Research Article

Sola Scriptura to Improve the Quality of Christian Students in Thinking Characteristics

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Sola scriptura is a doctrine emphasizing the Bible as the sole source of Christian teaching and life. All aspects and Christian thoughts must submit to the Bible as the main and absolute authority. Sola scriptura needs to be understood properly and correctly to help improve the quality of Christian students in thinking in character. Thinking in character is a process of making decisions based on the character possessed. The need to believe in character based on the Bible because of moral decline, the dangers of relativism/pluralism, and the fading spirit of example. This study uses a qualitative research method, with an exposition approach and an analysis of Biblical literature. The author researches books and conducts internet exploration that examines the concept of enhancing Christian character according to the Bible. This study aims to answer the question of what character is, what is meant by Sola Scriptura, and how the role of Sola Scriptura can improve the quality of Christian thinking.

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Introduction

Sola Scriptura is the doctrine that the Bible, and the Bible alone, has the final Word on all our teachings and our lives. All aspects of thought and energy must be subject to God's Word that the Scriptures are "the ultimate and absolute source of authority, the final say in determining, for all doctrines and practices (faith and morals)" and that "the Scriptures, neither more nor less, and nothing else is needed for faith and morals." This doctrine is adhered to by several Protestant Christian denominations. The principle of

Sola Scriptura breaks the tyranny of a "corrupt" ecclesiastical hierarchy because the church places itself higher than the Word of God. Based on Ephesians 2:20, it can be said that the authority of the Bible existed before the church was founded because the church was founded on the foundation of the teachings of the apostles and prophets. The teachings of the apostles and prophets were the teachings of God's Word and were not only older but higher than those of the church. The Bible can provide an assessment of the church and a model for the true church. Sola Scriptura rejects the authority of church tradition on a par with the Bible. There is a note to be made here to avoid a common misunderstanding. Many people think that the Reformers believed in the inerrant authority of the Bible.

In contrast, the Roman Catholic church believed only in the inerrant rule of the church and its traditions. This is a mistake. During the Reformation, both parties recognized the authority of the Bible (Boice, 1984). For example, for most medieval theologians, the Bible was a good source of Christian teaching (McGrath, 1987). The question and debate is: "Is the Bible the only infallible source of special revelation?" (Sproul, 1997).

Improving the quality of thinking in the Character of Christian students is very important today. Many students claim to be Christians, but their lives are not by the Word of God. Very often, it is found that many of them carry out religious activities, but their behavior in society, at school, or anywhere always hurts other people's feelings. In this day and age, the biggest problem faced by the Indonesian people is a moral crisis which results in another situation. The problems resulting from the moral crisis are Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism (KKN), usually among the elite. Meanwhile, the lower class (the people) is characterized by rampant acts of crime such as fraud, theft, mugging, robbery, rape, and murder.

Likewise, among students, many cases have occurred which indicate a moral crisis, such as drug abuse, rampant free sex, brawls, and the spread of pornographic photos and videos that damage the morale of students. Moral damage among students has occurred to university students at the elementary school level. Christians who are not of their Character commit dangerous acts to themselves and others. Thus, Christianity in society is often viewed badly by those who do not share the faith.

Christianity is not just a religion but a lifestyle in which everyone who claims to be a Christian must have a Christ-like lifestyle. Everyone who has a Christ-like lifestyle must have a quality character. The main figure of God's church is Christ. This is because Christ is the head, while the church is the body. Ephesians 5:23,30 (Sukri, 2021) As a Christian student, Christ's Character as a form of Christian Character is not just a statement of faith but actions because faith without deeds is essentially dead (James 2 verse 17).

Christian faith is a living faith that must manifest in real everyday attitudes and actions. Actions must be based on "love" or love because that is the main and first law (Matthew 22 verses 37 to 40) which says that loving the Lord God and others is like loving yourself. The Lord Jesus advised (Luke 6 verse 31): "And as you want people to do to you, do the same to them." This advice is known as the golden rule or principle, the main law that later becomes the characteristic of Christian Character (character trait).

