonesia. The case study design is chosen to gain in-depth insight into how teachers present theories of origins in classroom settings and how they pedagogically frame the relationship between scientific explanations and biblical teaching. This approach does

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<sup>8</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, 421–430.

<sup>9</sup> Abd. Hadi, Asrori, and Rusman, *Penelitian Kualitatif: Studi Fenomenologi, Case Study, Grounded Theory, Etnografi, Biografi* (Jawa Tengah: CV. Pena Persada, 2021), 12–19; John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 44–47.

<sup>10</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Science and Religion: A New Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 89–97; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, 421–430; Hannas dan Rinawaty, “Apologetika Alkitabiah Tentang Penciptaan Alam Semesta Dan Manusia Terhadap Kosmologi Fengshui Sebagai Pendekatan Dalam Pekabarhan Injil,” DUNAMIS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani 4, no. 1 (2019): 55–74.

not aim at statistical generalization but at analytical understanding of recurring pedagogical patterns that illuminate the research problem.<sup>11</sup>

Data from the literature analysis and classroom observations are examined using a descriptive-analytical method. Through this approach, the study is able to identify key issues related to epistemological tension, the integration of pedagogy, and the role of teachers in mediating the relationship between faith and learning. This analysis utilises a prescriptive methodology to establish a biblical-pedagogical framework that addresses the identified research gap. The framework outlines key principles for teaching creation as divine revelation while critically and responsibly engaging with scientific knowledge within Christian Religious Education.

This study prioritises methodological rigour by highlighting conceptual consistency and theoretical triangulation across religious literature, educational theory, and observable classroom activities. Reflexivity is upheld during the research process by rigorously scrutinising the researcher's religious convictions and their impact on interpretation. The qualitative form of the study restricts empirical generalisation but offers analytical depth and theoretical clarity suitable for framework development in Christian Religious Education.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that teaching practices in Christian primary schools often treat science education and Christian Religious Education (CRE) as separate subjects. Scientific explanations of origins are usually presented as stand-alone accounts that focus on empirical processes, while CRE tends to communicate creation mainly through biblical narratives, with little reference to scientific discussions that are addressed in other learning contexts. This split encourages students to classify information, viewing science as explaining the world's mechanics and CRE as related to religious belief. In this context, creation is commonly understood only as a religious claim, separated from students' wider epistemological framework, and this separation makes it difficult for creation to contribute to a coherent view of reality.

The findings suggest that this separation in educational practice shapes students' epistemic beliefs and highlights the important mediating role of Christian educators. In some elementary school classes, students tend to view scientific explanations of science as more authoritative than biblical teachings about creation. They are influenced by the common belief that the Bible is only a matter of Christianity. The two must be separated.

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<sup>11</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 44–47.

<sup>12</sup> Hadi, et all, *Penelitian Kualitatif*, 12–19; Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 44–47.

Such an attitude not only disregards biblical truth and idolizes science. In such circumstances, learning models and strategies for integrating faith and science need to be formulated appropriately. Christian religion teachers improve their capacity in various sciences in line with the quality of their faith. Thus, each student is guided to be able to integrate faith and science theologically, academically, and practically in stages. The impact on students at the elementary school level is that they are trained to accept the construction of the integration of faith and science in a focused and sustainable manner. The results indicate that effective Christian Religious Education relies on pedagogical intentionality that synthesises theological comprehension with educational practice to foster the development of a Christian worldview.

