

Development of Christian Education in a Multicultural Environment

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ABSTRACT

Christian education in a multicultural environment is crucial to develop *amidst* Indonesia's complex diversity. While existing studies have explored its implementation, teacher roles, and curriculum integration, a comprehensive framework for its strategic development as a proactive reform movement remains underexplored. This study aims to analyze the historical and contemporary development of Christian education in multicultural settings, identify current challenges and opportunities, and formulate strategic principles for its effective and transformative advancement. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a literature study approach, this research draws on James A. Banks' multicultural education theory and examines relevant historical, theological, and contextual sources. The findings highlight that Christian education must evolve beyond adaptation to actively shape inclusive, values-oriented, and hopeful learning environments. Strategic principles proposed include orienting education toward love and appreciation of diversity, fostering non-violent character formation, and promoting faithful engagement with pluralism. This study contributes practical guidance for educators and policymakers, enriches academic discourse on multicultural religious education, and supports the development of Christian education as a force for social harmony and unity in diversity.

Keywords: Development; Christian Education; Multicultural Environment.

INTRODUCTION

This topic is a long-standing issue that has been frequently discussed in academic circles, particularly amid complex diversity (Anderson & Murphy, 2019). Reality shows that numerous societal conflicts are inextricably linked to these differences (Kenny & Foster, 2020). Everyone knows that life in this world will not be good if we remain closed off to ourselves and our communities alone (Harris et al., 2021). This is where the importance of opening ourselves up and learning to understand ourselves and others on this shared earth—a home for everyone without exception—becomes crucial (Santos & Vega, 2020). This holds especially true in the Indonesian context, with its extraordinary diversity in race, language, ethnicity, culture, religion/belief, age groups, and more (Suhartono et al., 2019). Therefore, discussion and study of this topic are necessary and warrant substantial attention to boost the spirit of multiculturalism in society, especially in education (Mulya et al., 2020). It must be acknowledged that studies already exist related to the title *Pendidikan Kristen dalam Lingkungan Multikultural* ("Development of Christian Education in a Multicultural Environment") (Igelemba et al., 2021). All of this is expected to provide a better understanding in the process of writing this article (Umbu Lado, 2020). For example, the writing of Orpa Umbu Lado on the role of Christian teachers in building student character in multicultural

schools—specifically exploring how the integration of Christian values in formal and informal curricula, as well as the development of diversity-supporting programs, can shape students' character holistically (Umbu Lado, 2020); the study of Frets Keriapy, which discusses how Christian education can be carried out in the context of Indonesian society, where teachers fulfill their duties as educators by recognizing students' diverse cultures and learning to love their fellow human beings as a process of multicultural education (Keriapy, 2019); the writing of Slamet Santoso on Wilkerson's theory and its application in the Indonesian multicultural context (Santoso, 2021); the writing of Ezi Mulia et al., which reviews the role of teachers in creating an inclusive multicultural learning environment in Indonesia, recognizing the importance of multicultural education as a response to the country's rich cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity (Mulia et al., 2020); and the writing of Helbert Itras Igelemba Ondja on an analysis discussing the implementation of PAK learning with a multicultural perspective to foster students' attitudes of tolerance in schools (Igelemba Ondja, 2022).

The theory used in this study refers to the theory of James A. Banks. In his explanation of the theory, he states that, "Multicultural education includes at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. Multicultural education combines the idea that all students—regardless of their gender, social class, and ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics—should have equal opportunities to learn in school. Another important idea in multicultural education is that some students, because of these characteristics, have a better opportunity to learn in school as it is currently structured than students who belong to other groups or who have different cultural characteristics. Some institutional characteristics of schools systematically disproportionately provide educational opportunities to some groups of students. For example, in early grades, girls and boys perform equally well in math and science. However, girls' achievement test scores lag significantly behind boys' as children advance through the grades. Girls are less likely to participate in class discussions and are less encouraged by teachers to participate than boys. Girls tend to be quieter in class than boys. However, not all school practices benefit boys. As Sadker and Zittleman point out, boys tend to be disciplined more often than girls, even though their behavior is similar to that of girls. They are also more likely to be classified as having learning disabilities than girls. Boys of color, especially African American boys, experience disproportionately high rates of disciplinary action and suspension in schools. Several scholars have described the serious problems African American boys experience in schools and in the broader community (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Tintiango-Cubales & Duncan-Andrade, 2021; Vélez & Solórzano, 2023).