Character is not only related to good and bad attitudes because even Christians outside of Christianity know these characteristics. Many examples or examples of Character can be learned through the Bible, for instance, about Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and many others. However, these are not exemplary standards that can be imitated because they have the Character according to their calling. Therefore, Christian Character is behavior according to one's calling status.

As for the character values in Christianity that need to be realized in the attitudes and actions written in Galatians 5:22 concerning the Fruit of the Spirit, namely: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Generosity, Kindness, Loyalty, Gentleness, Self-Control, these Christian values must be absorbed into the lives of Christians and integrated into values in behaving, behaving, and acting in everyday life.

In improving the quality of the Character of Christian students, the role of catechetics is very much needed in churches, schools, and families. Catechetics plays a very important role in educating or fostering Christians to know Christ and be like Christ in words, thoughts, and actions. Sola scriptura, as part of Christian catechetics, makes it necessary to understand properly and correctly. Thus, it can be hoped that it will help improve the Character's thinking quality.

The formulation of the problem in writing this is what Character means. What is Sola Scriptura? How can the role of Sola Scriptura improve the quality of Christian thinking? Through this writing, it is hoped that every Christian will have a quality character based on the historical, theoretical basis of Sola Scriptura's thinking for improving Christian Character.

Research Methods

In this scientific paper, the writer uses qualitative research methods, with an exposition approach and a study of Biblical literature where the writer researches books and conducts internet explorations that examine the concept of enhancing Christian Character according to the Bible. Library or literature research (literature review, literature research) examines or critically questions information, ideas, or

results contained in the scientific literature (scientific literature). It formulates theoretical and methodological contributions to certain topics (Donald R, Cooper., and Schindler, 2011).

Analysis and Research Results

The Meaning of the Characters

Character is a very important subject but must be discussed and addressed, even among Christians. Two possible reasons for ignoring this teaching are: (1) this discussion is considered less interesting than other doctrinal themes; (2) Not everyone likes to discuss Character because this concerns the area of a person's "personality," which is considered not to be disturbed. No attribute is more important than Character (J.C., 2001). Even Jesus put much emphasis on the Character of His disciples. God willingly provided time to be with His disciples. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew (10:1-4; 13:10 Mat 17:1). They were not only present but witnessed when the Lord Jesus preached, taught, or when the Lord Jesus discussed and even debated with the Jewish leaders.

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word "character" is Character, psychological traits, morals, or Character that distinguishes one person from another (Badudu, 1996). The good and superior Character of each individual means trying to do the best for God, oneself, others, the environment, the nation, the state, and the global world. Usually, a good character always optimizes his own potential (knowledge) and is accompanied by his emotions and motivation (his feelings).

Character is the reflection of a person's inner state, which appears in the form of daily behavior related to oneself, other people, and the natural environment. In other words, Character or temperament is an inner trait that influences all thoughts, behaviors, manners, and qualities of humans or other creatures. Character influences ethical and moral judgment and decision-making.

Generally, there are two types of Character: good (virtues) and bad (vices). Good Character (virtues) includes trustworthiness, respect, honesty, discipline, loyalty, self-acceptance, responsibility.), diligence and hard work (diligence), courage (courage), tolerance (tolerance), hospitality (hospitality), willingness to understand others, being fair (fairness), caring (caring), and having integrity (integrity). Meanwhile, bad characters (vices) include dishonesty, arrogance, indiscipline, laziness, carelessness, miserliness and wastefulness, greed, selfishness, selfishness, indifference, lies, or lies (Tjasmasdi, 2022).