### ***Creatio ex Nihilo and the Ontological Distinction between Creator and Creation***

The biblical account of creation must not to be construed as a mythological tale in accordance with Rudolf Bultmann's demythologisation framework. The creation narrative in Genesis 1-2 was revealed to the prophet Moses and written down as a proclamation of faith that is spiritual, theological, historical, and practical for the people of the Triune God. This narrative emerged in human civilization to counter the worldviews of Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and ancient East Asian mythology regarding the Creator, creation, and the act of creation. Experts acknowledge that the books of the Old Testament have similarities in literary pattern or narrative to literary documents of the Ancient Near East, but the two differ in their theological basis regarding the existence of God the Creator, creation, and human life at that time.<sup>13</sup>

Although there are similarities between the creation narratives in Genesis 1-2 and Mesopotamian cosmology in terms of structure, theme, and symbolism, they are theologically opposed. The narrative of harmony between heaven and earth in the Bible begins with the decree of the Triune God, while the Mesopotamian narrative begins with cosmic conflict between the gods. The creation narrative in Genesis 1-2 is the work of the Triune God, which was decreed and carried out in a good, beautiful, and orderly manner. In some narratives, God voluntarily decides to create and forms a covenantal relationship with humans. Creation is thus perceived as originating from divine will and benevolence, rather than from conflict or metaphysical chaos.<sup>14</sup> Based on this line of thinking, humans discovered the principle of investigating the origins of the universe, the earth, and its contents in a proper, orderly, and beautiful manner.

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<sup>13</sup> W. S. Lasor, D. A. Hubbard, and F. W. Bush, *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 1* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2005), 116.

<sup>14</sup> Lasor, and Bush, *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 1*, 116.

From the first verse to the last, the Bible clearly and completely states that the Triune God is the only Creator of the universe and all that exists. His work is based on His nature and attributes in a perfect and absolute unity. Therefore, the Bible teaches that God the Trinity in His majesty is the Ruler, Owner, and Sustainer of all that exists (Genesis 14:19, 22). This is written in the phrase “God said” before anything existed. This shows the absolute authority of God the Trinity. He rules with His powerful word, not because of the natural processes of all that exists. This principle of thought is not merely a belief in the existence of various entities and all that exists, but also in His continuity and independence in sustaining all His works. There are two differences between the Creator and creation: ability and inability to exist and non-existence, as well as life and living versus death and separation—a deep ontological chasm between the Creator and the created.<sup>15</sup>

The basic idea of *creatio ex nihilo* theology about the existence of everything, both time-space and the contents of the universe, is due to the existence of the eternal Trinity and His being. This is also the foundation of Christian faith and tradition as written in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. This confession affirms that creation is not an emanation from the Triune God, nor is it an essential process, nor is it a phenomenon that suddenly came into being on its own. Rather, everything exists and is present from nothingness through the free, authoritative, planned, and deliberate command of the Triune God. Therefore, there is nothing else except the Triune God who is alive and independent, while everything else depends on Him and is contingent. Herman Bavinck explains that this confession of faith maintains the transcendence of God and the authentic integrity of creation, providing an ontological basis for understanding the orderly and interrelated nature of the universe and its contents.<sup>16</sup>

In the current context, in the Modern and Post-Modern or Post-truth era, teachers and lecturers who teach Christian Religious Education are facing pedagogical challenges and opportunities, in relation to the increasing knowledge about the origins of the universe and its contents, such as the Big Bang Theory and the theory of natural evolution. Teachers who are not prepared with adequate biblical and theological thinking will find it difficult to reconcile their faith in the Creator and creation with these theories. At the same time, this pedagogical context is a real opportunity to guide students in their confession of faith in the Creator and creation and to engage in dialogue with various theories of origin. The main question is not whether scientific models accurately describe observable phenomena, but whether they can answer questions

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<sup>15</sup> P. D. Montang, *Doktrin tentang Allah (Teologi Proper)* (Jakarta: CV. Ruang Tentor, 2023), 243–246.

