

## The Revolution of Christian Religious Education in Indonesia: A Historical Liberation Perspective

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### Abstract

*This research aims to examine the history of Christian religious education in Indonesia, especially in the Protestant context, starting from the VOC era to the present, to assess its contribution such as liberating facilities for society, especially students. By examining the historical trajectory of Christian religious education in Indonesia, we can examine and make the necessary adjustments in its current implementation, especially in responding to the challenges of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) era. In order to achieve this goal, the literature method is a bridge that can be crossed using the correct procedures. The article produces an understanding of the importance of liberating Christian religious education after learning from its history in Indonesia. Through this discourse, it is hoped that we can identify and overcome our strengths and weaknesses in preparing students adequately to face the increasingly fierce competition of the contemporary era in the context of Christian religious education in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Revolution, Christian religious education, liberation.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education must essentially try to free students from ignorance, weakness, poverty and oppression. What is meant by "liberation" by the KBBI is the act of freeing individuals from various forms of shackles, demands, pressure, punishment, power, etc., giving them the freedom to express themselves and act accordingly. The phrase "Christian religious education" inherently emphasizes liberation. If we explore its meaning more deeply, the term "education" comes from two Latin words, *educare* and *educere*. *Educare* means the act of maintaining and providing for increased health and strength, while *educere* means guiding individuals from one stage of life to a better stage (Sidjaga, 1999: 8). Thus, education can be understood as a deliberate effort to equip and guide individuals or groups towards a more advanced stage of life. Apart from that, religion is a social system built by its followers, centered on non-empirical powers which are believed and used to achieve salvation for themselves and the wider community. Religion is expected to function as a system that frees its adherents from the challenges they usually face, such as uncertainty, helplessness, scarcity, suffering and death (Hendropuspito, 2006: 29-35). The definition of "Christian religious education" firmly underlines the mission contained in it to liberate students in PAK. However, despite the liberating nature of PAK, we often find examples of Christian religious education that restrict, oppress, and fail to enlighten students, hindering their expected development.

Research on liberating Christian religious education from Remegises D.Y Pandie, et al (2023) produces a generation that is critical, dialogical, has human sensitivity and solidarity, and has the ability to analyze social problems. Meanwhile, Frans Pantan's (2022) research on liberating education: awareness of plurality in Christian education in the postmodern era resulted in an inclusive education formula that sees others in the frame of diversity or plurality who have the right to enjoy freedom of expression in the light of the will of the Divine. This concept must be presented in the life of postmodern society. The concept of liberating education brings results that bring change in the Christian religious education environment.

However, the realm of Christian religious education exhibits many weaknesses that hinder its ability to fulfill its liberating function, often burdening students with unnecessary elements. This observation highlights the importance of revisiting thinking around religious education which often tends to be indoctrinative. The author identifies several shortcomings in the realm of Christian religious education, including: a) Lack of clear vision and mission in implementing PAK (Christian religious education) across churches, schools, families and communities. b) Lack of understanding of the PAK concept. c) Lack of presence of curriculum designers and program developers for PAK, resulting in a lack of familiarity between church and school leaders with the PAK curriculum. d) Lack of qualified PAK educators. e) Insufficient funding allocation for PAK development in all PAK areas. f) Limited availability of educational facilities that support the curriculum. g) Scarcity of skilled and qualified managers responsible for PAK development within implementing agencies. In addition, it should be noted that PAK learning largely follows an indoctrination approach. Historical studies are important to assess the extent to which PAK administrators in Indonesia have encouraged the progress of liberating Christian religious education, as discussed previously.

## **METHODS**

This research uses a literature research approach in the descriptive qualitative method space. The procedure taken was to collect literature that was relevant or related to liberating Christian religious education in the history of PAK in Indonesia. This literature was found from various sources such as books, scientific journals, research reports and other electronic sources. This section requires a critical study to determine whether the existing literature is related to the theme of liberating education in the history of PAK in Indonesia. Important information will be obtained from existing literature as a view that supports the topic of liberating education. A study of this information is needed that leads to a comprehensive literature review. (Sugiyono, 2015)

