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## **Philosophical Methods in Christian Religious Education: Answering the Challenges of The Alpha Generation Facing the Era of Society 5.0**

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**Abstract:** *The era of Society 5.0 builds upon the advancements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, emphasizing the harmonious integration of technology and human capabilities to address societal challenges. To effectively navigate this era, individuals need to develop critical thinking skills and self-awareness through philosophical methods. These methods, which are particularly relevant for the alpha generation growing up amidst information overload and technological advancements, can be introduced from early childhood. This study aims to introduce philosophical methods within the context of Christian Religious Education to empower the alpha generation in Society 5.0. The research utilizes qualitative methods, specifically a literature review, to propose three philosophical approaches for Christian Religious Education: the critical method, the intuitive method, and the dialectical method. By incorporating these educational philosophies, Christian Religious Education educators can strategize and adapt their teaching approaches to cater to the learning needs of the alpha generation within the framework of Society 5.0.*

**Keywords:** *Alpha Generation; Christian Religious Education; Philosophy Method; Society 5.0*

## PENDAHULUAN

In today's context, characterized by numerous challenges and changes faced by humanity, individuals are often inclined to opt for practical choices or seek convenience in accomplishing various tasks. The concept of Society 5.0, also known as the super smart society, was introduced by the Japanese government in 2016 as a solution and response to the perceived setbacks in human relationships caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.<sup>1</sup> In the current era of Society 4.0, marked by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, individuals tend to desire instant, rapid, practical, and self-beneficial outcomes. This phenomenon is attributed to the emergence of instant gratification, facilitated by digital technology.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, present-day society exhibits impatience and an expectation for immediate fulfillment of desires. Society 5.0 represents a modern-era concept wherein technology and human beings collaborate to enhance the quality of human life in a sustainable manner.

The pervasive and convenient use of technology has had a significant impact on children born into and approaching the era of Society 5.0. One notable consequence is that children often struggle to make sound decisions based on critical reasoning. This can be attributed to the widespread utilization of internet technology and its derivative, social media, as extensive sources of information, which may not necessarily be credible or trustworthy.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the Alpha generation faces challenges when it comes to collaborating with individuals from different age groups or with diverse backgrounds. This is a result of diminished face-to-face interaction and a decline in concern for the environment.<sup>4</sup> Children under the age of 12, born around 2010, referred to as the Alpha generation, are inundated with a constant stream of accessible information and entertainment. Consequently, they may be easily influenced by the information present in current social media platforms without critically evaluating it through rationality and sound logic. Furthermore, they may exhibit a reluctance to adapt and engage with their peers, displaying tendencies of being anti-social or lacking in interpersonal skills.

The 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, innovation, collaborative abilities, and digital literacy, need to be continually developed, particularly in the face of the

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<sup>1</sup> Atsushi Deguchi, Chiaki Hirai, Hideyuki Matsuoka, Taku Nakano, Kohei Oshima, Mitsuharu Tai, Shigeyuki Tani, *Society 5.0: A People-centric Super-smart Society*, (Gateway East: Springer Nature Singapore, 2020): 2, [https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/41719/2020\\_Book\\_Society50.pdf?sequence=1#page=18](https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/41719/2020_Book_Society50.pdf?sequence=1#page=18).

<sup>2</sup> Umar Al Faruqi, "Survey Paper: Future Service in Industry 5.0" *Jurnal Sistem Cerdas* 2 No. 1 (Mei 2019): 68 (67-79), <https://apic.id/jurnal/index.php/jsc/article/view/21>.

<sup>3</sup> Imroatul Ajizah, "Urgensi Teknologi Pendidikan: Analisis Kelebihan dan Kekurangan Teknologi Pendidikan di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0" *ISTIGHNA* 4 No. 1 (Januari 2021): 33 (25-36), [http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/id/eprint/635/1/Munawir\\_Urgensi%20teknologi%20pendidikan.pdf](http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/id/eprint/635/1/Munawir_Urgensi%20teknologi%20pendidikan.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Ajizah, "Urgensi Teknologi Pendidikan...", 33.

Society 5.0 era where technological proficiency is no longer new or challenging in communal life.<sup>5</sup> Technological mastery has become an everyday aspect of Society 5.0. The primary focus is no longer on adapting to increasingly advanced technology, but rather on empowering technology to enhance human performance and interrelationships. Engaging in philosophy, fundamentally encompassing critical thinking and fostering reflective self-awareness, is deemed crucial in educating children from an early age to confront the diverse challenges of the Society 5.0 era, specifically in implementing Christian Religious Education (CRE) instruction.