<sup>16</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, 523–529.

about the origin of things and why they happen. As written in Genesis 1-2, creation began with God's deliberate act, implying that existence is inherently dependent on the Transcendent to reveal the origin of all things. This is not an empirical phenomenon. Scientific theories are able to describe how the universe has developed, but they do not explain why it exists in the first place.<sup>17</sup>

From the perspective of Christian Religious Education, the universe is understood to have its primary origin in God Himself, who does not depend on any prior conditions or external materials in order to create. Even when cosmological theories describe motion, expansion, or energy, these processes still raise the question of an initiating cause that cannot be reduced to the material conditions that come afterward. From a biblical-theological standpoint, only God possesses eternal power and self-existent being. Scripture asserts that in God "we live and move and have our being," highlighting divine causality as fundamental to all existence and establishing the essential religious framework for genuine scientific investigation.<sup>18</sup>

### **A Theological-Philosophical Account of *Creatio ex Nihilo***

All the works of the Triune God are the tangible fruits of His sovereign and absolute will. His existence demonstrates authority, power, and independence that are free and unlimited. For this reason, creation is not viewed as a random or self-organising event, but as an ordered and meaningful reality that emerges from God's intentional will. Human reflection on the cosmos has long made use of causality in an attempt to explain what is visible and to search for a deeper explanation of existence. However, philosophical reasoning by itself is unable to reach a final account of an uncaused cause, since every chain of causation within creation already assumes a source that stands beyond contingent reality. Christian theology acknowledges this restriction by stating that God is the only being that exists forever and on its own, and that God is the ultimate source of creation and the one who keeps everything going (Acts 17:28).<sup>19</sup>

The capabilities and capacity of the human mind are limited in their ability to know, understand, and interpret all of the works of the Triune God. Even with scientific, logical, and objective observation, investigation, and research using various methods and methodologies, the reality of the works of the Triune God remains a mystery. There are limitations in terms of time, scope, and completeness of the results of scientific work. The results achieved by humans have indeed progressed in terms of science and

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<sup>17</sup> K. Stevanus, *Apologetika: Benarkah Yesus itu Tuhan?* (Yogyakarta: PBMR Andi, 2016), 71-83.

<sup>18</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol.2, 523-529.

<sup>19</sup> Stevanus, *Apologetika*, 71-83

technology, but there is still so much in the universe that has not been investigated. On the part of the Triune God, through the Bible, He speaks and teaches about the origin of the universe and all its contents, the meaning and purpose of its existence. The Bible explains things as they are, without scientific explanations, with its narrative about the truth of God and Himself, the Creator who interacts with His creation. Thus, the Triune God reveals Himself and His work through His work and His word, which are not contradictory, but synergistic and communicate with each other to show the origin, meaning, and purpose of what exists (creation). Thomas Aquinas clarifies this with the basic idea that even though human reason cannot fathom the mind of the Triune God, humans can know and learn indirectly and directly from His creation. It is important to realize that this thinking is in the light and understanding of the Bible (special revelation) and His special grace. This knowledge transcends the limits of rational intellect, which is suprarational.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, Christian teachers accept and acknowledge that the universe came into existence from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) and that its existence is due to the Triune God. This thinking is certainly different from the construct of Naturalism, which explains that the origin of the universe and its contents is not due to a Personal Creator who lives eternally, but rather due to the existence of matter, which is considered eternal.. In this context, the Big Bang theory elucidates a cosmic event pertaining to the universe's formation, but Christian theology articulates creation as stemming from God's sovereign will, devoid of any preexisting matter or self-sustaining process. From this perspective, God and creation do not occupy the same ontological status: God exists eternally and inevitably, whereas creation exists contingently and dependently. As Bavinck observes, preserving this divide safeguards both God's transcendence and the coherence of created reality, while also preventing the simplification of theology to naturalism or the conflation of scientific explanation with metaphysical assertions.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, the difference between the teachings of the Bible and various scientific theories based on human assumptions stems from the errors and ambiguities of experts on both sides. They treat the Bible as a scientific document like other theories. Then the results of human investigations of the universe are positioned as more authoritative and scientific. However, the Bible does not explain the Triune God, the universe, and humanity scientifically. The Bible teaches humans about these three things as an integral, holistic, and complete unity so that humans may glorify the Triune God as their purpose in life. The Triune God not only created and sustains His work, but is also

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<sup>20</sup> A. F. Gultom, "Iman dengan Akal dan Etika menurut Thomas Aquinas," *JPAK: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katolik* 16, no. 8 (2016): 44–54.