## **DISCUSSION**

The concept of liberation in education is strongly influenced by liberation theology in Latin America and Paulo Freire's thoughts on liberation education. Liberation theology originated in Latin America in 1968 under the guidance of Catholic theologians. It emerged in response to various social, economic, and cultural reform movements since the 1960s, when the term "liberation" rose to prominence in Latin American theology. Basically, this theology advocates the

liberation of the Latin American people from exploitative actions carried out by national and international institutions through radical transformation in the social and economic fields. It critically examines their identities and the challenging circumstances they faced at the time, such as the presence of oligarchy, capitalism, and violence. The aim is to uncover the underlying causes of these problems, including the social marginalization, poverty, dependency and violence experienced by the majority. (Desi Sianipar, 2017:36-37)

The concept of liberation was extended to the field of education, incorporating the thought of Paulo Freire, as seen in his influential work, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." Freire envisioned liberating education as an approach based on critical awareness and dialogue (Livingstone & Fiorenza, 2006: 288-289). His theories are outlined in his book "Conscientization." He viewed education as an integral component of revolutionary social transformation, driven by the context of Brazilian society in the 1960s, in which much of the population lived in a culture of silence, grappling with illiteracy, oppression, apathy, and fatalism. Freire aimed to eradicate these conditions by emphasizing the importance of cultivating critical consciousness, enabling Brazilian citizens to become active agents in their social reality and identifying necessary changes. Critical consciousness is a deliberate process that develops and has the power to change reality. Active dialogue and critical pedagogy, which draw on concrete social experiences and realities and use problematization, play an important role in achieving this critical awareness. As a result, passive learning behavior is weakened, while critical analysis and creativity are fostered. Freire's methodology also underlines the importance of a dialogical and dialectical relationship between educators and students, encouraging collaborative learning activities and attitudes. (Paulo Freire, 2008).

Based on the history of Christian religious education in Indonesia, it can be traced back to the arrival of the Portuguese who had two main goals: spreading their religion and monopolizing trade. However, this study specifically focuses on the implementation of Protestant Christian religious education which began with the entry of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) into India in the early 17th century.

### **Christian Religious Education in the VOC Era**

During the VOC era, Christian religious education was closely intertwined with evangelization efforts and the establishment of churches led by pastors appointed by the VOC. According to the book "Early Educators in Developing Countries" by Kroeskamp, the VOC paid great attention to educational issues in Indonesia, in line with the directives of the Governor General and the Council of the Dutch East India Company in 1617. During this period, churches and schools were intricately connected, with schools seen as ideal places for religious development. In addition, schools were considered as instruments for fostering social cohesion in relation to VOC goals. Thus, educational policy reflects a combination of religious, socio-political and economic interests (Kroeskamp, 1974: 9-10).

The shortage of teaching staff arose because Christian religious education was mainly carried out by the church, under the guidance of a number of Dutch priests. To overcome this shortage, teachers were given a dual role, simultaneously caring for churches and schools. Although there were teachers, formal theological education and schools for native Christian teachers did not exist during the 17th and

18th centuries. All Dutch priests who were sent to Indonesia underwent preparation at the Seminarium Indicum which was founded in Leiden between 1622-1632 (Jan Sihar Aritonang, 1999:64). These teachers are only facilitators, limited to teaching predetermined material provided by the school or church. They are strictly prohibited from developing their own teaching materials. Kroeskamp emphasized that the VOC had indeed made significant efforts to build a school system, including Christian religious education (PAK), by preparing various essential aspects. This preparation includes the establishment of an educational system, determining the language used for teaching, recruiting teachers and students, developing pedagogical approaches (curriculum, teaching methods, school schedules, and educational facilities), providing supervision, and increasing cooperation between schools. However, it turns out that these preparations were heavily influenced by Western ideology which considered itself superior to colonial nations. During this time, the administration of the education system was heavily influenced by the church, with schools functioning as tools of government power. The VOC financed the entire school system and entrusted the implementation of educational policies and school supervision to the priests in accordance with church regulations. It is evident that the establishment of schools was not motivated by recognition of the fundamental need for education to free society from ignorance, poverty and oppression. (Kroeskamp & Weitjens, 1999)

During the VOC era, teachers had the dual responsibility of teaching in schools and fulfilling the duties of preachers, caretakers of the sick, and church pastors. They hold church services every Sunday, lead catechism classes, and perform various other church-related duties. However, these teachers do not receive specific professional education for this multifaceted role. Prior to their training as teachers, they usually underwent additional instruction in parsonages or sometimes received tutoring from government officials, focusing on areas such as psalm singing, religious education, and reading. The quality of school education really depends on the intelligence and character of the teacher.