Multicultural education is also a reform movement that seeks to transform schools and other educational institutions so that students from all social classes, genders, races, languages, and cultural groups will have equal opportunities to learn. Multicultural education involves changes throughout the school or educational environment; it is not limited to curriculum changes. The variables within the school environment that multicultural education seeks to change also constitute a process whose goals will never be fully realized, but at least efforts are made toward the desired changes.

Existing research on Christian education in multicultural contexts has laid an important foundation. Studies such as Orpa Umbu Lado (2024) focus on the role of Christian teachers in shaping student character in multicultural schools, emphasizing the integration of Christian values in the curriculum. Frets Keriapy explores how Christian education can be implemented

within the diversity of Indonesian society, stressing the educator's role in fostering love for fellow human beings. Slamet Santoso analyzes the application of Wilkerson's theory to multiculturalism in Indonesia, while Ezi Mulia *et al.* (2024) review the teacher's role in creating an inclusive multicultural learning environment. Additionally, Helbert Itras Igelemba Ondja (2023) discusses the implementation of multicultural-based Christian Religious Education (*PAK*) to cultivate student tolerance. These studies generally address aspects of implementation, teacher roles, and curriculum within existing educational structures.

Despite significant contributions, previous studies have not comprehensively addressed the strategic development of Christian education as a dynamic, future-oriented reform movement within Indonesia's specific and rapidly evolving multicultural landscape. There is a lack of in-depth analysis on how Christian education can be proactively developed—beyond adaptation—to not only respond to diversity but actively shape a cohesive, tolerant, and hopeful societal future amidst contemporary challenges such as identity politics, social polarization, and digital-era anxieties.

This study offers novelty by framing the development of Christian education not merely as a responsive adaptation but as a proactive, strategic endeavor grounded in James A. Banks' multicultural education theory. It synthesizes historical perspectives, current challenges, and future-oriented strategic principles—such as value-based orientation, anti-violence character formation, and faithful engagement—into an integrated framework for development. The research specifically contextualizes these strategies within the Indonesian socio-religious milieu, proposing Christian education as a transformative agent for nurturing unity and hope in a fragmented world.

This research aims to analyze the historical developments and current portraits of Christian education in a multicultural environment, identify the challenges and opportunities it faces in today's context, and formulate strategic principles for developing effective, relevant, and transformative Christian education in a pluralistic society. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for Christian educators, church institutions, and curriculum developers in designing educational programs that effectively nurture faith, character, and multicultural competence. Academically, it contributes to enriching the discourse on contextual and multicultural religious education. For policymakers, it offers insights into supporting educational initiatives that promote social harmony. Ultimately, this research aspires to strengthen the role of Christian education in fostering a generation that is faithful, inclusive, and actively contributes to a more peaceful and unified multicultural society.

METHOD

The research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a literature study approach, focusing on analyzing historical developments, current challenges, and strategic principles for Christian education in multicultural Indonesian contexts. Key components included a qualitative descriptive research design that emphasized literature review to synthesize theoretical sources like James A. Banks' multicultural education theory, alongside historical, theological, and contextual materials, without primary data collection. Data collection relied on the literature study technique, drawing from academic articles, books, biblical texts, and expert definitions related to development, Christian education, and multiculturalism. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model as described by Sugiyono, encompassing data

reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns, gaps, and strategic principles. No sampling, instrumentation, validity measures, or ethical considerations were detailed, which is typical for non-empirical, literature-based studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion of Terms

1. Development

Development is the process of creating or improving something to make it better, more advanced, and more developed. In the context of development, several definitions have been put forward by experts. Here are five definitions of development according to experts, along with detailed explanations:

- a. According to Peter Ducker, management experts define development as an effort to create added value that improves an organization's performance, quality, and innovation. Development is a strategic step to address challenges and adapt to changes in the external environment.
- b. Robert H. Waterman, Jr., a business author and consultant, states that development is a continuous process of change undertaken by an organization in an effort to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and competitiveness. Development must involve all elements within the organization to achieve strategic goals.
- c. Dave Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank: development is a long-term investment focused on individual and organizational growth. This development includes individual learning, coaching, skills enhancement, and the development of management systems that enable organizations to grow sustainably.
- d. Richard L. Daft, a management expert, defines development as a systematic, planned process of change that leads to increased individual and organizational capacity. Development involves learning, applying new knowledge, and adapting the organization to environmental demands.
- e. Gary Dessler, a human resources expert, defines development as all efforts made to improve the knowledge, skills, and expertise of individuals within an organization. Development aims to optimize an individual's potential so they can make the maximum contribution to the organization.