Several studies have previously examined the connection between philosophy and the Society 5.0 era. In an article written by Ramses Simanjuntak et al., titled “Akomodasi Filsafat dalam Pendidikan Agama Kristen untuk Menjawab Tantangan Pembelajaran di Era Digital” (“Accommodating Philosophy in Christian Religious Education to Address the Challenges of Learning in the Digital Era,”) the utilization of pragmatist philosophy in PAK (Pendidikan Agama Kristen) instruction, such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, and creative problem solving, is suggested in response to the rapid development of technology that emphasizes utility.<sup>6</sup> Findings from Andrias Pujiono's research, titled “Profesionalitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen di Era Masyarakat 5.0,” (“The Professionalism of Christian Religious Education Teachers in the Society 5.0 Era”) conclude that teachers must continuously update and upgrade themselves, both individually and communally, in order to teach in a contextual manner.<sup>7</sup> Emilia Mude, in the Journal of STT Jaffray Jakarta, writes about “*Cyber Parenting In Society 5.0*” highlighting that parenting with a focus on reinforcing the spirituality of children is a divine mandate, and it necessitates the utilization of information technology in the Society 5.0 era.<sup>8</sup> From these articles, the author observes that, in response to the presence of Society 5.0, it is essential for educators, including teachers and parents, to be tech-savvy while also not neglecting a philosophical approach in their interactions with children, particularly in CRE, to enhance the 21st-century skills of children. The author also notes the lack of discussion regarding philosophical methods for the

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<sup>5</sup> Edi Syahputra, “Pembelajaran Abad 21 dan Penerapannya di Indonesia” *Prosiding Seminar Nasional SINASTEKMAPAN 2018*, (Medan: Universitas Quality, 2018): 1277 (1276-1283), [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Edi-Syahputra/publication/331638425\\_PEMBELAJARAN\\_ABAD\\_21\\_DAN\\_PENERAPANNYA\\_DI\\_INDONESIA/links/5c847e51458515831f96f565/PEMBELAJARAN-ABAD-21-DAN-PENERAPANNYA-DI-INDONESIA.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Edi-Syahputra/publication/331638425_PEMBELAJARAN_ABAD_21_DAN_PENERAPANNYA_DI_INDONESIA/links/5c847e51458515831f96f565/PEMBELAJARAN-ABAD-21-DAN-PENERAPANNYA-DI-INDONESIA.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ramses Simanjuntak, “Akomodasi Filsafat Pragmatisme dalam Pendidikan Agama Kristen untuk Menjawab Tantangan Pembelajaran di Era Digital”, *Angelio: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen*, 2 No. 2 (Desember 2021): 178, diakses 26 Juni 2022, <https://ejournal.sttberitahidup.ac.id/index.php/jan/article/view/200/137>.

<sup>7</sup> Andrias Pujiono, “Profesionalitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Di Era Society 5.0”, *Skenoo: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen 1*, no. 2 (24 December 2021): 88, diakses 26 Juni 2022, <https://journal.sttia.ac.id/skenoo/article/view/15>.

<sup>8</sup> Emilia Mude, “Cyber Parenting In Society 5.0”, *Integritas: Jurnal Teologi 2*, no. 1 (Juli 2020): 74, diakses 26 Juni 2022, <https://journal.sttjaffrayjakarta.ac.id/index.php/JI/article/view/30>.

Alpha generation in facing the Society 5.0 era within the context of CRE, which aligns with the current focus of the author's research. In response to this gap, the author seeks to conduct further studies to explore new findings related to philosophical methods in CRE, aiming to address the challenges faced by the Alpha generation in the Society 5.0 era.

## METHODS

In writing this article, the author employed a qualitative research method that involved analyzing several contemporary theories documented in books and journals. Data collection for this article was conducted through a literature review that focused on the theories relevant to the research. Qualitative research heavily relies on the ideas and opinions of experts, which cannot be measured numerically.<sup>9</sup> Lexy J. Moleong, citing Bogdan and Taylor, states that qualitative methods are an approach used to obtain descriptive data in written, oral, and observable forms of behavior.<sup>10</sup> Literature review is a method used to search for references with the aim of obtaining relevant information related to the research by reading, studying, and delving into existing literature.<sup>11</sup> The data analysis technique involves the researcher in analyzing the content and narrative by gathering information from literature sources such as journals and recent books. This is done to gather relevant data regarding the challenges of the Society 5.0 era faced by the Alpha generation. Subsequently, the researcher compares the understanding of philosophy, philosophy of education, philosophy of Christian education, and philosophy of PAK (Pendidikan Agama Kristen). The purpose of this comparison is to present arguments regarding the philosophical methods suitable for children of the Alpha generation in addressing the challenges of the Society 5.0 era. The results of the analysis are then summarized in written narrative form. The specific targets of this research are Christian educators, Christian religious educators, and students.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Challenges of Society 5.0 in the Eyes of the Alpha Generation

The theory of generations in the United States was first proposed by William Strauss and Neil Howe, who identified several generations, namely the G.I. generation (greatest generation) born between 1901-1924, the Silent generation born between 1925-1942, the Baby Boomer generation born between 1943-1960, Generation 13 or commonly known as Gen X born between

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<sup>9</sup> V. Wiratna Sujarweni, *Metode Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Baru Press, 2014), 57.

