



From Proclamation to Dialogue: Reconstructing the Cross-Cultural Mission of Christianity in Christian Religious Education

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Christian Cross-Cultural Mission, Christian Religious Education, Dialogic Communication, Social Reconciliation, Missio Dei

Received : 21, October

Revised : 23, December

Accepted : 25, February

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how to rebuild cross-cultural Christian missions in Indonesia from a monologic proclamation paradigm to a dialogic approach. This study uses a qualitative approach with a review of the latest theological, pedagogical, and social literature. It starts from the reality of religious and cultural pluralism and the sensitivity of the issue of mission in public spaces. The analysis shows that the one-way proclamation paradigm also keeps stereotypes alive, makes people resistant to Christianity, and makes it harder for students to have conversations. This article suggests a framework for Christian Religious Education (CRE) principles that is based on God's mission, incarnational, dialogical, and focused on restoring social relationships. It does this by combining the ideas of missio Dei, interkultural mission, dialogical communication, and social reconciliation.

INTRODUCTION

Today's social world is characterized by high mobility, urbanization, and intensified interfaith and intercultural interactions, calling into question the relevance of a one-way proclamation paradigm. In this context, churches and Christian educational institutions are challenged to rethink ways of witnessing and educating that not only affirm their faith identity but also build a just and peaceful life together. In Indonesia, religious and cultural plurality is enshrined in Pancasila, with the principle of "Belief in One God" as the basis for civilized religious life that respects human dignity (Bessie et al., 2023). However, there are still reports of violations of freedom of religion and belief in the form of restrictions on the establishment of houses of worship, bans on religious activities, and pressure on minority groups, so that religious practices at the grassroots level are often far from the ideal spirit of Pancasila (Tampanguma, n.d., 2025).

In this context, missionary and evangelical activities, including religious teaching methods, are often perceived as factors that have the potential to trigger tension. The history of Christian missions in Indonesia shows that for a long time, the dominant paradigm was monological proclamation oriented towards church expansion, often accompanied by Western culture and not infrequently associated with colonial power. This paradigm placed the church as the subject of proclamation and the world, including followers of other religions, as objects to be won over, resulting in hierarchical relationships (Stevanus, 2021).

This legacy has influenced PAK practices in both churches and schools, where teaching often centers on the authority of the teacher, uses lecture methods, and positions other religions primarily as objects of study or a "threat" rather than partners in dialogue. In a pluralistic society, this pattern has the potential to perpetuate stereotypes, weaken the ability to engage in dialogue, and close off opportunities for intercultural learning, which are actually very much needed. On the other hand, developments in contemporary missiology have shifted the understanding of mission from

institutional expansion to *missio Dei*, namely mission as God's work to reconcile the world to Himself, in which the church is only invited to participate (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

The Lausanne Movement emphasizes that proclamation and social engagement are two integral dimensions of the church's mission, so that a complete Christian witness must touch all aspects of human life. In this horizon, cross-cultural mission demands an incarnational, contextual, and dialogical presence. Local experiences such as the Pohnsarang Church show that creative dialogue between the gospel and local culture through art, architecture, and mutual cooperation practices can be a form of mission that is communicative and reconciliatory, rather than confrontational (Prasojjo, Agilang Aji & Wijayaputra, Yusuf Irawan Arsardi, 2011).

Research on the communication of the Gospel and Pancasila also shows that the principles of integral mission can be combined with Pancasila's vision of tolerance to produce a testimony that is theologically faithful and socially constructive. However, there is a gap between the theoretical discourse on *missio Dei*, intercultural mission, and dialogical communication and the concrete practice of PAK in the classroom, which is still heavily influenced by the monological proclamation paradigm. This is where the need arises to formulate a cross-cultural Christian mission framework that explicitly shifts the focus from proclamation to dialogue and applies it in the context of PAK (Utomo, n.d.-a).

This study aims to critique the limitations of the monological proclamation paradigm in cross-cultural Christian education in Indonesia and to reconstruct the mission of cross-cultural Christianity from the perspectives of *missio Dei*, dialogical communication, and social reconciliation, as well as to propose a framework of principles for Christian education as a dialogical and reconciliatory practice of cross-cultural mission. Academically, this article is expected to enrich the discourse on missiology and PAK; practically, it offers operational principles for educators and churches in the midst of Indonesia's pluralistic society (Giban & Rangka, 2024).