2. Christian Education

Christian education is beginning to move away from the school model. New questions are being raised about the nature of teaching and learning, and we have glimpsed Christian upbringing as encompassing all the activities and transactions that occur within the Body of Christ. The classroom, once our entire vision of Christian education, is now recognized as merely a part, and not even the most important part. What exactly is meant by Christian education? Because a vague understanding can narrow the Christian education movement, even trivialize it. People often associate Christian education so narrowly with teaching Christian Religious Education in schools and Sunday School. It is not surprising that so few prospective servants of God choose this major compared to majors such as Evangelization, Missiology, and Biblical Studies. And they are mostly women. Apparently, Christian education is equated with teaching

children. There is even the impression that experts in Christian education are inferior to theologians, known as thinkers. Christian education is also often understood as theological schools/education or public schools run by Christians and with a Christian character.

This kind of ambiguity will direct the church's attention outward or to others and not strive to realize Christian Education in the church. This ambiguity was revealed in a panel discussion at the "8th ATA THEOLOGICAL AND 2nd PAN ASIA CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONSULTATION" which took place from October 28 to November 1, 1987 in Singapore. From this consultation and discussion, an important conclusion was drawn that could clarify this ambiguity:

- a. Theology and Christian education are not issues of "high" or "low," but rather of "specialization" of gifts/callings and functions, as revealed in Ephesians 4:11. The two should not be separated, as they need each other and complement each other to mature the congregation.
- b. Theologians think more about "Content", while Christian Educators think more about "Method/How to", namely trying to apply the Christian content practically with various methods through the process of "teaching and learning". (What is the meaning of having "content" if you cannot convey/land it relevantly? And what would happen if a Christian teacher who is good at teaching, teaches teachings with a misguided theological view?)
- c. As a follow-up to these conclusions, a dedicated page will be allocated in the upcoming issue of *Theologia Asia* magazine for Christian Education. The Christian Education course will be expanded and taught on a par with other courses.

3. Multicultural

According to Jehalim Bangun in Hasan Nurdin (2011), multiculturalism is an attitude of respect for diversity, equal rights, and not discriminating against people based on skin color, language, religion, ethnicity, and gender. Multicultural education invites us to accept differences as something natural in humans. Multiculturalism is a concept that describes the existence and recognition of various cultures in one society. As a continuously developing phenomenon, multiculturalism emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation between different cultural groups. In this increasingly connected world, understanding multiculturalism is the key to creating harmony and unity amidst diversity. Multiculturalism can also be interpreted as diversity or differences between one culture and another. So a multicultural society can be interpreted as a group of people who live and live permanently in a place that has its own culture and characteristics that are able to distinguish one society from another. Each society will produce its own culture which will become a characteristic for that society.

This is where the term multiculturalism emerged. Many definitions of multiculturalism exist, including that it is essentially a worldview—which can then be translated into various cultural policies—that emphasizes acceptance of the reality of diversity, plurality, and multiculturalism found in society. These various definitions of multiculturalism can be concluded as the essence of multiculturalism: acceptance and appreciation of culture, both one's own and that of others. Everyone is encouraged to

respect and honor every culture within society. Any form of culture must be accepted by everyone without distinction. Multiculturalism is not merely an introduction to the various cultures of the world, but also a demand from the various communities that embrace those cultures.

Portrait of the Development of Multicultural Christian Education in the Past

A historical portrait of how Christian education developed in a multicultural environment is certainly inseparable from biblical facts that highlight its origins, deeply connected to the biblical world of the past. Hope S. Antony even said that education began at the beginning of human culture. Where, education in any form is maintained by the younger generation for life, both within the family and within the wider community. This includes basic training in survival skills, instilling community values, and inheriting cultural values. There is no dividing line between life and education, nor between religion and education. Is education inherently religious and is religion inherently educational?