<sup>10</sup> Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2011), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Indri Handayani, Erick Febriyanti, dan Teguh Arya Yudianto "Pemanfaatan Indeksasi Mendeley Sebagai Media Pengenalan Jurnal STT Yuppentek" *Technomedia Journal 3 no 2* (Februari 2019), 234-245, diakses 26 Juni 2022, <https://ijc.ilearning.co/index.php/TMJ/article/view/1057>

1961-1981, and Millennials or Gen Y born in 1982.<sup>12</sup> Generation Z, which sets the birth year boundary for Gen Y at 1995, and Generation Alpha, were later included in the generational classification following research conducted by Bencsik, Csikos, and Juhez in 2016.<sup>13</sup> Generation Z was born between 1995-2010, while Generation Alpha represents the youngest generation born from 2010 onwards. Nugroho (2016), as cited in Utomo (2018), states that although this theory is based on American history, Life Course Associates, a consulting firm founded by Strauss and Howe, further developed the theory by studying trends from various countries and discovering similar cycles.<sup>14</sup> In other words, this theory is not only applicable to American society but also to global society in general, including Indonesian society.

Generation Alpha refers to the children born to the Millennial or Gen Y generation. This term was introduced by Mark Mc. Crindle in an article by Christina Sterbenz in the Business Insider magazine in 2015.<sup>15</sup> Generation Alpha is a generation that is born into a world surrounded by technology. According to Khumar Jha, as cited in Hidayat, although this generation is relatively young, their use of technology, ease of conducting research, and inclination towards critical thinking have become noticeable characteristics among them.<sup>16</sup>

On January 22, 2016, the Government of Japan released its fifth Basic Plan for Science and Technology. Within this plan, there is a concept known as Society 5.0, which envisions a future where scientific and technological innovations play a central role. The primary focus of Society 5.0 is on key concepts such as "human-centered society," "integration of the virtual and physical worlds," "knowledge-rich society," and "data-driven society."<sup>17</sup> Society 5.0 strives to be a society that is proficient in the use of technology while prioritizing human values. Analysis of a problem is carried out by robots or AI (Artificial Intelligence), and the results are subsequently discussed among individuals in physical form.<sup>18</sup> Society 5.0 views technology not as a divider but as an assistant to humans in solving various issues.

<sup>12</sup> William Strauss & Neil Howe, *Generations: the history of America's future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Morrow, 1991), 8.

<sup>13</sup> Yanuar Surya Putra, "Theoretical Review: Teori Perbedaan Generasi", Among Makarti, *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, Vol. 9 No. 2 (Desember 2016): 130, diakses 19 Juni 2022, <https://jurnal.stieama.ac.id/index.php/ama/article/view/142>

<sup>14</sup> Triyo Utomo, "Perbedaan Kelompok Generasi & Tantangan yang Dihadapi oleh Perguruan Tinggi A", *Personifikasi*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Mei 2018): 3, diakses 18 Juni 2022, <https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/personifikasi/article/view/6742>

<sup>15</sup> Ishak Fadlurrohman, et. al., "Memahami Perkembangan Anak Generasi Alfa di Era Industri 4.0" *Focus: Jurnal Pekerjaan Sosial*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (Desember 2019): 183, diakses 20 Juni 2022, <http://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/focus/article/view/26235/12729>.

<sup>16</sup> Ahmad Hidayat, *Pendidikan Generasi Alpha* (Yogyakarta: Jejak Pustaka, 2022), 62.

<sup>17</sup> Deguchi, et.al., "What is Society 5.0" dalam *Society 5.0: A People-centric Super-smart Society*, (Singapore: SpringerOpen, 2020), 2, diakses 20 Juni 2022, [https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/41719/2020\\_Book\\_Society50.pdf?sequence=1#page=18](https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/41719/2020_Book_Society50.pdf?sequence=1#page=18).

<sup>18</sup> Pujiono, "Profesionalitas guru Pendidikan ...", 84.

The challenges faced by Generation Alpha in the era of Society 5.0 involve essential skills required in the 21st century, such as critical thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, digital literacy, and, specifically, the ability to collaborate with individuals of various ages, statuses, positions, races, and other factors in the physical realm. In other words, critical thinking and self-reflective awareness when engaging in collaboration with others are two necessary elements that present challenges for Generation Alpha. These two aspects pose challenges because since birth, Generation Alpha has been introduced to mobile devices, leading to a tendency to focus more on engaging with captivating digital devices rather than listening to and discussing with their peers, for example. Consequently, the depth of meaningful discussions becomes challenging, and Generation Alpha struggles to socialize with others. Mc Crindle confirms this by stating that this generation (Alpha) faces difficulties in socializing, lacks creativity, and tends to be individualistic.<sup>19</sup> CRE educators also need to anticipate this by humbling themselves to embrace change<sup>20</sup> and relearn, viewing the challenges posed by Generation Alpha as opportunities while still keeping in mind God's command to humanity to "subdue the earth" (Genesis 1:26), which includes technology.

