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2019 REA Annual Meeting, November 1-3
Toronto, Ontario

Postcolonial Imagination and Liberating Interdependence in Christian Religious Education for Divided Societies

Abstract

This paper identifies the potential of combining postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence in religious education conducted by a community of faith located in divided societies, by using literature-based review and analysis in reference to postcolonial theory. Postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence lead to intercultural education which promotes dialogue, liberation, and social justice in the Indonesian context. It creates a space for Indigenous peoples, their stories, and their cultures, as well as for Indonesian women to share their life stories in religious education.

A. Introduction

Colonialism in Indonesia by European Western countries contributes to the marginalization of local cultures, a culture of silence in education, and divisions in society. This chasm is growing and becoming sharper in the present time due to democracy, globalization, and capitalism, as well as neocolonialism. Addressing this context, I assert the potential of postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence as a pedagogical practice in Christian religious education. Postcolonial imagination creates a space for the stories of Indigenous people and their cultures, as well as the everyday stories of Indonesian women, as significant sources of learning about God. With respect to diversity, liberating interdependence, a concept borrowed from Musa W. Dube, an African feminist postcolonial theologian, provides a framework to connect the story of the Bible with the many stories of the Indonesian people who come from various backgrounds. The relational aspect of these differences, namely ethnicity, religion, political ideology or preference, gender, and many others, matters. Both postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence can inform an intercultural pedagogy for the church, aiming toward liberation in the Indonesian context.

Contacts and encounters between the colonizers and colonized have shaped the Indonesian culture. The Dutch colonized Indonesia for three hundred and fifty years and influenced many aspects of Indonesian life, including Christianity. Christianity, including Protestantism, was planted by the westerners with their agendas.¹ The role of missionaries during colonialism as school and church teachers affects the way the church conducts education. The church here refers to the Protestant church that was established during Dutch colonialism in the

¹ John A. Titaley, "From Abandonment to Blessing: The Theological Presence of Christianity in Indonesia," in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed. Sebastian C.H. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 86.

seventeenth century, which was known as the *De Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indie* or *Indische Kerk*. Since the early twentieth century, this church has formed several ethnic Protestant churches, which are found in Minahasa, Maluku, East Nusa Tenggara, and Western Indonesia. In these churches, the only source of teaching is the Bible, which plays a vital role in people's lives. However, there is a gap between the Bible's message and the everyday life of the people. According to Tabita Kartika Christiani, an Indonesian theologian and Christian religious educator, this gap leads to a culture of silence in education, in which women feel reluctant to reflect on their lives as they read or hear the stories of the Bible.² This Bible-centered approach also provides no space for Indigenous cultures to be considered as an essential source for understanding God. A division occurs between the stories of the Bible and the people. This promotes a binary mindset in education between the church and everyday life; the church and the culture, and the sacred and the profane.

In *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World*, Pui-lan Kwok asserts that the concept of "dialogical imagination" describes the process of creative hermeneutics in Asia.³ It attempts to open a space for the complexities, the multidimensional linkages, and the different levels of meaning that link the Bible to the Asian context, which includes Indonesia. This process involves an ongoing conversation among different religious and cultural traditions. For Kwok, a dialogical model takes into consideration both the written texts and oral discussions. In this regard, Mikhail M. Bakhtin's dialogism and *heteroglossia* are helpful to identify the church as a community with multiple discourses and to investigate how different groups of people create meaning out of the Bible from their diverse backgrounds.⁴ Kwok thus moves further toward a postcolonial imagination, where she combines historical, dialogical, and diasporic imagination. These are the three tasks that she believes are required for doing feminist theology as an Asian-American in the context of America.⁵ I build on this to create a method for postcolonial imagination by adding the level of Indigenous imagination. Through Indigenous imagination, local cultures can serve as an essential source of imagination in addition to the Bible.