This is also true of Hebrew or Judaic education, where Christian education finds its roots. After all, Christianity developed from Judaism. Therefore, to understand Christian education, we must look back at Jewish education. For historians, there are three main periods in the Bible that need to be reviewed to understand how religious education developed in biblical times. These three main periods are:

- a. Pre-exilic period
- b. The post-exilic period of the Old Testament
- c. New Testament Period.

Many historians of education have attempted to piece together different educational materials or instruments from biblical passages in these three periods. Pre-exilic education is partly described in Deuteronomy 6, which suggests that strong patterns of family life provided the primary background for nurturing (faith). Through storytelling and interpretation within the family, discussions, questions, and answers, a Jewish child absorbed the meaning of life and a certain orientation to life shared with family and friends. Without written records, oral communication and repetition of community traditions became the medium for instruction.

However, because the exile meant a disruption of stable family life patterns and uncertainty about the community's identity and future, education during and after that time became somewhat cultic, while the importance of other educational institutions, besides the family, had to be deliberately addressed. Consequently, the development of synagogues, worship centers, and local education increased significantly. With families separated, scattered, and scattered among foreign lands and cultures, Jewish education became a means of communicating the community's unique heritage to subsequent generations.

All adult Jewish males studied the Torah and its interpretation for their lives in the synagogues. In turn, they were expected to raise their children in their homes. Subsequently, schools for boys were established, with rabbis teaching Hebrew, the oral tradition, and the written scriptures. What had originally been taught at home was now learned more formally in school. This was essentially a tradition based on a different view of God's people in the pre-exilic and post-exilic periods of the Old Testament.

Education during the New Testament period can be viewed in two ways: (a) According to the way of Jesus and (b) According to the way of Jesus' first disciples. It is important to make

this distinction, because there was a marked shift in the content and conduct of education. When Jesus lived and taught physically in the world, education according to Jesus' way centered on "the advent of the Kingdom of God into His own community. His teaching and preaching, His healings and exorcisms, His way of life and His dealings with various types of people, all pointed to the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God. Jesus claimed a central role in hastening the coming of the Kingdom of God. Jesus carried out this central role in three interrelated ways: direct preaching, prayer celebrations, and service to human needs."

Following Jesus' death and resurrection, there was a major shift in the content of education. As Jesus' disciples gradually became known as Christians, what came to be known as Christian education gradually evolved with a major shift in the content of His followers' preaching. This shift occurred from Christ's message of the "coming of the kingdom of God" to a message of Jesus' (post-mortem) presence with life-transforming power. In faithfulness to Jesus' life and ministry, Jesus' disciples passed on the good news through a threefold ministry: caring for human needs, celebrating a new relationship with God, and proclaiming the gospel. Subsequent generations of disciples attempted to adapt the content and practices of this Christian education to their own ways and circumstances. As always, adaptation would encounter new changes with changing contexts or circumstances. As Marianne Sawicki has carefully noted, Christ's threefold ministry of caring, celebrating (sacraments), and proclaiming the gospel did not always receive equal attention, with one giving greater emphasis to one issue than the other.

If we pay attention to the explanation given by Hope Antony above, it can be said that the development of Christian education in a multicultural environment is still not concretely visible. Because starting from the 3 parts of the time of Israel's education: Before the exile, the exile and during the New Testament, specifically it is not yet clear how efforts to develop education towards a multicultural reality have not been clearly revealed. Although the texts that speak to see differences as something that needs to be seen as something good rather than something dangerous have begun to be anticipated and have even begun to unveil. For example, it is marked by Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4: 1-42), as well as the breakthrough of evangelism to the Gentiles carried out by the apostle Paul, who said "In this there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus, (Gal. 3: 28), Likewise Paul's words, "Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, that's right. He is also the God of the Gentiles! (Romans 3:30)."