Despite their low income, teachers at that time were dedicated to their work. In Batavia, teachers were allowed to accept voluntary gifts from parents, except from the poor and slaves, and even their own children were taught free of charge (Kroeskamp, 1974: 13-15). Education, both general and religious, was only given to students who were children of Christian parents, regardless of whether they were Dutch or non-Dutch. Non-Christians are not prohibited from attending, but they are sometimes encouraged to continue their education elsewhere. However, since 1780, Christians and non-Christians have been separated.

Many private schools were founded during this period to meet the needs of Dutch VOC employees who preferred not to have their children mix with poor children or slave children who attended VOC-owned schools. Mardijkers, a community of freed slaves, followed suit. In 1674, there were 18 private schools in Batavia, 6 of which were managed by the Dutch and 12 by Mardijkers (Kroeskamp, 1974: 15-16). This description highlights how discriminatory attitudes have influenced the establishment of discriminatory schools, both in the general education environment and in the realm of Christian religious education.

The curriculum is based on the Church Regulations of 1643, which outline the duties of a teacher. However, due to a shortage of teachers, the curriculum could not

be fully developed. Significant changes occurred in the 18th century when pedagogical issues received great attention in Europe. In 1778, students began to be divided into three classes based on their progress. Third grade focuses on learning the alphabet and spelling, second grade covers reading, writing, catechism, and singing, and first grade combines arithmetic with other subjects. During this period, teaching methods relied primarily on rote memorization, especially in Malay, Portuguese and Dutch school languages. Critical thinking methods were not widely used in teaching until the mid-19th century. Instead, traditional teaching methods prevail, with knowledge transmitted from one teacher to another. In terms of the school schedule, initially learning was carried out for four hours per day, which was later expanded to six hours. Wednesday and Saturday are designated as play days for students, and school holidays are aligned with national holidays.

Educational materials mostly consist of textbooks, as no information was found regarding equipment and other school materials, except in Batavia. School books were obtained from the Netherlands based on a list of requested items submitted through the VOC office in Batavia. However, due to the large distance between Amsterdam and Batavia, the delivery of these books was often delayed. The books were written in three languages: Dutch, Malay, and Portuguese, sometimes causing difficulties when a book was suddenly in Spanish (Kroeskamp, 1974: 16-21).

Supervision of schools was initially under the responsibility of da'i, who would visit schools in their respective areas twice a year. In Batavia, supervision was stricter, because the preacher would be accompanied by elders and representatives of the central government during the visit. The chaplain will assess the results of religious education by individually engaging students in catechisms, confessions of faith, and other relevant topics. They will monitor students' progress in reading and writing and determine when students reach the maximum age for learning, thereby completing their education. Other parties involved in school supervision include sick visitors, lay lecturers, and traders. However, two general objections are raised regarding this method of control: first, the inspectors do not have sufficient knowledge of the work, because they can identify teacher errors but cannot provide solutions. In Batavia, supervision was carried out by the Church Council (Kroeskamp, 1974: 21).

### **Christian Religious Education during Dutch Rule**

After the transfer of political power from the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to the Dutch government on January 1 1800, the Dutch government took over responsibility for church maintenance and Christian religious education. The introduction of mission institutions from the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland further enriched Christian religious education efforts. When there was a transition from the VOC to the Dutch government, there was a decrease in the number of teachers joining the congregation, so the responsibility was taken over by lay teachers. The Dutch Missionary Society (NZG) attempted to establish a school to train church teachers, but unfortunately this effort was unsuccessful.

During the first half of the 19th century, native education received little attention from the colonial government, as their primary focus was on making profits and promoting economic development that primarily benefited the Dutch, rather than prioritizing the advancement of the native population under their rule.

The Dutch Parliament encouraged the colonial government in its colonies to establish a school system that could meet the needs of universal education (Kroeskamp, 1974: 9-10).

Education based on Christian awareness is revitalized through da'wah (zending) efforts. Many church members in the Netherlands support their work in Indonesia by donating money to missionary causes, some even dedicating themselves to being missionaries and teachers simultaneously. For example, in the 1840s and 1850s, Roskott and Graafland established teachers' schools in Ambon and Minahasa respectively, while many village schools were established in the area. Roskott and Graafland adopted an innovative approach to improving the skills of school teachers by incorporating agricultural and arts education programs into the curriculum. In addition, Graafland developed a monthly magazine as an ongoing source of information and guidance for village teachers. This effort was supported by the climate of openness and freedom in reading newspapers at that time (Kroeskamp, 1974: 9-10).