### **Philosophy and Christian Religious Education**

Philosophy and education are as old as human consciousness. Therefore, it is not surprising that many prominent philosophers and thinkers throughout history have dedicated their time and attention to education. When it comes to implementing education in general, the implementation of various philosophical methods becomes crucial. Philosophy in education is also key to fostering 21st-century skills, particularly in preparing an Alpha Generation child to face the challenges of Society 5.0 from an early age. Hence, it is important to understand the role of philosophy in education, specifically in CRE.

#### *The Definition of Philosophy and Educational Philosophy*

The term "philosophy" originates from the Greek words "*phillein*," meaning love, and "*sophia*," meaning wisdom. Etymologically, philosophy can be understood as the love or pursuit of wisdom.<sup>21</sup> Aristotle argued that philosophy is a science encompassing knowledge, including

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<sup>19</sup> C. Sterbenz, "Here's who comes after generation Z - and they're going to change the World Forever", Business Insider, (2015, December 5), diakses 20 Juni 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.in/Here's-who-comes-after-Generation-Z-and-theyre-going-to-change-the-world-forever/articleshow/50060434.cms>

<sup>20</sup> Pujiono, "Profesionalitas guru Pendidikan...", 87.

<sup>21</sup> Khoe Yao Tung, *Filsafat Pendidikan Kristen* (Yogyakarta: ANDI, 2013), 3.



metaphysics, logic, rhetoric, ethics, economics, politics, and aesthetics.<sup>22</sup> Socrates, on the other hand, referred to philosophy as the pursuit of understanding the essence of nature and the reality of existence through the use of reason.<sup>23</sup> Immanuel Kant explained that philosophy is the fundamental science encompassing four questions: "What can we know?", "What should we do?", "What may we hope for?", and "What is a human being?"<sup>24</sup> In summary, philosophy is the discipline that seeks to understand the truth related to humanity and its existence in the world through logical reasoning.

According to the National Education System Law (UU SISDIKNAS) No. 20 of 2003 in Indonesia, education is defined as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process in which learners actively develop their potential to possess spiritual, religious, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the necessary skills for themselves and society.<sup>25</sup> Pazmiño states that every community has a heritage or memory that serves as a guide for living within that community.<sup>26</sup> Pazmiño cites the identification conducted by Bailyn, confirming that the main axis of a society is family, church, community, and economy.<sup>27</sup> This implies that in both formal and informal education, reflective thinking is carried out by previous generations on various events and experiences, which are then organized in a way that allows the essence of the reflection to be passed on to future generations within a group or community to guide them in their lives within that community.

Hasanah quotes al-Syaibany's opinion that philosophy of education involves the organization, alignment, and integration of educational processes through structured thinking.<sup>28</sup> Hasanah continues to cite John Dewey's view that the philosophy of education involves the formation of fundamental basic skills in human capabilities, both intellectual and emotional, related to human nature.<sup>29</sup> Finally, Hasanah also mentions Imam Barnadib's statement that fundamentally, the philosophy of education is a discipline that provides answers to questions that arise in the context of education.<sup>30</sup> Based on these statements, it can be concluded that the philosophy of education involves the organization, alignment, and integration of educational

<sup>22</sup> Mardinal Tarigan, Feby Annisa Yasmin, Akrizal Rifai, Yusriani, Khairul Azmi, "Filsafat Ilmu sebagai Landasan Pengembangan Ilmu Pendidikan" *Mahaguru: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar* 3 No. 1 (Maret 2022): 177 (175-182), <https://ummaspul.e-journal.id/MGR/article/view/4049/1518>.

<sup>23</sup> Debra Nails dan S. Sara Monoson, "Socrates" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Laman Web], 16 September 20085 diperbarui 26 Mei 2022, diakses 30 Juni 2023, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/socrates/>

<sup>24</sup> Tarigan, dkk., "Filsafat Ilmu sebagai...", 177.

<sup>25</sup> H. Amka, *Filsafat Pendidikan* (Sidoarjo: Nizamia Learning Center, 2019), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Robert W. Pazmiño, *Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 184.

<sup>27</sup> Pazmiño, *Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen...*, 184.

<sup>28</sup> Mila Hasanah, *Filsafat Pendidikan* (Mataram: Kanhaya Karya, 2022), 61.

<sup>29</sup> Hasanah, *Filsafat Pendidikan...*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Hasanah, *Filsafat Pendidikan...*, 62.

processes through structured thinking. At the same time, the philosophy of education is the formation of fundamental basic skills in human capabilities, both intellectual and emotional, related to human nature. The philosophy of education can also be seen as a discipline that provides answers to questions that arise in the context of education. Thus, the philosophy of education plays an important role in understanding and guiding the educational process and provides a philosophical foundation for improved educational practices.