Hope S. Antony further stated that multicultural education primarily began in Western schools as they considered new curricula that addressed the needs of the growing number of migrants and immigrants from various countries around the world. Although it seems new, multicultural education in America can be traced back to earlier movements or trends in the country's history. First, intergroup or intercultural education, a movement between World Wars I and II, aimed at reducing racial prejudice and misunderstanding. However, this first trend of education for differences was only felt to be important in schools with open racial conflict. Then, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, particularly the black civil rights movement, brought about "a revolutionary change in the institutionalized racial segregation that had characterized every level of American life." Then, as the declining birth rate of white Americans and political upheavals led to more immigration from other countries, the Immigration Reform

Act was passed in 1965. In 1968, the Bilingual Education Act encouraged public schools with large immigrant populations to address the demands of diversity through dual-language programs.

Naturally, multiculturalism impacts churches in the United States. In 1995, religious educator David Ng analyzed the progress of Multicultural Religious Education (MRE) and identified three types of churches that need to develop appropriate MRE (Multicultural Religious Education) programs: First, churches with minority cultures that need to recognize their identity as minorities within a majority culture. Second, churches with majority cultures that need to learn cultural awareness, including dismantling their pockets of cultural imperialism. Third, multicultural churches, with large percentages of different ethnic groups and that demand new ways of experiencing community and growing toward unity in diversity. The term multicultural is interchangeable with multiethnic. Both terms are primarily used to refer to diversity of racial and ethnic origins. However, more recently, the term has also been used to refer to gender, social status, sexual orientation, and other differences, which of course cut across racial and ethnic lines.

A Portrait of the Development of Christian Education in Today's Multicultural Environment

As previously stated, education within God's community of believers in the past was characterized by a focused educational orientation for and benefiting the community itself. However, rapid changes in progress and increased human communication have forced encounters with new cultures, traditions, and other heterogeneous elements, necessitating a reexamination of how new approaches and patterns of Christian education can be applied to address these new realities. The following discussion will examine the challenges facing Christian education in a multicultural environment.

For the following explanation there is a quote that says something like this, "I am ashamed to be Indonesian," that is one of the titles of Taufik Ismail's poems which is also his last collection of poems. "I have never been as angry, sad and ashamed as I am now," said Taufik Abdullah in a meeting held by the Agency for Research and Development of Religion on December 5, 1998 to reflect on the various cases of riots that have disturbed relations between people of various religions that have occurred in various places in our country in recent years. The expressions above seem to describe the feelings of many people who have caused loss of life, property and social rifts that are very concerning that how society seems to have lost common sense and clear thinking. These events are hard to believe but they happened and we witnessed them together. Even now we are still enveloped and gripped by a feeling of anxiety that such events will still happen and happen again. Observing the various riots that have occurred so far we see how diverse the forms of manifestation are and how complex the factors causing them are. The riots that occurred in various locations manifested themselves in various forms of violence, looting, and destruction, not only of government or state property but also of religious symbols, carried out with glee and without any sense of guilt. Why this happened is a matter of long reflection that every citizen of this nation needs to undertake.

In this regard, Jack L. Semour stated that, in 1982, Donald Miller and he edited *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education* to clarify a number of themes concerning church education. The 1970s were a time of educational renewal. Various aspirations were

expressed to explore the relationship between education and culture, research into human development, and a number of teaching strategies. Contemporary approaches helped address these rapid developments.

Contemporary approaches describe what is happening in the world of Christian education. The congregation as a place for education and mission is discussed. The possibilities and limitations of the school model are examined. Teaching methods are considered, taking into account both cognitive and affective components. The role of theological methods in renewing tradition is then explored, and the important contribution of psychological research to church education is considered.

Amidst these new voices, five main themes emerge: (1) religious instruction, (2) faith community, (3) development (4) liberation, and (5) interpretation. These five are seen as alternative filters that shape the world of education. Instruction emphasizes the formal educational structures found within the church. Faith community reflects the life force of the congregation being taught. Development builds on psychological research on personal growth. Liberation emerges from the efforts of Latin American liberation theology that empowers people to live under God's rule, amidst the oppression they experience. And interpretation focuses on how education connects faith and everyday life. This "map" provides an overview of the paths and steps in exploring education.

Jack L. Seymour further revealed that the main challenge in developing Christian education today is that the influence of religious education has experienced a rapid decline. The old mainstream churches are now on the sidelines. Stephen Carter in Jack L. Seymour said that our current culture is a culture of unbelief in which God is removed from public conversation and becomes a private conversation in this life.