In Tanawangko, Minahasa (1854-1883), Graafland ran a school for prospective teachers as well as prospective religious teachers. He provides religious studies and biblical scholarship, promoting a process of awareness that deepens Christian values. Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions, and engage in constructive criticism, rather than simply note down or memorize information. Education goes beyond the classroom, encompassing disciplined yet flexible boarding life. Students are taught etiquette, health and hygiene practices, and practical skills. For Graafland, beliefs and religion need to be integrated into daily life and reflected in all aspects of behavior (Posumah-Santosa, 1998: 154-155).

Within the Zending organization itself, education is given to zendelings (European missionaries) with the aim of equipping them to teach religion to native people who have recently converted. Accepting candidates for zendeling involves considering important requirements such as having good character, living out true faith, having a calling to evangelization, demonstrating knowledge of a high level of catechism education, being in good physical and spiritual health, and demonstrating mental resilience to face various challenges and pressures (Randwijk, 1989: 581).

In Eastern Indonesia, Traditional Teacher Education Schools (STOVIL) were established after 1867 in various locations such as Ambon, Minahasa (originally founded in 1851 by N. Graafland in Tanawangko, then moved to Tomohon), Sangihe Talaud Islands, and Timor. In addition, a two-year evangelical education school or religious teacher school was established in Parausorat for the Batak region, followed by the establishment of a seminary in Pansur Napitu in 1883 and another in Narumonda (1905-1919). On the island of Java, the Depok Seminary was founded, and in 1867 there was an attempt by Anthing to open a teacher's school, although it was ultimately disbanded. Among these schools, Depok Seminary was considered the most ecumenical (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 30-34).

Depok Seminary founded by J.A. Schuurman, with the support of P. Janz in 1878, followed the traditional pattern of educating young people from various corners of Indonesia to become teachers and instructors of the congregation until 1926. Education at the Depok Seminary lasted for 4 years, with a weekly workload of 23 hours. The curriculum covers a wide range of general subjects and theological

topics, including commentaries, introductions and dogmatics, practical subjects, church history, history of zending (missions), and the history of Islam and pagan religions. The language of instruction at Depok Seminary is Malay (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 30-31).

The seminary in Pansur Napitu operates under the Zending Rheinische Mission, led by P.H. Johannsen. Initially, the duration of education was 2 years, but it was extended to 4 years in 1879. Johannsen taught all theological subjects at the seminary. Since 1883, the seminary has also offered a two-year program for native priests. The curriculum follows the Barmen pattern, focusing on Biblical subjects, with little emphasis on Old Testament studies. It included knowledge of the catechism, practical theology, apologetics, and church history, while dogmatics was absent, possibly to promote ecumenical openness. In 1900 the seminary was moved to Sipoholon (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 32-33).

In Eastern Indonesia, several STOVIL were established in Ambon, Tomohon, and Kupang, based on the Decree of the King of the Netherlands in 1867, which established the position of Native Pastor (Inlandsh leraar). Graduates from these schools served as native ministers in branch congregations, and some were entrusted to preside over native resorts. Their title is vicar, giving them the authority to administer baptisms and Holy Communion. The implemented curriculum focuses on the most important parts of the history of the Bible, especially the life of Jesus, summaries of the contents of the books of the Bible, interpretation and explanation of parts of the Holy Scriptures (especially those from the New Testament), religious principles and Christian Knowledge, teachings ethics, and a brief summary of the history of the Christian Church, with emphasis on the Age of Reformation and the origins and principles of Protestantism. Practical exercises in delivering catechisms and sermons are also included. Old Testament teachings are limited, and there is no significant emphasis on church history and zending history. Catechisms and creedal texts do not receive sufficient attention in the curriculum (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 34-35).

The increase in theological education, including Christian religious teacher education, in Indonesia can be observed as a response to the impending independence of the churches in the country and the desire to establish equality between Christian theologians and scholars in other fields. This can be seen from the establishment of several theological colleges in Indonesia. These institutions provide continuing education for graduates of two-year teachers' schools where the language of instruction is Dutch. The leading theological schools include a six-year theological education in Yogyakarta, founded by Zending Gereformeed in 1925. Dr. J.H. Bavinck and Rev. D. Baker serves as a lecturer at this institution. The establishment of this school was proposed by R.S. Nimpoeno, who is of Priyayi descent and believes that teacher graduates face limited acceptance among the upper classes in Java due to their limited education. In addition, members of the European clergy did not fit into the local environment. The school curriculum covered topics such as animism, Hinduism, Islam, theosophy, and Dutch literature (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 114-115).