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Understanding Character from several Experts: (1) According to (Ditjen Mandikdasmen – Ministry of National Education), Character is a way of thinking and behaving characteristically of each living together within the family, community, nation, and state. Individuals with good Character can make decisions and are ready to take responsibility for any consequences of their choices (Ministry of National Education, 2010). (2) Michael Novak, in the book Lickona Thomas, explains that Character is "a compatible mixture of all the goodness identified by religious traditions, literary stories, wise people, and a collection of common sense people in history (Thomas, 2012). (3) Daniel Nuhamara said that Character is the quality of a person responding to something (Nuhamara, 2002). (4) Zaim Elmubarok explained that Character is the process of forming the human soul so that it becomes unique and different from other people so that with differences in Character or nature, a person can be known as a character (Elmubarok, 2009). (5) Samani and Hariyanto (2013) that Character can be interpreted as a basic value that builds a person's personality, formed due to the influence of heredity, as well as environmental impacts, which distinguishes him from other people and is manifested by his attitude and behavior in everyday life (M, Samani, 2013).

Christian is a term for someone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and imitates His life and teachings daily. Thus, the Character of Christian students is also called Christian characteristics, namely the spiritual qualities a Christian student possesses.

Each person is known through the characteristics (Character) that are unique to him. Personal formation includes several elements that cannot be avoided: innate, environmental, and habits. (1) natural elements are carried (inherited) from parents through birth, such as physical, intellectual, emotional, temperament, and spiritual conditions. (2) environmental elements have a big role and influence in shaping the Character of a person's personality. The environmental elements here include the family environment, the tradition and culture environment, and the natural environment (place to live). (3) The element of habit is an action or behavior that is continuously carried out to become a belief or necessity. These habits will also shape a person's Character.

Definition of Sola Scriptura

A Pastor named Pdt. Stevri I. Lumintang wrote: "Loving the Lord Jesus means loving His church, loving His Church, means loving His word, loving His word means studying and preaching it with full faithfulness." (Lumintang, 2017). Sola Scriptura means "only the Scriptures," i.e., the Bible. This means that, as Christians, the Bible is the only standard, principle, and ultimate authority over our lives. The doctrine is that the Bible is the only infallible source of authority in Christian faith and practice matters. This doctrine is adhered to by several Protestant Christian denominations.

Many denominations within the Protestant Christian family view Sola Scriptura as a formal principle and one of the Panca Sola. Sola Scriptura is a basic doctrinal principle of the Protestant Reformation and adhered to by Protestant Reformed figures who teach that the proof of the truth of the Bible is determined by the clarity of its verses and by the personal testimony of the Holy Spirit to the heart of each person. Several Evangelical and Baptist denominations express the doctrine of Sola Scriptura more emphatically, namely that the Bible can prove its truth by itself, is clear (obvious) to a reasonable reader, can explain its contents (the Bible explains the Bible), and can stand alone as the final authority of Christian doctrine.

Sola Scriptura is one of the Panca Sola, the five principles seen as the pillars of Reformation by some Protestant Christian groups. The main implication of the principle of Sola Scriptura is that the explanations and applications of Bible verses do not have the same authority as the Bible itself. Therefore ecclesiastical authority is considered valid to be corrected by the Bible, even if it is legal to be corrected by church members. Individual.

The question now is, why should the Bible be the standard, principle, and authority for the life of Christian students? Why not other things such as experience, reason, philosophy, dreams, etc? The following are some answers that can be given. Why the Bible and nothing else:

First, the Bible is the Word of God. The Word of God that God gave to man in writing. Through the Bible, believers learn to know God. God is holy, all-loving, and all-wise; the human mind cannot fathom His wisdom. God maintains human life, fulfills all the necessary needs, and so on.

Second, Christian students learn to know who they are through the Bible. Humans, who were created in the image and likeness of God, are the crown of creation of all existing creations. However, with the fall of man into sin, the image of God in man is damaged in all aspects. As a result, nothing done by humans is good in the eyes of God. Human life becomes hopeless because human life is controlled by sin.

Third, the Bible tells students that there is hope in life. The hope given through Christ willingly descends into the world and carries out the work of redemption by sacrificing Himself and dying on the cross. Thus human life is no longer controlled by sin.

Fourth, the Bible is inerrant. Both teach safety, morals, history, culture, and all aspects. In addition, the Bible also tells us what God's will for humans throughout history.