#### *Definition of Christian Education Philosophy and Christian Religious Education Philosophy*

By understanding the concept of philosophy and philosophy of education, CRE educators need to also understand the concept of Christian education and CRE in order to comprehend the role of philosophy in Christian education and CRE.

Christian education is centered on God, an implication and interpretation of God's love. Christian education employs a theistic philosophy based on the truth of God's word, which is distinct from secular educational philosophy.<sup>31</sup> Beth E. Brown, as quoted by Alfius Areng Mutak, states that Christian education is an interaction with truth that leads to a life guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, resulting in transformation in the lives of students, making them more like Christ.<sup>32</sup> Generally, Christian philosophy of education is based on a comprehensive understanding of the Bible. The Bible is considered the authoritative Word of God, and thus all processes occurring within Christian education and its underlying philosophy rely heavily on the Word of God. Ev. Otniol Seba, S.Th., quoting van Till, states that the philosophy of Christian education must be based on correct theological understanding. The philosophy of Christian education must be closely related to a correct understanding of God.<sup>33</sup> It can be understood that the philosophy of Christian education is a conscious and planned effort to realize organized thinking activities that make philosophy the means to organize, align, and integrate the educational process centered on God and His work through Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to understand the Word of God in shaping fundamental skills. This entire process is structured in such a way that the essence of previous generations' events and experiences can be passed on to subsequent generations.

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<sup>31</sup> Louis Berkhof dan Cornelius Van Til, *Foundation Christian Education*, terjemahan, cetakan ketiga, (Jakarta: Momentum, 2010), 15.

<sup>32</sup> Alfius Areng Mutak, "Gereja Dan Pendidikan Kristen", *Jurnal Theologia Aletheia*, Volume 7, Nomor 12 (Maret 2005): 14, diakses 26 Juni 2022, [http://sttaletheia.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/vol.7-No.12\\_2005.pdf](http://sttaletheia.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/vol.7-No.12_2005.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Otniol Seba, "Pengantar Filsafat Pendidikan Kristen", Materi Training Guru Sekolah Kristen Gloria, (Februari 2011): 4, diakses 26 Juni 2022, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/81139940/Pengantar-Filsafat-Pendidikan-Kristen#>.



From a Christian perspective, believers, especially Christian educators, must establish Christian education on a solid foundation. Robert W. Pazmiño says, "To think responsibly about Christian education and educational practice within the framework of evangelical theology, Christians, especially Christian educators, must carefully examine the biblical foundations that underlie Christian educational practices. Christian education must be reasonable."<sup>34</sup> Proverbs 8:10-11 (KJV) states, "*Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.*" It is important for Christian educators to acknowledge the significance of the philosophy of Christian education as an effort to understand the role and calling of humans in relation to God. In the context of educational ministry, the philosophy of education becomes a valuable tool to guide educational ministry so that Christian schools can meet the demands and objectives found in the Great Commission.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, according to the author, it is not easy to discuss which philosophy is suitable for implementing CRE. However, what is important to remember is that when discussing CRE, it cannot be separated from Christ. This means that Christian religious guidance must be based on a philosophy consistent with the philosophy imparted by Jesus Christ to His disciples and Early Christianity. Therefore, CRE practice must be based on the Christian philosophy, in this case, the Bible.

CRE and Christian education are often equated or considered the same in various instances by different people. Religious Education is a phrase frequently encountered in various formal educational institutions. This means that, in addition to planning and implementation carried out by other Religious Education, and also carried out by Christian education, there is also evaluation that determines the success of religious education for a student. This is not found, for example, in "Christian Education" which tends to be informal and does not have an evaluation determining the success of such education. The term CRE was proposed by Groome to counter the term Christian Education, which, although simpler, carries a discriminatory connotation because it contains Protestant indoctrination, while Christianity itself is also possessed by Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others. Thus, the word "religion" in the term CRE reminds us of Christ's call to unite and become the universal Christian Church.<sup>36</sup> However, Groome's writing, which dates back quite some time (first edition in 1980), seems to need reconsideration because currently the term Christian Education no longer carries a discriminatory meaning, and the church movement is increasingly moving towards unity, agreement on universal understanding, and

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Pazmiño, *Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 14.

<sup>35</sup> Tung, *Filsafat Pendidikan Kristen...*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas H. Groome, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen: Berbagi Cerita dan Visi Kita*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 35-36.

others. He is also open and believes that someday, the term Christian Education will become more emancipatory. According to the author, Christian Education is now more suitable to be used, both in formal and informal educational institutions.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the philosophy of Christian education and the philosophy of CRE actually do not have fundamental differences. Both primarily focus on God, the Word of God, the work of God through His Son, Jesus Christ, and the ongoing guidance of the Holy Spirit in deepening believers' knowledge of God. However, in relation to religious education, as explained above, the philosophy of CRE can be defined as a conscious and planned effort to realize organized thinking activities that make philosophy the means to organize, align, and integrate the educational process centered on God and His work through Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to understand the Word of God in shaping fundamental skills. This entire process is structured in such a way that the essence of previous generations' events and experiences can be passed on to subsequent generations, with control in the form of evaluation that ensures its success, and it is implemented in formal educational institutions.