In Malang, East Java, Bale Wijata was founded in 1927 for the benefit of the church in East Java. Some of his early students were J. Mattheus Jr., Mardja Sir, and Drija Mestaka, who later became lecturers at the school. The curriculum at Bale

Wijata also includes Greek and English. Lecturers at this institution include Rev. C.W. Nortier and Dr. B.M. Schuurman. The theological education given here is adapted to the Javanese way of thinking (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 115-116).

In 1934, the Theological College (Hoogere Theologische School; HTS) was founded in Bogor, then moved to Jakarta in 1936, and is now known as the Jakarta Theological College. This school was founded by Hendrik Kraemer, B.M. Schuurman, and Johannes Warneck. It is an ecumenical institution that symbolizes the growing unity among various mission organizations, youth churches, and Protestant churches. The education provided at this school is considered equivalent to academic education in fields such as law, medicine, and engineering. It lasts for six years, based on the MULO/SMP certificate, with a focus on intellectual and mental development. The school also implements a mentoring system in the dormitory. During the first two years, MULO graduates must increase their knowledge to AMS/SMA level. Dutch is the language of instruction, and the curriculum includes in loco theological studies. Greek and Hebrew were compulsory subjects (Hoekama, 1860-1960: 118-120).

### **Christian Religious Education during Indonesian Independence and after that**

After Indonesia's independence and beyond, many theological educational institutions were established throughout the country (Weitjens, Op. Cit., 375-376), with Christian religious education considered a component of theological education. Important advances have occurred in theological education. In eastern Indonesia, the GPM Synod in 1948 stated that every church leader, regardless of level of education, had the same authority in the ministry of the Word and sacraments. In 1960, the quality of theological education was improved, leading to the establishment of the Theological Academy. Prospective pastors are expected to have general knowledge that enables them to understand and address social issues in addition to theological understanding. In Minahasa, a theological college was founded in 1962 in Tomohon as a Christian University faculty known as the "Wenas" Faculty of Theology at UKI. On the island of Java, the development of theological education can be observed at the Theological College (HTS) in Jakarta. Dutch, which served as the language of instruction, was replaced by Indonesian in 1946. Most of the lecturers are alumni of the institution, and P.D. Lautuihamallo was appointed as the first Indonesian lecturer. In 1954, the name of the institution was changed to Higher Theological School. In 1958, advanced study programs were introduced, and the first doctorate was awarded to Fridolin Measure.

During his visit to Indonesia in 1951, C. Stanley Smith, envoy for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (FTESEA), observed that most schools in Indonesia were Bible schools with low academic standards. He considers Higher Theological College (referring to Jakarta Theological College) as the best theological educational institution in India, comparable to Nanking Theological Seminary (NTS) in China and leading seminaries in India. The academic standards at the Higher Theological Seminary are considered equivalent to a Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degree from NTS. However, Smith notes a shortage of professors and a dearth of Indonesian or Chinese literature at HTS (Pearson, 2010: 161-162).

As previously mentioned, Christian religious education is considered solely as a component of theological education. Thus, the primary responsibility for providing

religious education to Christians in churches and schools rests with the clergy. Although pastors do not directly teach Sunday School, their role is fulfilled by teachers or church elders. Christian religious teachers continue to serve as assistant pastors. For example, Robert R. Boehlke notes that before World War II, even full-time teachers at HKBP Schools were not allowed to lead children's services or Sunday School. Apart from that, there is no different Sunday School curriculum. Children's worship follows the same procedures as adult worship. Boehlke concluded that almost a century before the arrival of Elmer G. Homrighausen in 1955, there had been little change in the conceptualization and practice of Christian religious education in Indonesia (Boehlke, 2011: 769-770).

Boehlke emphasized that Christian religious education in Indonesia experienced conceptual and practical changes under Homrighausen's influence. Homrighausen emphasizes a dialogical approach that integrates education, religion and true human nature. This approach requires individuals to understand the reasons behind their obedience to God and the meaning of their existence. Homrighausen rejected approaches that placed too much emphasis on psychology and pedagogy, as well as rigid orthodox and liberal theology. He attempted to reconcile intellectual integrity with Christianity. All aspects of religious education must involve a careful examination of the realities of the world, humanity, and the religion being taught (Boehlke, 2011: 771-773). Christian religious education then received increasing attention, as seen in efforts to develop curricula in churches and schools, as well as initiatives to recruit qualified Christian Religious Education teachers. However, the author believes that the development of Christian religious education has not been fully optimal, especially considering the rapid advances in technology in the current era. Compared to theologians, there is still a shortage of Christian Religious Education (PAK) experts in Indonesia.