Fifth, God teaches Christian students to become whole human beings before Him through the Bible. As Paul said in his letter to Timothy: "All Scripture is inspired by God for teaching, for reproving mistakes, for correcting behavior and for training people in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16). (Youth, n.d.)

The Bible-centered principle (Sola Scriptura) is a Biblical principle that has appeared in the lives of Bible characters, and it is God Himself who is the initiator for humans to apply the Sola Scriptura principle (cf. John 8:51; 14:23). After the stated Word of God has been fully recorded, namely in the Bible which consists of 66 books, namely 39 O.T. books and 27 N.T. books. God wants His people to be Bible-centered. So that the Theologians, if they want to preach, are obliged and must preach based on the Bible, the Word of God. These Bible facts show that the Sola Scriptura principle is a Biblical principle. Reformers are only one of God's tools to re-echo this principle. (Halawa, n.d.)

The Importance of Thinking in Christian Character

Humans have two ways of thinking: positive (good) thinking and negative (bad) thinking. Only these two ways are owned by humans in living their lives in the world. Everyone must know how to think in determining things and how people act because people who act without thinking are the same as people who do not have a reason. For example, is he thinking if someone says something carelessly if it makes a sound in a crowded place? Of course, people judge that the person does not use his mind first before saying something. (Anwar, 2020)

Thinking comes from the word "think," which means: (1) reason; memory; wishful thinking, (2) said in the heart; opinion (consideration). Thinking is an activity of the human person that results in the discovery that is directed towards a goal. The definition of thinking, according to Roos, is a mental activity in the aspect of the basic theory of psychological objects. Thinking is seen as mediocre and given by God to humans, so humans become glorified creatures (Sunaryo, 2011).

The basic activity or activity of thinking is a complex and dynamic process in thinking which includes three stages, namely the process of forming an understanding, the process of forming opinions, and the process of forming decisions. Based on this opinion, the thinking process is the activity of understanding

something or solving a problem through understanding one or the core of the problem and other factors (Soemanto, 1898).

The purpose of thinking is an important process in education, learning, and learning. The process of thinking in students is a manifestation of their seriousness in learning. Thinking helps students deal with problems in the learning process, exams, and other educational activities such as experiments, observations, and other field practices. The thinking process in implementing teaching and learning students aims to build and shape students' habits in solving problems faced properly, correctly, effectively, and efficiently. The ultimate goal is to hope that students will use the skills encountered in real life in society. (Irham, Muhammad, et al, 2013).

Thinking in Character is a process of making decisions based on the Character possessed. The important reasons you need to think about Christian Character are (1) Moral decline. Because now there are so many people who feel the moral decline. Teaching character is a resistance to modernization. In this modern era of globalization, it is increasingly recognized that different cultures have different moral rules. We are currently in an age of global encounter and cultural diversity, which requires adapting. Character is shaped by other people who become models to follow. Parents, teachers, coaches, trainers, pastors, and church councils are models or role models who help shape one's Character. By being led or following and emulating models or others worthy of imitation, one learns to recognize and manifest the virtues' habits and emotional and intellectual skills.

It is known that the identity of Christians is known through two qualities that are clearly stated as "salt" and "light" of the world (Matthew 5:13,14). These two things refer to "difference" and "influence." This can be interpreted as that Christians must carry a moral burden consistently. Therefore "good deeds" refers to good deeds regarding morals, qualities, and benefits. Thus, good deeds are a mirror of one's character qualities. (Maitimu, n.d.)