The history of Christianity in Indonesia cannot be separated from the historical dynamics of colonialism, nationalism, and religious pluralism. Since the VOC era, Christian missions have been present in the archipelago with a hegemonic proclamation; the church spoke, the world listened. This pattern yielded many results, but also left a history of hurt, bitterness, suspicion, and resistance (Mareta & Windari, 2025).

In the paradigm of propagation, missions are often simple, involving verbal evangelism, church planting, and verbal individual conversion. But this paradigm is rarely reflected in reality, because missions often go hand in hand with colonial political power, and the gospel is often identified as “the religion of the rulers.” On the other hand, the *missio Dei* paradigm calls for a broader approach, consisting of personal, social, and cosmic transformation, involving justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

Intercultural mission makes local churches realize that there are seeds of truth, beauty, and goodness in every culture that can be welcomed by the gospel, but also filtered by the light of Christ's promise. Faith-culture dialogue is not doctrinal compromise, but interrelatedness. The gospel evaluates culture, and culture enables the Messenger to communicate effectively in a particular context (Hutahaen & Lumban Tobing, 2023).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study design that focuses on reconstructing the conceptual framework of cross-cultural Christian missions in the context of PAK in Indonesia. The study materials include relevant theological, missiological, pedagogical, and social literature, including Lausanne Movement documents, studies on *missio Dei*, studies on Pancasila and religious freedom, as well as recent research on PAK, interreligious dialogue, and social reconciliation.

Sources were selected based on the following criteria: (1) published in reputable journals or credible academic publishers; (2) directly relevant to the theme of the shift from proclamation to dialogue; and (3) reflecting the latest developments in thinking with some key classical sources for theoretical foundations.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis: key ideas were coded and grouped into main themes such as the proclamation paradigm, *missio Dei*, cross-cultural mission, dialogical communication, PAK in a pluralistic society, and social reconciliation. These themes were then synthesized into a framework of PAK principles as a dialogical cross-cultural mission, which was tested for consistency with the Indonesian context. This research is normative-theoretical in nature; the findings are in the form of a conceptual framework that can be further tested through empirical studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The limitations of the monological proclamation paradigm in PAK show that the monological proclamation paradigm places the church and educators as the sole subjects who “speak,” while the world and students are positioned primarily as objects receiving messages. In PAK, this pattern is evident in the dominance of lecture methods, an emphasis on cognitive memorization, and a lack of space for students' experiences, questions, and critical reflection (Talizaro Tafonao et al., 2025).

This paradigm has several weaknesses: first, it tends to ignore the cultural background and concrete experiences of learners; second, it maintains a deep divide between “us” and “them” that is easily filled with stereotypes; third, it is weak in forming dialogical competencies that are very important in a pluralistic society. In the Indonesian context, this paradigm has the potential to strengthen resistance to Christianity in the public sphere, as Christian witness can easily be perceived as an expansionist effort that ignores fragile social relations (Birdsall & Brown, n.d.).

Dialogic Communication

Communication is the transmission of information, but it is also a process of forming shared meaning through encounter. In the context of missional theology, this means that Christian witness is an act of listening, respecting, and understanding others. Dialogue does not lead to relativism; rather, it seeks shared truth in an atmosphere of mutual respect while remaining honest about one's own truth. In Pancasila, this category is embodied in the spirit of “Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa yang berkebudayaan” (Belief in One God who is cultured): practicing religion with modesty and respect and rejecting the spirit of ego associated with religion (Weyn, 2020).

Social Reconciliation

Social reconciliation is the most important dimension of *missio Dei*. In Christ, God is the world's pilgrim with Himself and entrusts us with the mission of reconciliation in the church (2 Corinthians 5:18–20). Reconciliation is vertical, between humans and God and humans and groups. The mission of the church, therefore, must manifest itself in acts of social reconciliation. Sometimes this means building bridges, other times it means repairing them, and still other times it means uniting what already exists. In Indonesia, the experience of religious conflict several years ago demonstrated the importance of the church community as an agent of reconciliation. The Christian mission not only expands the common good but also contributes significantly to social integration, which should be in line with Pancasila and the constitution that guarantees justice and fairness for all people.