### **The Implementation of Philosophical Methods in Children**

In Stephanus Turibius Rahmat's article, it is stated that the philosophy of child education aims to help formulate the role of educational processes for children in society, interpret the role of education, and direct that role towards realizing goals in serving society, both in the present and the future.<sup>37</sup> Philosophy is crucial to be taught to children from an early age. Reza A.A. Wattimena quotes Maughn Gregory's opinion that children are essentially natural philosophers. This means that they always question everything, including things that are clear to adults. Often, children ask questions that contain political, metaphysical, and even ethical elements. Answering these questions requires a deep understanding of history, politics, and metaphysics. Children already possess a natural inclination towards philosophical intuition within themselves. In his research, Wattimena provides an example that in Germany, the program "philosophizing children" (Kinder Philosophieren) has been implemented since the 1960s. The method used is quite simple, namely: first, formulating questions together with the children; second, discussing with the children; third, in order to answer these questions, considering several open-ended

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<sup>37</sup> Stephanus Turibius Rahmat, "Filsafat Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini," *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, Volume 1, Nomor 1, (Juli 2018); 2  
[http://repository.unikastpaulus.ac.id/121/1/Artikel\\_Filsafat\\_PAUD.pdf](http://repository.unikastpaulus.ac.id/121/1/Artikel_Filsafat_PAUD.pdf), diakses tanggal 20 Juni 2022.

possibilities for answers; and fourth, trying to dig deeper into the questions beyond the existing answers.<sup>38</sup>

Wattimena also cites Zeitler's opinion that many people doubt the role of philosophy in the development of children's thinking and life values from an early age. Their reason for doubting the role of philosophy is that children do not yet have the cognitive ability to develop opinions and construct explanations that often have abstract characteristics. Children are also considered unable to distance themselves from their own thoughts in order to develop a critical attitude towards themselves. Through his research, Zeitler responds that children have the ability to express opinions and think critically. Children also have a strong curiosity that is highly useful for delving deeper into understanding a subject. With this curiosity, they then ask questions, propose possible answers, and dismantle those answers with further questions. The process of philosophical discussion can sharpen this curiosity and enhance the ability to delve deeper through open-ended questioning. The result is an open mind and self-awareness in dealing with an increasingly complex world. With these two abilities, children are invited to learn to think and make decisions independently based on what happens in their lives. They are not enslaved by dogmatic thinking or relativism.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, they can also develop self-reflection to collaborate with others.

### **Philosophical Methods in CRE for Generation Alpha in the Era of Society 5.0**

In implementing education, particularly character education, it is important to always return to the context in which the education is conducted and who the learners are. In a study conducted by Pramita et al., it is revealed that learning with the seven components of contextual approach (constructivism, questioning, discovery, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment) in the learning activities will actively engage students in the learning process. They become enthusiastic when asked to play a role in front of the class, enabling them to discover concepts by constructing their own knowledge. This approach also helps students better understand social arithmetic materials as the learned content is connected to real-world experiences of the students.<sup>40</sup> The intended contextual learning is a student-centered approach that shifts the focus from the teacher to the students.

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<sup>38</sup> Reza A.A. Wattimena, "Pendidikan Filsafat Untuk Anak? Pendasaran, Penerapan Dan Refleksi Kritis Untuk Konteks Indonesia," *Jurnal Filsafat*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (Agustus 2016); 164-165, diakses tanggal 18 Juni 2022, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/291838474.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Wattimena, "Pendidikan Filsafat Untuk Anak?...", 168-169.

<sup>40</sup> Mitra Pramita, Sri Mulyati dan Hery Susanto, "Implementasi Desain Pembelajaran Pada Kurikulum 2013 Dengan Pendekatan Kontekstual", *Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Maret 2016): 295, diakses 20 Juni 2022, <http://journal.um.ac.id/index.php/jptpp/article/view/6150/2595>.

In Contextual Character Education (CRE), CRE educators must be able to understand their students, their characteristics, challenges, and various ways to effectively deliver holistic CRE content that is accessible to Generation Alpha. Generation Alpha is considered the smartest generation, surpassing the intelligence of previous generations. Therefore, it is crucial for CRE educators to adapt their teaching methods in order to enhance the knowledge and skills of Generation Alpha, as well as prepare them for the challenges of the Society 5.0 era. As stated in Genesis 1:26 (KJV), God's purpose of creation was to give humans dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the livestock, and all the earth: *and God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and **over all the earth**, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."* The phrase "dominion over all the earth" can be seen as an endeavor to understand various aspects, including technology, and then utilize it to aid human survival, rather than relying on it as a source of life or truth. If depicted, humans are positioned above technology. Technology depends on humans, not the other way around.