(2) The dangers of relativism/pluralism also give birth to a hedonic consumerist lifestyle. Online travel agents emerged because of the swift flow of travelers to satisfy the desires of the eye and taste. Travel advertisements are unstoppable in cyberspace and the real world. Culinary, factory outlets, super malls, and everything else is thriving. Alfamart on the outskirts of town, preying on traditional stalls. Because shopping is no longer just meeting personal/family needs, but a lifestyle or fun. Because of this shopping appetite, banks are competing to issue credit cards that are so easy to get in order to expedite transactions through online shops. The hedonic consumerist lifestyle poses at least five important problems: Consumerism is self-centered, flattering choices, becoming dependent, and forming individual

social values promising freedom. The church community is surrounded by hedonic consumerism, and some are influenced by it. This situation should have been addressed as the God of the times, who was used as a place of refuge due to spiritual drought. The church should be saddened by this phenomenon, like the apostle Paul when he witnessed the worship of the people in the city of Athens Acts 17:16, 22-23 (Faot, 2017).

Because of the influence of Pluralism/Relativism and poverty, Christian enclaves have also experienced erosion. Many Christians change their faith to get financial assistance or scholarships. In the past, Christians were accused of misusing social assistance to convert Christians; now, many Christians in this area have become victims of social assistance inducements. This situation, of course, requires Christians who think in Character based on Sola Scriptura.

(3) The fading spirit of exemplary. Character is shaped by others who serve as models or mentors; parents, teachers, coaches, and trainers who become models or role models also shape students' Character. By being led or following and imitating coaches or other figures worthy of example, students learn to recognize and embody various policies' various dispositions, habits, and emotional and intellectual skills. Unfortunately, most modern rationalistic and individualistic ethical theories pay little attention to these influences, or in other words, the enthusiasm to inherit this example of truth is fading (Tong, 2010).

Human Character or temperament can be developed with exercises. It is believed that humans are good and have the potential for goodness. It is the potential for goodness that must receive attention. Then it is fertilized or resurrected so that people behave with that habit. The teaching of moral values must be activated. Besides that, the family, school, or community environment must also be fostered so that it becomes a conductive social context for the growth of noble Character. However, this view is not entirely correct because, in reality, humans tend to do bad things in their lives. The human tendency to do bad things is because humans have died spiritually due to their violation of God's law, so humans experience total depravity and incompetence; this condition makes humans unable to do what is right according to God's view. (Nainggolan, 2020)

The Role of Sola Scriptura in Improving the Quality of Thinking of Christian Students in Character

The Bible is the Word of God which humans wrote for approximately 1500 years (1450 BC - 95 A.D.). However, His words were written through humans as His special statement so that He was expressed in

verbal form (Crampton, 2011) and an anthropomorphic language which means that God speaks to humans in human language because human language is the only language humans can understand. The Bible comes from the Arabic "kitab" with the article "al". In Greek, the word "biblia" is used with the plural form "billion," which means "books/books." (H. Soesilo, 2014)

The Bible consists of 66 books divided into two parts; the Old Testament consists of 39 books, and the New Testament consists of 27 books. The Old Testament is addressed to the Israelites, but its contents are universal. The Old Testament was written over 1050 years (1450–400 BC) with different situations and backgrounds. Meanwhile, the New Testament was written for believers, but its contents are also universal. The New Testament was written over 44 years (51–95 years) with different backgrounds and situations.

The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew, and some texts were written in Aramaic (Dan 2:4-7:18; Ezr.4:8-6:18; 7:12-26). The New Testament was also written almost entirely in Greek. Some words/sentences written in Hebrew/Aramaic (the words of Jesus). So, the Bible has three languages (not written in 3 languages). The Bible was written in several media, such as vellum (animal skin), parchment (paper from bark), leather, and papyrus. (Geisler, Norman L., Nix, 1996)

Christians are very proud of the Bible because the Bible is God's Word that leads people to His purposes and will. Man does not need to look for other ways to please God; it is enough to obey His Word so that he pleases God. The Bible is the basis of family life, so harmony in the family declares itself as the family of God. The church makes the Word of God the foundation of worship. Submission to the authority of God's Word leads the church to true growth and maturity. God speaks to His people through His Word, so the preacher preaches the Word of God with one intention, namely God's intention and not the preacher's. Spirituality and morality should be found in human life in theological schools. The spiritual life that pleases God is easy for theologians to apply because they associate with the Bible daily.