Challenges and Obstacles

Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest level of religious and ethnic plurality. As a country based on Pancasila, the duty of the church in Indonesia is to support the commitment to Pancasila. Pancasila is the “meeting point,” “foothold,” and “destination” of the Indonesian people. The first principle is Belief in One God, a blueprint to encompass diversity and the position of religion in the state (Rotua, 2014).

Referring to its guiding vision, religious tolerance under Pancasila should bridge, not suppress: it should not force citizens to “hide” their faith in a closed world, but rather encourage sincere expressions of faith that shape the dignity of others and legal order. However, in practice, tolerance is instead reduced to a subjective ‘concealment’, especially for minority groups. There are still reports of bans on building houses of worship and prohibitions on religious ceremonies. It is not uncommon for this to be legitimized in the name of ‘public order’ or ‘social harmony’. On the other hand, this mentality has given rise to the jargon ‘double standards.

In this context, the church finds itself in a position where it must decide how to proclaim the Gospel faithfully and purely without being interpreted as contradictory, and how to bear witness to Christ, who is firmly rooted in the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, while still respecting the religious freedom of other believers.

The proclamation paradigm ignores the practical dimension because it emphasizes verbal aspects: social justice, peace, and participation in building society. For many Indonesians, testimony is not the first argument, but rather Christian character that is seen in concrete acts of love and solidarity. The Lausanne Movement also states that a sharp separation between evangelism and social responsibility is a form of mission that is unfaithful to the Gospel.

The confrontational proclamation paradigm contradicts cultural communication in the archipelago, which is dominated by brotherhood, face, and long-term relationships. Therefore, procedural missiology is expected to continue to correct and mobilize concrete testimonies that are in line with the local communication culture (Patabang et al., 2024).

The monological proclamation paradigm rejects dialogue without realizing that Christians themselves need to be rebuked and taught. Interfaith dialogue is as useful as possible in building a human perception of God and showing love to all believers. Therefore, the reconstruction of mission in Indonesia claims a theological and methodological shift: from monological proclamation to dialogical communication that still contains testimony but within the framework of participation and reconciliation (Sanderan et al., 2023).

A study of gospel communication in a pluralistic society that integrates the principles of Lausanne and Pancasila tolerance emphasizes that evangelism in Indonesia must be understood as an integral mission: combining the proclamation of the good news about Jesus Christ with a demonstration of God's love through concrete actions. In the Lausanne view, evangelism cannot stand alone but must always show love in social service and involvement in issues of justice. The Cape Town Commitment states that faithful communication of the Gospel “touches all of human life” – spiritual, social, economic, political. Conversely, Pancasila provides its ideological synthesis: the principle of “Belief in One God” demands a tolerant religious life (Wiguno & Handayani, 2025).

In other words, the church in Indonesia is called to witness not in the form of domination, but in the form of inclusive loving service: education, health, humanitarian aid, advocacy for justice, and so on, not only for its own religion, but open to all people regardless of religious affiliation. In other words, the Christian mission does not conflict with Pancasila, but can instead be one of the driving forces behind national spirit and social reconciliation (Utomo, n.d).

Cross-cultural Christian Mission

Contemporary missiology literature affirms a shift from an expansion paradigm that equates mission with adding members and territories to an understanding of *missio Dei*. Within the framework of *missio Dei*, mission is God's work that is broader than the church, encompassing the restoration of human relationships with God, fellow human beings, and creation. The church and PAK are called not only to fight for institutional interests, but also to be witnesses to the work of reconciliation in society (Prang & Tafonao, 2025).

In a cross-cultural context, *missio Dei* demands an incarnational attitude: entering the world of symbols, language, and local cultural experiences with humility, as well as a willingness to learn and examine everything in the light of the gospel. The reconstruction of cross-cultural mission from proclamation to dialogue is therefore not a blurring of the content of the Gospel, but a rearrangement of the way the Gospel is presented and communicated (Lasut et al., 2021).