Within the context of technology usage, educators need to raise awareness among students about their inherent critical thinking abilities from an early age. Magnis Suseno, as cited by Masinambouw, philosophically states that being critical means never feeling satisfied, always being ready to engage in discussion and dialogue, and genuinely adopting a dialectical approach where each truth becomes stronger through continuous debate between thesis and antithesis.<sup>41</sup> Critical thinking is a natural potential within every child that needs to be continuously developed by educators, whether they are parents or teachers. By possessing sufficient critical thinking abilities, Generation Alpha will be accustomed to questioning or considering every action they take, including the selection of technology to assist them, accepting information through social media, and other ethical considerations related to technological advancements. This is especially important in an era where false teachings are increasingly widespread through social media and the use of technology. Critical thinking is also the foundation of philosophy, as philosophy involves deep thinking, reflection, and critical analysis of various issues and fundamental questions about the world, knowledge, values, truth, and reality.

In supporting the critical thinking abilities of Generation Alpha to make clear decisions and engage in various activities, CRE educators need to delve into and reflect upon the definition of education according to Plato. For Plato, education is about nurturing the soul and providing individuals with the freedom to direct themselves in real-life situations, even though they have

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<sup>41</sup> Yornan Masinambouw, "Pendidikan Agama Kristen yang Kristis Sekaligus Reflektif" *Jurnal Didaskalia* 2 No. 2 (Desember 2021): 5 (1-13), <https://www.ejournal-iakn-manado.ac.id/index.php/didaskalia/article/view/693>.

been shaped by their environment with certain desires.<sup>42</sup> Through education, particularly CRE, a learner is expected to have a nurtured soul, centered on the unity of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and their ongoing work. This enables learners to actualize their critical thinking abilities freely in the face of any changes, including technological and informational advancements.

Nurturing the soul in the context of Indonesia should be based on Pancasila. Masinambouw states that in nurturing the soul, Pancasila serves as a means to explain reflective education, which is not only focused on love for God but also for others. This is aligned with what Jesus conveyed in the Gospel of Matthew 22:37-40 (KJV): *Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Therefore, in a reflective context, learners should be able to maintain their faith and love for God amidst the various developments of the times and in their relationships and collaborations with others.

A philosophical approach that is close to the world of children, who naturally have a tendency to ask questions and are filled with curiosity, is suitable for building critical thinking skills and developing self-awareness to collaborate with others. It is an appropriate approach for CRE educators to use for Generation Alpha. Thus, engaging in philosophy is the answer to two challenges faced by Generation Alpha in the era of Society 5.0, namely critical thinking and developing reflective self-awareness to collaborate with others. When dealing with Generation Alpha, who are under 13 years old, CRE educators need to analyze various philosophical methods that are suitable for sharpening their critical thinking abilities and developing their reflective self-awareness so that they can be implemented smoothly in the classroom.

Prof. Dr. Nur A. Fadhil Lubis, MA, has outlined 10 methods commonly used by philosophers in their philosophical explorations. These methods include: (1) ***critical method***, which involves determining the topic, comparing, categorizing, and drawing conclusions; (2) ***intuitive method***, which involves exploring feelings, ideas, or values that arise from a particular symbol; (3) ***scholastic method***, which entails presenting theories, engaging in discussions using normal logical rules, refuting arguments, and drawing conclusions; (4) ***mathematical method***, which involves analyzing and reasoning about everything personally by breaking it down as much as possible (resolution), selecting the simplest component as a "lens" to analyze complex matters, and drawing general conclusions (deduction), which are then tested with a case (induction)/enumeration—similar to mathematical proof; (5) ***empirical-experimental method***, which entails conducting experiments and basing conclusions on experience; (6) ***transcendental***

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<sup>42</sup> Masinambouw, "Pendidikan Agama Kristen...", 6.

*method*, which combines experience and knowledge, using both as boundaries for thinking; (7) *dialectical method*, which presents a commonly accepted understanding, proposes its opposite/negation, analyzes acceptance and negation until they become dense and concrete/aufgehoben, and produces new realities; (8) *phenomenological method*, which seeks the essence of a visible thing (phenomenon) as it appears, without any accompanying bias/feeling, by reducing all accidental and temporary aspects of the phenomenon (eidetic reduction); (9) *existentialist method*, which involves considering the existence or subjectivity of each individual when analyzing phenomena; and (10) *linguistic analytic method*, which distinguishes and examines the meaning of each language used, taking into account the context of its usage to avoid logical confusion.<sup>43</sup>

From the aforementioned ten methods, the researcher analyzes that not all methods can be applied to Generation Alpha children, as overly abstract and non-concrete thinking tends to disinterest them. Therefore, the researcher selects methods that support experiential and empirical approaches. Various methods that are not open to absolute truth, such as God, are also excluded because Generation Alpha children will be discussing material within the context of Christian Religious Education, which emphasizes their belief in God through Jesus Christ. Developing 21st-century skills to face Society 5.0, particularly critical thinking and openness to understanding others' thoughts within a reflective context where they also desire to be understood in order to collaborate with others, is a consideration in selecting the aforementioned philosophical methods. Therefore, the author chooses three philosophical methods for Generation Alpha in preparing them to face the challenges of Society 5.0: the critical method, intuitive method, and dialectical method.