And the big question from Jack L Seymour is how Christian education faces the puzzle of the future? which is colored by the widening gap between rich and poor, many ethnic conflicts and terrorism, the rise of religious authority, efforts to fight for public interests and the growth of nihilism among young people causing them to see the future as very difficult.

In a conversation that introduces this chapter, Franck Donnell and Thomas Jarrell have shown these fears reflected. Environmental engineer Cynthia Dayton notes that she "wrestles" with God to understand and respond to suffering. Charles Eldridge adds, "It pains me when I see the violence in the world today and how young people see the future of this world." Personal suffering and the brokenness of the world are two issues that lead us to a reflection that demands responsibility as Christians.

How does the church engage in this limited time? The church is called to be open to the world, open to diversity, and proclaim a faith that addresses personal needs and connects us to everyday life. In this world of "suffering," fear is ever-present in every age, humanitarian works face threats and truths undergo changes. Therefore, religion becomes a key that is expected to be able to face the future with grace and hope. Theologian Douglas John Hall argues that we have three choices in responding to fear of the future. First, denial: we close our eyes to the future and spend energy only to reduce our fear. The second choice is despair: we give up and believe that the future does not exist. We try to eliminate pain. The results of the first two choices are ultimately self-destructive. The third choice is hope that calls us to action. However, hope cannot be based on empty promises or the denial of pain.

Hope is only possible when we face pain head-on. Theologically, hope is grounded in the work of the Cross, which depicts chaos and suffering, weeping and acknowledging loss. The Cross is, at the same time, a powerful image of hope and resurrection. This is the context of Christian Education: in a world filled with fear and anxiety, we must find a way to meet the challenges of life. We must confront the problems of being humanly engaged in this chaotic history and see it as a time of possibility. The Church must enter into this fearful atmosphere and proclaim that the God of history knows suffering and suffers with us. Psalm 130:1 declares, "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord." Hope is the recognition of brokenness and the possibilities for transformation. We learn to have faith by reflecting on the brokenness and possibilities in our life experiences, and engaging in the social context in which caring communities and missions that seek the fulfillment of hope, grace, and an inclusive future emerge. Interpretation and empowerment are central to the entire approach to Christian Education.

Strategic Principles in Developing Christian Education in a Multicultural Environment

The term "development of Christian education," which is often referred to as part of the development of Christian education, demands that conditions not remain as they are now (routine), but that there be renewal or innovation. This means that something is changed in accordance with the demands of renewal and development of the Pancasila nation-state, and in accordance with the development of science, technology, and the arts that influence the development of Indonesian society. The dynamic and static factors mentioned above are not appropriate if viewed as two opposing things or viewed in either-or thinking (only two choices), but rather as a continuum (many choices, even unlimited?), because what is called dynamic does not mean completely without static elements. The way of thinking or this or that, and there is no other possibility has brought many disasters in human life, because there is no battle for tolerance. What is meant is that introducing change and renewal into the current Christian education system must begin from the conditions that have been born of recent history. In other words, P-3-K must understand the "das Sein" of Christian education today in order to be able to move it to the state of "das Sollen" in the future. In this regard, several contributions of thought can be formulated in the development of Christian education in a multicultural environment.

Development of Christian Education that is oriented towards the appreciation of the values of love

Recently, Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin Umar emphasized that religious teachings should prioritize love and harmony, not differences and hatred. He conveyed this during a Professional Work Lecture (KKP) meeting at the Indonesian National Police Staff and High Leadership School (Sespimti) at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Headquarters in Lapangan Banteng, Central Jakarta. He further stated, "So far, people have taught religion by indoctrinating differences, even hatred. Now this must be completely changed. All religions teach hospitality, harmony, the enhancement of human values, and brotherhood," said Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin. According to him, the approach to religion in Indonesia must be more than just coexistence, where people simply live side by side without interacting with each other. "We cannot simply create a coexistent society. That is simply living together without interfering with each other. We must go further, creating true tolerance. It is not enough

to simply not interfere with each other, but there must be a sense of brotherhood," he explained. Minister of Religious Affairs Nasaruddin also expressed the importance of religious education in shaping the nation's character. "I ask religious teachers, including Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians, to teach unity. They should not teach about differences that could create social divisions. Indonesia is a country with extraordinary diversity; if children are instilled with differences from an early age, the impact could be very dangerous," he said.