In line with this, liberating interdependence serves as an approach to deal with the many margins that exist in divided societies. Boyung Lee, an Asian-American postcolonial theologian and religious educator, utilizes Dube's notion of liberating interdependence. She claims that church communities should move beyond multicultural pedagogy and move toward a liberating interdependence through intercultural education.⁶ Lee argues that the multiculturalism that has characterized the mainline churches promotes the notion of many margins and one center. With liberating interdependence, the church will become an interculturally engaging church that acknowledges the differences, but also the interconnectedness, of different stories, histories,

² Tabita Kartika Christiani, "Biarkan Mereka Bercerita: Pendidikan Kristiani dan Keadilan Gender" in *Perempuan Indonesia dalam Karya dan Pengabdian* (The Work and the Vocation of the Indonesian Women), eds. Deetje Rotinsulu and Mariska Lauterboom (Jakarta: PT. BPK. Gunung Mulia, 2014), 15.

³ Pui-lan Kwok, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 12, 13.

⁴ See Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981).

⁵ Pui-lan Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

⁶ Boyung Lee, *Transforming Congregations through Community: Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 129-30. See also Boyung Lee, "Toward a Liberating Interdependence: Exploring an Intercultural Pedagogy," *Religious Education* 105, no. 3 (May-June): 283-98.

economic systems, political structures, cultural texts, races, classes, and genders. Thus, in intercultural dialogue, there is no longer a center and a margin; no one will claim the place at the center.

Combining postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence create a space for diverse narratives to serve as the essential sources of teaching and learning. It will also provide a brave space for bodily practices to be a site of reflection and learning. An example of this is when, in Indonesia, people use the Bible as a venerated sacred object and put it on the head of the newborn babies to protect them.⁷ A body can function as a text or a narrative. Bodily practices can be a site of learning and a way of knowing that leads to coexistences in divided societies.

In revealing the potential of postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence in Christian religious education, I will first examine the history of colonialism in Indonesia, as it contributes to the marginalization of local cultures, a culture of silence, and the division in society, using a postcolonial lens. I will specifically refer to education and the role of the Dutch missionaries. Then, I will review and analyze the concept of postcolonial imagination through the work of Kwok and liberating interdependence from Dube and Lee. Their work serves as the primary literature in my research. In this section, I will also propose postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence as a pedagogical practice/approach for Indonesian Christian religious education. Lastly, I will draw a brief conclusion and suggests topics for further research.

B. Indonesian Colonialism: Education, Discrimination, and Division

A growing chasm exists everywhere around the world, including in Indonesia. Social divisions often relate to religious preferences, political ideology, ethical orientation, cultural identity, ethnicity, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, amongst other factors. Recently in Indonesia, there have been many conflicts that involve religion and ethnicity, as well as political ideology and preference, especially during the latest 2019 Presidential election. It seems that divisions characterize Indonesian society. These divisions generate a critical context for the Christian religious education that is offered by the church. The church (as a religious educator) needs to give serious attention to this: how to promote dialogue across these divisions and boundaries within the society, as it is also present in educational settings. In order to address division, as well as discrimination and marginalization in education, it is necessary to examine the history of colonialism and how it has affected the way the Protestant church conducts its religious pedagogy.

Indonesia, although it is known for having the largest Muslim population country in the world, is a nation that diverse in its culture and religion. The government guarantees religious freedom and acknowledges six official religions. However, there are many other belief systems that are adhered by the people. This includes the religions and spiritualities of Indigenous groups, which were subordinated during colonialism. During the nineteenth century, missionaries used considerable pressure to convert the ethnic and Indigenous groups. They marginalized Indigenous religions and declared these beliefs to be superstitions.

Besides subjugating local groups and their cultures/spiritualities, the marginalization of women, and a culture of silence in education, colonialism also contributes to many chasms in

⁷ This is a common practice in Eastern Indonesia, such as the Moluccas and East Nusa Tenggara.

society. The *Priyayi* and *Santris* classes existed prior to colonization, but as Dutch colonized Indonesia, the discrepancy between them became even more apparent. Hence, the *Santris*, a devout Muslim class, became the dominant force in the colonial period, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unlike the *Santris*, the *Priyayis* or the Muslim aristocratic class, allied with the colonizer.⁸ This is one of many divisions. There was also a sharp division created between Christians and Muslims during Dutch colonialism.