From the above points, the reconstruction of intercultural Christian mission in Indonesia can be formulated as follows: 1) Rooted in *missio Dei*. The church does not have a mission, but members within this broader lexicon do. The mission itself is a testimony to Christ and a sign of the kingdom of the world: justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Therefore, repositioning requires a shift in focus from church institutions church growth to the kingdom: the transformation of sectors of society. 2) Incarnational and intercultural. Mission must be carried out within a cultural context. Inculturation is not a strategy, but a consequence of incarnation: the Word becoming flesh in a particular historical and cultural context. The church learns the language, symbols, rituals, and personal aspirations of the community past and present and discovers ways to express the gospel. 3) The journey of dialogical communication. Mission can no longer be carried out through one-way communication. Dialogical communication means speaking and learning, listening and emphasizing. Interreligious dialogue is

not bad and is a space for humble witness and honest learning. This is in line with the spirit of the One God (Zebua, 2021).

From this framework, the intercultural Christian mission in Indonesia can be understood as a calling to live among the people as witnesses who speak and listen, who proclaim the gospel and serve reconciliation, who love God and love their neighbors within the horizon of Pancasila and the constitution. From proclamation to dialogue, from claim to reconciliation, this is why the church is called to be part of God's mission for Indonesia (Stevanus, 2021).

Apologetics as a Dialogical Mission

Apologetics is often understood as “defense of the faith” in the form of rational arguments to respond to objections to Christianity. The call to apologetics is not the monopoly of professional theologians, but the call of all believers based on 1 Peter 3:15. However, the practice of apologetics influenced by the culture of debate often falls into a “win-lose” pattern, where the main goal is to defeat the opponent's arguments. In the pluralistic context of Indonesia, this form of apologetics easily triggers conflict and reinforces negative stereotypes about Christianity. Therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct apologetics as a dialogical mission (Fani, 2020).

First, apologetics as part of living testimony. Defending faith is not only through arguments, but also through moral integrity, love for others, and commitment to justice. Apologetics that separates words and deeds loses credibility in the public context (Mangguali, 2020).

Second, apologetics as humble rational dialogue. Giving an account means explaining why Christians believe in Christ in a reasonable way, but also respecting the right of others to disagree. In this framework, apologetics becomes an effort to build understanding, not to force agreement (Ambarita et al., 2025).

Third, apologetics as the formation of views about Christianity. Studying apologetics helps Christians see that their faith does not contradict reason and reality, but rather offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the world: God as the basis of morality, creation as the basis of human dignity, and the resurrection of Christ as the basis of hope (Manalu et al., 2023).

In the dialogical mission paradigm, apologetics is not a weapon to attack, but a tool to explain, bridge, and purify. It aims to clarify the gospel and eliminate misunderstandings, while respecting freedom of conscience. In apologetics, the gospel is discussed with those who do not yet fully know the truth of the gospel. This dialogue does not intend to defend oneself in a higher position and belittle others, but equality will open the door to a more logical and tolerant preaching of the gospel while maintaining the undeniable truth of the gospel (Stevanus, 2021).

Apologetics acts responsibly, rationally, and dialogically with mutual respect for one another. It respects each other's choices. The focus is not on winning the debate, but on being clearly responsible in witnessing to the gospel while maintaining tolerance (Purwoto et al., 2022).

PAK as a Space for Dialogic Communication

The integration of dialogical communication ideas shows that PAK should be a space for dialogical encounters, not just for the transmission of doctrine. By using a dialogical approach, PAK teachers place students as subjects who are invited to process their experiences of faith and life together, including their struggles amid plurality. In dialogical PAK classes, religious and cultural differences are not hidden, but presented as realities that need to be understood, heard, and responded to in a way that is faithful to Christ and at the same time respects the dignity of others. This requires a change in method: from one-way lectures to guided discussions, case studies, shared reflections, collaborative projects across identities, and other forms of learning that facilitate dialogue (Stepanus et al., 2025).

Within the Lausanne framework, evangelism cannot be separated from social service and involvement in issues of justice. Jesus himself taught, preached the Kingdom of God, and healed the sick (Matthew 9:35–38). The Cape Town Commitment affirms that faithful communication of the gospel is that which “touches the whole of human life” spiritual, social, economic, and political (The Lausanne Movement, 2011).