The critical method was first proposed by Socrates. He realized that he lacked knowledge of fundamental things. Therefore, he had to adopt a critical attitude in his pursuit of understanding these fundamental matters through dialogue. The framework involves formulating the topic to be discussed and then presenting comparisons or questions regarding the definition of the topic. Each question or statement is examined, and each term is defined, using analogies if necessary. In the end, generalizations are sought and a general understanding is formulated, which is a definition that encompasses everything relevant to the intended topic.<sup>44</sup> This method can be implemented for Generation Alpha children by training them to compare/distinguish between objects (big-small, more-less, long-short, slow-fast, same-different, many-few, and so on).

The intuitive method is centered on a contemplative attitude, as there is already potential to attain genuine truth and the essence of problems within the human being. This method was first

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<sup>43</sup> Nur A. Fadhil Lubis, *Pengantar Filsafat Umum* (Medan: Perdana Publishing, 2015), vii.

<sup>44</sup> Lubis, *Pengantar Filsafat Umum...*, 23.



advocated by Plotinus and later developed by Bergson. Plotinus believed that through intuitive introspective reflection and the use of symbols in all philosophical materials from various philosophers and religions, a harmonious vision of the cosmos would be created. The meaning of each symbol and sign used is left to the intuition of each individual to interpret.<sup>45</sup> Bergson refined Plotinus' method by arguing that within humans, in addition to vital biological instincts, there is also a spiritual vitalism that transcends material things and cause-and-effect mechanisms, so the meaning behind a symbol does not depend on logic but on the things evoked by those symbols, such as feelings, ideas, values, and so on.

The dialectical method was proposed by George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, emphasizing subjectivity. Subjectivity encompasses the entire self-sufficient reality, hence the phrase "The real is identical with the rational," meaning "Thought is Reality."<sup>46</sup> The path to understanding reality is to follow the path of thought itself, known as dialectics. Dialectics are explained in three steps: proposing a concept (thesis), proposing its opposite (antithesis), and finally reconciling the thesis and antithesis by finding the strongest aspects of both (synthesis). For Hegel, contradiction or negation is the driving force for progress and the stages that must be traversed to achieve truth.<sup>47</sup>

When utilizing the three methods mentioned above, educators in Christian Religious Education need to remember and correctly apply the principles of Christian educational philosophy, namely: (1) God is the source of everything. God is the creator of the universe. Therefore, Christian educational philosophy is rooted in theism and relies on the truth of God's word; (2) Humans are created in the image of God, but they have fallen into sin. Nevertheless, God restores humanity as whole individuals. Thus, Christian educational philosophy views that humans can be restored in body, soul, and spirit through the justification of Christ as Christian truth; (3) The educator is spirit, soul, and body. Only by the Holy Spirit can a person radiate the light of Christ. That is why Christian educational philosophy seeks to point towards a renewal of life in accordance with the glory of God; (4) The universe is God's creation. Christian educational philosophy regards the universe as God's creation that is subject to God as a means of His glory; (5) It is centered on and developed according to the will of God. Christian educational philosophy is not merely aimed at the restoration of individual humans but also at love, justice, and the well-being of people and the entire universe.

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<sup>45</sup> Lubis, *Pengantar Filsafat Umum...*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> Lubis, *Pengantar Filsafat Umum...*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> Lubis, *Pengantar Filsafat Umum...*, 34.

## CONCLUSION

Generation Alpha refers to the children of the millennial generation born after 2010. They are the generation most familiar with the internet throughout history. The challenges for Generation Alpha in facing the era of Society 5.0 involve essential 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, innovation, digital literacy, and, particularly, the ability to collaborate with individuals of various ages, statuses, positions, races, and so on, in the physical realm.

Philosophy is crucial to be taught to children from an early age because their inherent capacity for philosophical thinking needs to be directed and nurtured so that they can become accustomed to expressing opinions and constructing explanations more effectively and coherently. Considering the age, appeal, the fundamental principles of Christian Religious Education philosophy, and the 21st-century skills required by Generation Alpha children, the author proposes the use of critical method, intuitive method, and dialectical method. These three simple philosophical methods can be introduced in Christian Religious Education for Generation Alpha. Thus, educators in Christian Religious Education can start preparing strategies for implementing these various educational philosophy methods in the classroom to meet the challenges of the Society 5.0 era.

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