The Dutch favored the Christians, such as those in Ambon-Moluccas, an island located in Eastern Indonesia. According to Frank L. Cooley, a Presbyterian missionary who worked in Indonesia for 33 years, there were noticeable differences between the Christian and non-Christian villages in Central Moluccas.⁹ The Christian villages were more orderly, sanitary, and stable. The Ambonese Christians were also better educated and seemed to enjoy a higher standard of living. The public buildings in the Christian areas were kept in a better condition, as were the residences and village streets. Christianity offered a certain type of uplift and stability to the village life; becoming a Christian meant having a new social status, compared to one's non-Christian neighbors. Cooley contends that the Dutch considered Christians to be a separate and higher class than the non-Christians; he writes, "this special status carried certain coveted privileges in the form of educational and employment opportunities in the Dutch commercial, governmental, and military establishments, not offered to or taken by the local Muslims." They (the Christians) were called *Belanda Hitam*, the Black Dutchmen. Thus, Ambonese Christians became closely associated with the Dutch colonial regime.¹⁰ Many divisions were created (or became sharper and more evident) during the Dutch colonial period. Divisions tie to religion (Christian and non-Christian), class (*Priyayi*, *Santri*), *adat* or Indigenous culture (*adat* elites mostly men, whereas women were considered second-class citizens), and ethnicity (*pribumi* or natives and the *non-pribumi*). Division also relates to distribution of power between the ruler and the ruled, the colonizer and colonized. It also relates to discrimination and marginalization. Amidst all of this, education by the Dutch played an important role.

The Dutch first provided general education for Indonesians when JB van Heutsz established the *Volkscholen* or village schools, in 1907 (the Dutch colonized Indonesia since 1605).¹¹ In education, the role of the Dutch missionaries was significant. They served as both school and religious teachers. From the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, the period of the Dutch East India Company, missionaries not only spread the Gospel, but they also served as schoolteachers and catechetics. They perceived themselves not only as teachers but also as the guardians of the uneducated people.¹² The standard method used by missionaries in education was memorization, with no opportunity for the development of critical thinking skills. Students memorized the principal doctrines of Christianity from the Bible, without understanding their

⁸ Soe Hok Gie, *Di Bawah Lentera Merah: Riwayat Sarekat Islam Semarang 1917-1920* (Jakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1999), 58.

⁹ Frank L. Cooley, "Altar and Throne in Central Moluccan Societies," *Indonesia*, no. 2 (October 1966): 135-156. The Rev. Frank L. Cooley is a Presbyterian Pastor and mission worker who worked in Indonesia for 33 years (1952-1985). He wrote many books regarding Indonesian history and is considered as the foremost Protestant historian of Christianity in Indonesia.

¹⁰ Cooley, *Indonesia*, 147-9.

¹¹ R.B. Cribb and Audrey Kahin, *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (Lanham Maryland, Toronto, Oxford: The Scarecrow, 2004), 132.

¹² Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts 1596-1950* (Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993), 24. Th. van Den End, *Ragi Carita: Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia 1, 1500-1860* (Jakarta: PT. BPK. Gunung Mulia, 1988), 73, 67

meaning. This leads to dualism in education, where the students experienced the separation of the Bible and everyday life, as well as the separation of mind and body in a classroom setting.

In preparing teachers and preachers, the education given was very basic. A missionary would take boys and girls, give them an elementary education, and discipline them. Moreover, they would perform household tasks, too. Aware of the significant influence of the social status that comes from gaining congregants, Th. van den End and Jan Sihar Aritonang describe that the missionaries mostly chose the children from the upper class to be educated as teachers and preachers.¹³ Boys were baptized and employed as teachers, while girls became brides for the missionary assistants or the Christian village chiefs. Education was not entirely intended to liberate the locals, especially women. In the late nineteenth century, Raden Ajeng Kartini, a girl from the island of Java, advocated for the education of the Indonesian girls/women. She was only allowed to attend school until she was twelve years old, even though she was from an aristocratic family. Then, she was secluded to prepare for her marriage, before authority over her was transferred from her parents to her husband. There was minimal education offered to marginalized girls/women. Schooling was for the aristocratic class but was only at the elementary level. The education system that was established during the Dutch colonial period contributed to discrimination and inequality, including that which was provided by the Protestant church. The missionaries organized the church in patriarchal and hierarchical order to maintain the power relationship between the colonizer and colonized.¹⁴