On the other hand, Pancasila provides an ideological framework: the principle of “Belief in One God” demands a religious life that respects freedom of religion, rejects discrimination, and promotes tolerance. Lausanne–Pancasila integration means that churches in Indonesia are called to witness not in the form of domination, but through inclusive ministries of love: education, health, humanitarian aid, advocacy for justice.

PAK and Social Reconciliation in Indonesia

In the context of Indonesia, which bears the scars of religious conflict and identity tensions, PAK has significant potential as an instrument of social reconciliation. When PAK integrates the dimensions of history, justice, and empathy, students are helped to recognize the real impact of violence and intolerance, while being encouraged to participate in efforts to restore relationships in their communities.

Reconciliatory PAK does not ignore the truth claims of the Christian faith, but expresses them through the practice of forgiveness, solidarity with the vulnerable, and interfaith cooperation for the common good. Thus, PAK functions as an integral part of the church's participation in God's reconciling mission.

A synthesis of the above findings allows for the formulation of a number of PAK principles as a dialogical cross-cultural Christian mission rooted in *missio Dei*. The goal of PAK is participation in God's work of reconciliation, not merely the preservation of institutions or traditions. Incarnational and cross-cultural. PAK values and processes the concrete cultural context of learners as a space for the encounter of the gospel with their world. Based on dialogical communication, the learning process

places learners as subjects, opening space for questioning, listening, and learning together (Purwadi, 2023).

PAK Material in the Context of Social Reconciliation

The content and methods of PAK are directed at restoring relations between groups and preventing identity-based violence. There is an integration of proclamation, service, and justice. PAK combines teaching the word, social sensitivity, and ethical responsibility (Adiprasetya, 2023).

In the context of Indonesia's history of inter-ethnic violence and conflict, the Christian mission needs to position itself as an agent of reconciliation that has fulfilled its promise, rather than merely as an opponent that perpetuates conflict. This task aims to work hard in the peace process, in mediation, in teaching enemies to be friends, and in serving victims of violence in collaboration with fellow believers who are committed to Pancasila and human rights.

The intercultural Christian mission in Indonesia can be understood as a call to live among the people as witnesses who speak and listen, who preach the gospel and serve reconciliation, who love God and love their neighbors within the horizon of Pancasila and the constitution. From proclamation to dialogue, from claim to reconciliation; this is how the church is called to be part of God's mission for Indonesia (Simanjuntak et al., 2021).

Intercultural Christian Education Framework

First, PAK needs to be reorganized as a space for dialogical formation, not just a space for delivering doctrinal information. This requires changes in curriculum design, methods, and evaluation, so that dialogical competence, empathy, and intercultural sensitivity are given equal weight with cognitive mastery of religious teachings (Manalu et al., 2023).

Second, the role of PAK teachers needs to be understood as facilitators of cross-cultural dialogue and agents of social reconciliation, not merely conveyors of material. Teachers are called to develop theological, pedagogical, and intercultural competencies so that they are able to mediate the encounter between the Christian faith and the diverse experiences of students in a sensitive and responsible manner (Markes & Londo, 2022).

Third, churches and Christian educational institutions need to integrate this framework of cross-cultural dialogical mission into teacher training, curriculum development, and congregational development programs, so that there is consistency between the messages taught in the classroom and the practice of church life (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The old paradigm of monological proclamation that colored the Christian mission has proven to be inadequate in responding to the challenges of plurality, sensitivity to mission issues, and the need for social reconciliation in Indonesia, especially in PAK. The reconstruction of cross-cultural mission from proclamation to dialogue, rooted in *missio Dei* and articulated through PAK, opens up possibilities for Christian witness that is both faithful to the Gospel and constructive for communal life.

The proposed framework of principles—based on *missio Dei*, incarnational, dialogical, and oriented toward social reconciliation—provides concrete direction for the development of PAK as a practice of cross-cultural mission in Indonesia. This framework enriches the academic discourse of missiology and PAK, while providing a practical foundation for curriculum and pedagogical renewal.

Further research is needed to test and enrich this framework through empirical studies in various school and church contexts, so that the transformative impact of PAK as a dialogical cross-cultural Christian mission can be assessed and developed more broadly.

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