<sup>21</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol.2, 536–541.

present and leads the story of creation, the journey of human life until the end. Christian teachers will maintain these differences and divisions so that scientific research is valued as the fruit of important investigation in the order of creation, in line with Christianity giving an account of its faith regarding the origin, meaning, and purpose of all that exists.<sup>22</sup>

The findings of this study indicate that Christian Religious Education (CRE) frequently struggles to integrate theological teaching on creation with scientific concepts presented in formal curricula. When creation is approached theologically instead of competitively, students more effectively acknowledge God as the ultimate source of existence, while considering scientific ideas as tentative and exploratory explanations of natural phenomena. This integrative approach directs and guides a holistic and harmonious relationship between faith and knowledge. Teachers educate students to think critically about various human thoughts and discoveries in this universe while placing them all in the light and authority of the Bible. Christian Religious Education subjects become a useful educational tool for shaping students to learn various sciences with respect for the Triune God. Epistemological principles in the learning process can develop intellectual responsibility that gradually and continuously shapes and equips students in Primary School with a comprehensive Christian worldview.<sup>23</sup>

### **Teachers as Formative Agents: Facilitating, Reconciling, and Transforming Worldviews in Teaching Creation**

Within Christian education, teachers have a formative influence on how students come to understand creation and, more broadly, how they make sense of the world around them. From a Christian pedagogical perspective, teaching is never religiously neutral; it is inherently formative, directing learners toward particular assumptions about authority, truth, and meaning. Christian educators therefore carry multiple roles within the learning process, acting as facilitators, reconcilers, and agents of transformation. As facilitators, teachers do not simply pass on information, but help students take part in the responsible formation of knowledge. This role involves guiding learners to recognise God as the Creator and Sustainer of all things, while at the same time engaging critically with scientific knowledge under the authority of Scripture.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Stevanus, *Apologetika*, 71–83.

<sup>23</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol.2, 536–541.

<sup>24</sup> Cornelius Van Brummelen dan W. Harro, *Berjalan dengan Tuhan di Dalam Kelas: Pendekatan Kristiani untuk Pembelajaran* (Karawaci: UPH Press, 2006), 33–35; George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews

Christian educators not only facilitate learning but also serve as agents of reconciliation by engaging in God's redemptive process and directing students towards a revitalised relationship with God through Christ. Therefore, Christian Religious Education subjects need to study various new sciences and technologies in the introduction to the Lord Jesus Christ. Both grow and develop spiritually, academically, and practically. Teachers serve as examples of this integration through the teaching and learning process in and outside the classroom so that students can witness, imitate, and be impacted in their lives. Therefore, learning about the Creator and His creation helps students to know the Triune God and understand the meaning and purpose of His creation, as well as Christ's redemption of creation in the grand narrative of the Bible.<sup>25</sup>

Christian teachers proactively influence students with creative insights from the Bible. They are guided holistically so that they do not become fragmented and dualistic in their understanding of the Bible and creation, God and His work. Such Christian education will transform and renew students' thinking about the Creator and creation through unity with Jesus Christ. This transformation and renewal does not stop at the amount of knowledge, technology, and skills that students master, but begins with the knowledge of the Triune God through Christ, right thinking, and godly character. The personal integration of each student precedes the integration of faith and knowledge. The impact of this integration is seen in the attitudes and perspectives of students on the Big Bang theory, the theory of evolution, and other theories, and is critically explained in terms of the true reality of creation. Christian teachers guide students to think critically when explaining the origin, meaning, and purpose of creation based on the worldview of the Bible. This model of integration places all scientific and academic inquiry within a comprehensive theological framework of open and responsible dialogue based on the understanding that science is not incompatible with biblical teachings.<sup>26</sup>