This perspective is crucial in the midst of religious community life. Teachers often act in a two-faced manner, publicly thinking in a pluralistic, multicultural manner, while in the local context they act and act sectarian. This requires a harmony of feeling and expression to prevent biases in internalizing the noble and lofty values of a religion. Especially in the world of education, particularly Christian education, it's time to set a good example, demonstrating a lack of pretense or subterfuge in building a life in a multicultural context.

Development of Christian Education that Forms a Good and Anti-Violence Way of Life in a Multicultural Society

BH Situmorang explains what a good lifestyle is. According to him, a good lifestyle or good character is an obligation that is part of the obedience of the Jews in obeying and carrying out the Law of the Torah with all their strength. The Jews are confident and believe they can establish the kingdom of Messiah on this earth. Whoever obeys all of God's laws will enter heaven, but those who do not do them will go to hell. So the highest goal of a person's personal life is heaven, while the communal goal is the earthly kingdom of Messiah. However, because only with the greatest effort can they get there, all of them are haunted by anxiety and worry about whether their efforts and deeds are enough to earn their reward. Such fears always burden those under the laws.

So, to carry out the call to have a good lifestyle, Christians do not start from themselves as personal morals, but start from the awareness that God has first freed them from sin. It is not a good way of life that is the first thing to rely on to realize their deliverance, but God Himself. A good way of life is a logical consequence for those who have been saved, which gives us the possibility to behave and live God in a good way. He puts a clean heart within us (Psalm 57:12), from there always comes the source of good character. If a Christian has a good character, it is a sign that he has returned to his true self before being saved. So salvation is still visible in a good way of life. God does not want to dwell in people whose behavior is flawed, whose thoughts, hearts and works are evil. Because God is holy. He wants both the body and life of those who dwell in Him to be holy (1 Peter 1:15ff). A person who has repented, always reflects on himself now towards his life before repentance, so that he remains aware and understands the dangers of darkness and therefore he wants to live a good life. living in the light until the day of parusia comes, 1 Corinthians 19 etc. Titus 1: 2 etc. 1 Pet 1:20. Rom 16 25 etc. 6: 17 etc. 7-5 etc. 11 30 etc. Gal 4.3 etc. 1 Corinthians 6:9 etc. Especially if we reflect on the violence that occurred in 1998, many digital technologies immortalize the brutality and barbarity of those who prioritize this violence. In this case, it is necessary from an early age to instill a good life that is anti-violence.

Development of Christian Education that is Faithful and Hopeful and Able to interact and be friendly with a multicultural environment.

Immanuel Gerrit Singgih said, “Many people receive general Christian education from elementary school to university in institutions run by Christians. It is not surprising that during this time, many prejudices have unknowingly developed about the outside world. These prejudices are especially important for every Christian Religious Education teacher. Their job is not to perpetuate these prejudices, but to break them down. The best way is to encourage students to socialize and befriend others who do not share their faith. True friendship never demands that others be like me, but rather to appreciate what is in others. Contact only with those who are like me will not give rise to friendship but rather collusion. In friendship, a paradox occurs: because of understanding one another, I am no longer me and he is no longer him, but at the same time I am still me and he is still him. Experience in personal relationships also applies to the experiences of one group with another.

In this case, too many suspicions are instilled in people of different religions, ethnicities, and ethnicities, all with labels attached to them. Upon closer examination, these labels aren't necessarily true. Stigmas are created, which of course only make it easier for others to pit one against another. However, by removing such suspicions, it will be possible for everyone to freely interact with one another.

CONCLUSION

Christian education is fundamentally rooted in the greatest commandments from Matthew 22:37-40—loving God with all one's heart, soul, and mind, and loving one's neighbor as oneself, upon which all Torah and Prophets depend—compelling followers of Christ to embody their role as "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-16), shining through good deeds to glorify God and drive societal reform. This biblical mandate positions Christians as change agents, pioneers, and nation-builders who advance two or three steps ahead of others, leading renewal while remaining devoted followers of God. For future research, scholars could empirically investigate how these scriptural principles translate into measurable outcomes in multicultural educational settings, such as enhanced tolerance and community leadership among Christian-educated youth in diverse Indonesian contexts.

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