The concept of Sola Scriptura has been postmodernly influenced so that the Bible is not the only true guide to life. The influence of secularism, pragmatism, and materialism has dimmed the function of the Bible in Christianity. This postmodern self-submission and not to the authority of the Bible makes Christianity wordless.

Back to the Bible is a phrase that every servant of God has never lost. Therefore, the back to the Bible that needs to be revitalized includes: (1) Reading the Bible, the Bible is not a closed book; the Bible is an open book because it is written in human language. However, reading the Bible requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit to understand what God's words mean. The Holy Spirit, who controls the world and the Bible,

must lead people to seek, find, study, combine, assess, and make decisions. (Bruggen, 2013) Reading the Bible is a must for Christians because God no longer speaks directly to humans, but through the Bible, His words have already been conveyed in the Bible. People who read the Bible continuously will be renewed, and their lives will be even better.

- (2) The correct interpretation of the Bible, the correct interpretation is when the interpreter interprets based on the intent of the first author. Following the correct hermeneutic discipline leads the interpreter to the true meaning. Violations that occur in interpreting the Bible will fade the meaning of the Word itself. God's Word is often manipulated to convey the wishes of the interpreter and in the name of the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) The Bible Basics of Ethical Decisions, Christians never escape mistakes and problems. Every mistake always has a consequence. The Bible is useful for teaching, stating mistakes, correcting behavior, and educating truthfully (2 Tim 3:16). Every decision must be based on the Bible. God's Word is the basis for doing everything. The growth of the congregation's faith is greatly influenced by their knowledge of the Word of God. Making decisions about any activity or giving punishment must be based on the Bible. The Bible is the secondary basis for making decisions.

In thinking in Character based on the Bible, it must be a biblical ideal or patron that must be fulfilled by everyone who lives in Christ. This Character is the requirement or qualification for a person to be able to lead and achieve a quality character. As for thinking in Character, according to Sola Scriptura, are: Integrity (brave because it is right, honest, not greedy, diligent, loyal, trustworthy, thrifty, sincere, pious, faithful), friendly, gentle, full of kindness/love, generous, obedient, be patient and kind. This Character must be possessed by all members of Christ who claim to be Christians. This Character must be understood through Sola Scriptura. The Holy Spirit will strengthen every believer to grow and improve the character quality of Christian students today.

Conclusion

Character is Character, psychological traits, morals, or manners that distinguish one person from another. The good and superior Character of each individual means trying to do the best for God, oneself, others, the environment, the nation, the state, and the global world. Christian is a term for someone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and imitates His life and teachings daily. Thus, Christian Character is also called Christian characteristics, namely the spiritual qualities Christian students possess. Thinking in Character is a process of making decisions based on the Character

possessed. The need to think in Character based on the Bible because of moral decline, the dangers of relativism/pluralism, and the fading spirit of example.

Sola Scriptura means "only the Scriptures," i.e., the Bible. As a Christian student, the Bible is the only standard, principle, and supreme authority over his life. The doctrine is that the Bible is the only infallible source of authority in Christian faith and practice matters. This doctrine is adhered to by several Protestant Christian denominations. Why should the Bible be the standard, principle, and authority for Christian students' lives? First, the Bible is the Word of God. The Word of God that God gave to man in writing. Second, through the Bible, we also learn who he is. Third, the Bible tells His people that there is hope in this life. Fourth, the Bible is inerrant. Fifth, through the Bible, God teaches His people to become whole human beings before Him.

Christians are very proud of the Bible because the Bible is God's Word that leads people to His purposes and will. Man does not need to look for other ways to please God; it is enough to obey His Word so that he pleases God. In thinking in Character based on the Bible, it must be a biblical ideal or patron fulfilled by everyone who lives in Christ. This Character is the requirement or qualification for a person to be able to lead and achieve a quality character. The way to train yourself to think in Character based on the Bible is by reading the Bible continuously, interpreting the Bible correctly, and making the Bible the right decision-maker.

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