In sum, Dutch colonialism affected the Indonesian peoples' lives and culture. There are positive and negative aspects that came with the mission work. The Dutch colonial rule and the missionaries helped to establish the Indonesian education system, but at the same time, they prohibited the existence of Indigenous cultures and restrained the roles of women, which, in return contributed to division, discrimination, and marginalization within the society.¹⁵

C. The Potential of Combining Postcolonial Imagination and Liberating Interdependence

In bringing the notion of postcolonial imagination to the field of Christian religious education, an awareness of social location is necessary, as it determines access to languages and how people use them. An awareness of the role of power and its dynamics in a classroom is also needed. A religious educator must recognize the different social location of the students in accessing both religious/Biblical and cultural languages. Moreover, understanding *heteroglossia* as the many voices/languages leads to an understanding of the Bible as a "talking book."¹⁶ According to Kwok, an image of the Bible as a talking book will invite "polyphonic theological discourses and ongoing dialogues."¹⁷ A teacher thus needs to consider the different backgrounds and hopes held by the Bible's dialogue partners (the students). Borrowing Mary Elizabeth Moore's concept of "intersection," every person is located in an intersection.¹⁸ Moore argues that

¹³ Th. van den End and Jan S. Aritonang, "1800-2005: A National Overview," in *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, ed. Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 158.

¹⁴ van den End, *Ragi Carita*, 34-35. See also van den End and Aritonang, *1800-2005*, 155.

¹⁵ See S. Nasution, *Sejarah Pendidikan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1994). See Titaley, "From Abandonment," 86.

¹⁶ Kwok, *Discovering the Bible*, 40.

¹⁷ Kwok, *Discovering the Bible*, 5.

¹⁸ Mary Elizabeth Moore, *Education for Continuity & Change: A New Model for Christian Religious Education* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 110.

education must begin in the middle of a person's life, which she calls the intersection. It begins where the student meets other students, faces the future, probes the past, confronts contemporary issues, and so forth. The starting point of a church's pedagogy is neither the Bible nor the present setting, but an intersection. Every student is located in a specific intersection that might be different from that of another student.

I envision this intersection as a hybrid third-space; a place where the postcolonial imagination occurs. It is a space where the words in a living conversation will always denote an open-ended answer. Here, the teacher acknowledges the uniqueness of each person or context. It is the site of a complex struggle, as well as a place of meaning-making.¹⁹ In dialogue, the meaning is made at the border between a text and a reader, society and an individual, between utterances, and divisions. Here, boundaries are everywhere, and dialogue is always an encounter with boundaries. It is a place where those who are voiceless can alter their identity, and power relations can shift as a result of negotiations. The marginalized can speak and assert their agency. As Homi Bhabha claims, the "third space displaces the histories that constitute it and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom."²⁰ Dialogical imagination in a hybrid third-space can help to understand the use of the Bible alongside local narratives. It provides a space for the women and all who are oppressed to acknowledge or to channel their voices in many different ways. This form of imagination has the potential to be developed in the Indonesian postcolonial context.

Postcolonial imagination can be a strategy for reading the stories of the Bible, Indigenous cultures, and the stories of different people in connection with one another. Therefore, besides dialogical, historical, and diasporic imagination, Indigenous imagination is necessary for the Indonesian context. The threefold approach to imagination will become a fourfold imagination. Indigenous imagination provides a space for the teacher and the student to imagine and reflect upon the Indigenous cultures that bear local wisdom in their everyday lives, alongside the Biblical narratives.