### **Historical Analysis of Christian Religious Education**

This section provides an analysis of various aspects related to the pattern of Christian religious education throughout the history of Christianity in Indonesia, including vision and mission, objectives, learning content, teaching staff, learning methods, learning resources, and learning tools.

The author underlines the absence of a clear vision and mission from the VOC (Dutch East India Company) as an institution entrusted by the Dutch government to carry out evangelization, which includes Christian religious education. The VOC often prioritized trade interests over the spread of the Bible or the promotion of Christian religious education in its colonies. Likewise, during Dutch rule in Indonesia, education did not receive significant attention. The development of Christian religious education mainly fell on missionary institutions from Europe. This weakness persisted even after independence. However, having a clear and strong vision and mission is very important for education providers to achieve desired and optimal results. Christian religious education cannot effectively free students from various obstacles without being guided by a clear and solid vision and mission. A vision represents a future state that is desired to be realized within a certain time period. This vision should inspire all stakeholders involved in the education process. To realize this vision, a mission is needed that demands concrete efforts that are measurable, verifiable and can be continuously evaluated.

Articulating the vision and mission, as stated by W. Gulo, requires considering internal and external factors, as well as anticipating various trends in educational development (Gulo, 2006:95). Without a clear and strong vision and mission that inspires all students, the implementation of education will not foster progress and liberation from factors that hinder students, such as ignorance, poverty, injustice, oppression, and so on.

During the VOC period and the Dutch colonial period, as well as in the contemporary period, the provision of education, including Christian religious education, was often seen as a means of instilling certain teaching patterns in students. Informal discussions with Christian religious teachers in Jakarta reveal that their goal is to instill a certain set of teachings in their students. The perception of schools as institutions for instilling certain doctrines can result in the practice of indoctrination, where memorization is prioritized in the learning process. In his book "Poor Education", Darmaningtyas also examines the function of this type of education in Indonesia. According to him, based on Ortega y Gasset's views, education must involve the spread of ideas that enable individuals to make choices, improve their lives, and not solely focus on making individuals pious and obedient to religious laws (Darmaningtyas, 2004: 27) . Religious education must go beyond the transmission of knowledge and encourage active reflection on real life experiences, fostering an appreciation of life values, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to contribute positively to society.

The availability of curriculum and religious learning materials during the VOC period, the Dutch colonial period, and after independence shows a lack of seriousness in responding to the challenges of religious education in Indonesia. Christian religious education has historically been considered part of general education and, even today, remains connected to theological education. Although there is now recognition that Christian religious education and theological education are different but closely related disciplines, there is still less attention given to curriculum advancement in Christian religious education (Boehlke, 1998: 37-68).

The scarcity of curricula can also be attributed to the shortage of Christian religious educators and the lack of efforts by priests and missionaries during the VOC and Dutch colonial eras to promote the independence and professional development of Christian teachers. During that time, these teachers were appointed as assistant pastors and were never considered equals in their work. The content of the curriculum alone is not enough to answer the social problems that exist in Indonesia. Apart from that, the lack of teaching staff, learning resources, educational facilities and funds from the VOC era until now has hampered the expected development of Christian religious education. These limitations have prevented Christian religious education from taking a more prominent role in liberation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Christian religious education practitioners must adapt to the context and realities of the developing environment, including discussions surrounding the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Christian religious education must be based on an attitude of supporting the oppressed, facing the challenges of ignorance, injustice and poverty. Therefore, Christian religious education teachers must

actively develop responsive religious education that responds to the context of oppression wherever it appears. Christian religious education must be based on pedagogical-theological principles so that it becomes a guide and continues to advance its liberating function through establishing a clear vision and mission, goals, objectives, graduate profile, curriculum, facilities, funding and other important components. Whatever the circumstances, Christian religious education teachers must be individuals who are called to their respective fields, persevering in their mission even though they do not have adequate resources. Christian religious education should not aim to convert Christians, but rather facilitate significant transformation in the religious experience and quality of students.

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