Integration instills a spirit of transformation in every Christian teacher to experience the learning process with integrative models and strategies through Christian Religious Education. Teachers guide students to engage in dialogue, cooperate, and collaborate with one another so that they may become more familiar with the creation of the Triune God and the Bible. Integration is manifested through various tasks and learning activities in and outside the classroom on a regular basis with all its beauty. Students can write, narrate, and make creative videos as a means of integrating faith and knowledge. Teachers provide space, opportunities, and facilitation so that students'

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University Press, 2006), 255–260.

<sup>25</sup> D. M. Sandi and C. B. Nainggolan, "Cara Pandang Guru Kristen terhadap Otoritas dalam Kerangka Kisah Agung," KENOSIS: Jurnal Kajian Teologi (2020): 180–198.

<sup>26</sup> Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 255–260.

practice and reflection can improve their intellectual and faith abilities through learning with God and His creation. On the other hand, the development of the curriculum and lesson plans for each subject in elementary school can be linked to models and strategies for integrating faith and knowledge. This conceptual design is systematically, measurably, and sustainably structured while continuously evaluating and updating its integration models and strategies. Ultimately, all of this is directly related to teaching methods, comprehensive learning models and strategies, and a firm belief in the Triune God.<sup>27</sup>

This research shows that the personal integration of a Christian teacher plays an important role in preparing students to know, understand, and recognize the Creator and His creation. They will creatively study creation in this world from a biblical perspective and with minds submissive to the Triune God. Through inquiry-based and reflective teaching approaches, teachers guide children to recognise God as Creator while engaging thoughtfully and responsibly with scientific knowledge. In this way, Christian Religious Education is framed not as a defensive reaction to modern science, but as a learning space that is intellectually serious and spiritually formative, remaining faithful to Scripture while engaging with contemporary educational challenges.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

This study shows that teaching Christian elementary school students scientific theories of origins is very difficult from both a teaching and a knowledge point of view if there is no intentional theological reflection. The results indicate that scientific explanations, especially the theory of evolution and the Big Bang hypothesis, are often employed to elucidate the entirety of the world. Because of this, students may not be able to tell the difference between biblical and scientific knowledge. Christian Religious Education, especially in elementary school when kids are still learning basic ideas about knowing, truth, and reality, has an epistemological deficit. This is where the separation starts, not a rejection of Scripture.

The research indicates that Christian Religious Education (CRE) and the theology of creation (*creatio ex nihilo*) ought to be integrated to formulate a cohesive biblical-pedagogical framework to address this issue. When students view creation as a supernatural revelation grounded in Scripture rather than as a rival scientific explanation, they cultivate sophisticated critical thinking skills regarding scientific

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<sup>27</sup> J. Zendrato, J. S. Putra, W. Cendana, A. E. Susanti, dan A. P. Munthe, *Kurikulum bagi Pemula* (Surakarta: CV Oase Group, 2019), 48–50.

<sup>28</sup> J. Zendrato et al., *Kurikulum bagi Pemula*, 48–50.

concepts while maintaining a Christian perspective. This broad idea of education sees faith and scientific thinking as two parts that work together. In this case, Christian teachers have a big effect on how students see themselves by always helping them understand things clearly, think responsibly, and grow spiritually. They also help students develop and change.

This study says that teacher preparation programs should give teachers biblical-pedagogical skills so they can combine faith and learning. Christian schools ought to endeavor to integrate scientific explanations of creation into their Christian Religious Education curricula. Future research employing longitudinal and mixed-method approaches could investigate the influence of integrated Christian Religious Education practices on students' worldview formation and epistemic development over time. Even though this study can't be used to make generalizations because it was qualitative, it does give us a good idea of how to improve training in the future and do more empirical research in this area.

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