In postcolonial imagination, the body is a site of reflection; it is a text. In this regard, I will expand Bakhtin's notion of dialogic imagination in "The Discourse in the Novel," as well as Kwok's postcolonial imagination to include dialogue between the Bible as an object and the bodies of the people who use it. Here, intertextuality/intersubjectivity occurs between the people as a cultural text and the Bible as a sacred text. People's bodily and emotionally behaviors toward the Bible are narratives, where they can learn something. The Bible, as described by Charles E. Farhadian, drawing on his ethnographic work in Papua, an Eastern island in Indonesia, is not only a source of knowledge or an identity marker but is also an object that can protect the people both spiritually and physically; it is a powerful object. People will put the Bible at the top of the head of their newborn babies and will bring it with them when they travel far from home and are uncertain of their surroundings, whether or not they have read it. Postcolonial imagination provides a space to reflect and imagine these practices as a source of learning about God. Here, the students do not imagine with their minds only, but also with their

¹⁹ See Ira D. Mangililo, "When Rahab and Indonesian Christian Women Meet in the Third Space," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 31, no. 1 (2015): 64.

²⁰ Jonathan Rutherford, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 211. See also Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge), 1994.

bodies. Their bodies are the imagining bodies.²¹ Their bodies record things and keep memories, which is valuable for educational purposes. Postcolonial imagination leads to an embodied pedagogy that involves imagining bodies.

Regarding the relationship between the teacher and the student, postcolonial imagination leads to equality or at least an acknowledgment of the power dynamics in a classroom. Dialogue can be interpreted as a hierarchical inversion of traditional student/teacher roles, as well as a relationship of collaboration among participants. The role of a teacher/pastor that is too often dominant and can even forsake the role of the student can be viewed differently. The teacher and the student, the pastor and the congregant, have equal access to meaning-making concerning their Christian lives through the narratives of their bodies and their lives, the Bible, and the Indigenous culture.

In support of postcolonial imagination, liberating interdependence can serve as an approach to deal with the many margins that exist in divided societies. Dube, who coined the term liberating interdependence, draws from the historical experiences and strategies of resistance of Two-Thirds World women. She proposes a move toward what she contends to be decolonizing feminist practices in Biblical studies. In using “decolonizing” as a practice, Dube resists both patriarchal and imperial oppression to cultivate a space for “liberating interdependence.” It is an approach that highlights the interconnectedness of different narratives and relationships within both specific and global contexts that recognize and affirm the dignity of all.²² Dube proposes a reading of Biblical texts for liberating interdependence by using decolonizing as a postcolonial approach.

Acknowledging diversities in culture as well as the realities of colonialism and imperialism, Lee recommends a model of interculturalism that leads to a liberating interdependence. This model is an alternative to the current dominant approach of multiculturalism in mainline churches, which is individualistic and colonial in the way it engages with different racial and ethnic communities.²³ Lee states that the prefix “inter,” in both interculturality and interdependence, signifies a relationship and a dialogue between two or more different communities. Moving beyond multicultural pedagogy, which is individualistic and colonial, toward liberating interdependence is necessary. A postcolonial intercultural pedagogy can create liberating interdependence, and vice versa the liberating interdependence is necessary for intercultural pedagogy. Lee opts for an intercultural approach that reaches across cultures and boundaries in different ways rather than a multicultural one where marginal communities “are not necessarily in communication with one another, except as mediated by the dominant group.”²⁴ In liberating interdependence, the small and marginalized groups have a space to talk and connect one another. Therefore, moving from a multicultural to intercultural framework is necessary.

In an intercultural education, liberating interdependence and postcolonial imagination serve not only as a reading strategy for the Bible but also as an approach to reading the Bible together with Indigenous stories, such as myths and folklore. Indonesia is rich in its Indigenous stories, and they need to be used as a significant resource for religious education. Furthermore, the bodies of the people (the students) are also texts or narratives. Dialogue can occur between

²¹ See James B. Steeves, *Imagining Bodies: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Imagination* (Duquesne University Press, 2004), 6, 157.

²² Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist*, 111, 185-6.

²³ Lee, *Transforming Congregations*, 129-30.

²⁴ Lee, “Toward Liberating,” 284.

the bodies of the people, the stories of the Bible, the stories of the Indigenous cultures, and the everyday life stories of the students. In this regard, a religious educator needs to pay attention to the body in the learning process. The body and emotion are as important as the mind in education.

Theological educators and ministers must pay serious attention to their education and ministry. Attention and intention toward freedom and social justice through liberating interdependence and postcolonial imagination are needed. This pedagogical model is an integrative approach of formation, reformation, and transformation of both individual and communities. In this regard, educators or ministers need to promote interaction and relationships among learners of different backgrounds and remain conscious of the value of interculturality. Postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence need to inform the curriculum of Christian religious education in the Indonesian context. It must be a postcolonial-imagination and liberating-interdependence-informed pedagogy. In this pedagogy, there is a bridging of the disciplinary divide between Biblical, theological, historical, cultural, and pedagogical trajectories. It is a pedagogical practice that seeks to uncover, examine, and challenge the colonial epistemological framework, logic, methodology, knowledge production, and representation in Indonesian Christian religious education.

D. Conclusion

Postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence have the potential to create an intercultural and interreligious education in divided societies such as Indonesia. It provides a brave space for the bodily practices, the many stories of the people (women), and the Indigenous cultures to serve as sources of reflection and learning that leads to coexistences in divided societies. Here, I envision a dialogical pedagogy that addresses the need for education in, from, or about religion or spirituality to foster dialogue across divisions or differences. It can also educate one about the Christian faith and remain hospitable to any form of dialogue with other faith traditions or spiritualities in the context of the diversity in Indonesia. This pedagogy will also help the educator to facilitate integrated learning, to challenge and question binary mindsets and dualism in education. Here, education always connects to the spiritual quest; ethical and spiritual values relate to critical thought and reason.²⁵

Amidst this, a religious educator needs to constantly ask about where (or what or how) God is in her/his teaching. A quest for God always needs to inform her/his pedagogy. As a religious educator for almost 20 years, I understand God as the one who surpasses the boundaries of the Western colonialism. God is both personal and communal. God is the one who is present through the culture of Indigenous groups. The local culture has something good and functional to offer as a source of learning about God and life. Here, the Bible is the inspired word of God, and God also speaks through other local narratives, not only that of the Israelites. God is at work in the entire world; the Spirit is actively present. God, the Sacred, who creates everything, penetrates God's creation in sacredness. God is the liberator who inspires and liberates religious educators to educate in ways that humanize and liberate. Furthermore, God is the one who acts "to decolonize, diversify and promote[s] counter-hegemonic social condition."²⁶

²⁵ See Hanan. A. Alexander, *Reclaiming Goodness: Education and the Spiritual Quest* (Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

²⁶ Emmanuel Yartekwei Amugi Lartey, *Postcolonializing God: New Perspectives on Pastoral and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2013), xiii.

Postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence as an approach not only functions to acknowledge the variety of voices that form languages, meanings, and identities, but it also helps to discern and to be sensitive to power relations and their dynamics. It then has the potential to become a liberating-postcolonial approach that is valuable to many fields, including in Christian religious education. Finally, it is significant to recognize that human situations, including educational settings, have power imbalances and that these should be resisted, so that the submerged voices can be brought out, and the power dynamics can be exposed. This is ongoing work rather than something that can be accomplished once and for all. What I have offered in this paper is a preliminary step towards more thorough research regarding (decolonizing) Christian religious education in the Indonesian context. Further research will include an in-depth analysis of Indonesia's history of colonialism employing postcolonial historiography, a study of its Indigenous cultures, and discerning the educational implications of postcolonial imagination and liberating interdependence through ethnographical research and the discipline of practical theology. I hope that in addressing and mapping Christian religious education in Indonesia, both in the present and the future, religious educators will always challenge colonialism and imperialism in their pedagogy.

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