

## ANABAPTIST MENNONITE CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF POSTMODERN EDUCATION: A PEACE-ORIENTED PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA

### CRÍTICA TEOLÓGICA CONTEXTUAL ANABAPTISTA MENONITA DA EDUCAÇÃO PÓS-MODERNA: UM MODELO PEDAGÓGICO ORIENTADO PARA A PAZ PARA ESCOLAS CRISTÃS NA INDONÉSIA

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#### Abstract

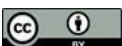
This article presents a contextual theological critique of postmodern education through the lens of Anabaptist Mennonite theology and explores its relevance for Christian education in Indonesia. Postmodern thought, with its rejection of meta-narratives and absolute moral values, has profoundly influenced global education, resulting in moral relativism, fragmented identities, and the marginalisation of biblical authority. By engaging in a constructive dialogue between postmodern epistemology (Lyotard, Foucault, Rorty) and the Anabaptist Mennonite theological perspective (Murphy, 1997; Yoder, 1972; Sawatsky, 1997; Gerbrandt, 1998), this study proposes a peace-oriented pedagogical model rooted in the incarnational presence of Christ, communal ethics, and non-violent theology. Using descriptive analytical and comparative theological methods, this study identifies the strengths of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition in reconstructing Christian Religious Education (CRE) for the Indonesian context, a multicultural society often faced with ethnic, religious, and cultural conflicts. The proposed peace-oriented contextual theological pedagogy bridges theology and practice by forming a holistic educational ethos that integrates biblical truth, communal character formation, and social reconciliation. This contribution enriches the global discussion on contextual theology, peace education, and Christian pedagogical renewal in the postmodern era.

**Keywords:** Contextual Theological Education. Anabaptist Mennonite Theology. Postmodernism. Peace-Oriented Pedagogy.

#### Resumo

*Este artigo apresenta uma crítica teológica contextual da educação pós-moderna através da lente da teologia menonita anabatista e explora sua relevância para a educação cristã na Indonésia. O pensamento pós-moderno, com sua rejeição de metanarrativas e valores morais absolutos, influenciou profundamente a educação global, resultando em relativismo moral, identidades fragmentadas e marginalização da autoridade bíblica. Ao estabelecer um diálogo construtivo entre a epistemologia pós-moderna (Lyotard, Foucault, Rorty) e a perspectiva teológica menonita anabatista (Murphy, 1997; Yoder, 1972; Sawatsky, 1997; Gerbrandt, 1998), este estudo propõe um modelo pedagógico orientado para a paz, enraizado na presença encarnacional de Cristo, na ética comunitária e na teologia não violenta. Utilizando métodos descritivos, analíticos e comparativos de teologia, este estudo identifica os pontos fortes da tradição anabatista-menonita na reconstrução da Educação Religiosa Cristã (ERC) para o contexto indonésio, uma sociedade multicultural frequentemente confrontada com conflitos étnicos, religiosos e culturais. A pedagogia teológica contextual proposta, orientada para a paz, estabelece uma ponte entre teologia e prática, formando um ethos educacional holístico que integra a verdade bíblica, a formação do caráter comunitário e a reconciliação social. Esta contribuição enriquece o debate global sobre teologia contextual, educação para a paz e renovação pedagógica cristã na era pós-moderna.*

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Teológica Contextual. Teologia Anabatista-Mennonita.



Christian Education in Indonesia. Moral Relativism.

*Pós-modernismo. Pedagogia Orientada para a Paz. Educação Cristã na Indonésia. Relativismo Moral.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, there have been major changes in education, especially in the way we view knowledge and culture. These changes have been influenced by postmodern ideas. The postmodern view of education questions the idea that there is only one correct way to understand something. They do not believe in the old belief that reason and logic can solve all problems. Instead, they value different perspectives, backgrounds, and stories. Therefore, education is now seen as a place where people explore different values and explore their personal identities, rather than as a way to build character based on a single, higher truth. (Jean-François Lyotard, 1984) In Christian education, especially in Indonesia, these changes have caused much concern. The loss of strong belief in the Bible and the lack of clear moral values among students point to a larger problem occurring throughout the world—people are becoming more focused on themselves and less on fixed truths. This situation has sparked new thinking about how Christian teaching can preserve the message of the Bible and good moral values in an ever-changing world. Postmodern ideas, as discussed by Jean-François Lyotard and Michel Foucault, challenge the grand narratives that once guided the understanding of knowledge in the West. (S. E. Kelly, 2017) Knowledge is not a neutral way of seeing the world—it is shaped by language, culture, and power. This idea, which questions how we know things, has changed the approach to modern teaching. Now, learning focuses more on understanding from different perspectives and giving students control, rather than following strict rules or rigid beliefs. While this can make education more inclusive and help people think critically, it can also weaken the moral and religious foundations that are important for Christian growth. In the case of Christian Religious Education in Indonesia, these ideas can challenge the spiritual values and deep beliefs that are at the core of the subject.

The Indonesian education system provides an interesting context for this discussion. As a country with diverse religious beliefs and occasional social conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups, Indonesia must face two main problems: promoting peaceful harmony among diverse groups and maintaining a strong sense of

moral unity. Christian schools, operating in this culturally diverse environment, need to respond to changing views of truth in today's world without becoming overly exclusive or resorting to violence. Therefore, it is important to have a theological approach that focuses on peace and is relevant to the current situation. The Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, which emphasises non-violence, community building, and living out one's faith in daily life, offers a useful model for thinking about methods of Christian teaching in today's complex world. ( Rather than looking back nostalgically at the rigid beliefs of the pre-modern era, this method focuses on putting biblical truth into practice through relationships and actions, transforming theological ideas into ways of life that promote peace and reconciliation. Theologically, the Mennonite Anabaptist movement emerged from the Radical Reformation of the 16th century as a response to overly controlling church leadership and pressure from government. Their approach to education emphasises following Jesus closely, making decisions together as a community, and living in ways that reflect the life and values of Christ. Gerald Gerbrandt, "Who Are We? Mennonite Higher Education," in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World*, ed. Harry Huebner (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1998). In contrast to the focused thinking of scholasticism or the emphasis on individual thinking in modern rationalism, Anabaptist education aims to transform a person holistically in their spiritual, moral, and social life. This approach directly counters the fragmentation seen in the post-modern era by connecting knowledge with relationships based on mutual promises and commitments, rather than focusing solely on personal independence. Furthermore, its strong belief in peace (shalom) helps address the ongoing need for unity and understanding between different religious and cultural groups in Indonesia. By combining this history with modern theological ideas appropriate to the local context, it enables meaningful conversation and connection between global Christian beliefs and the specific situations of various communities.

Contextual theology, as explored by Stephen Bevans, Robert Schreiter, and Asian theologians, emphasises that theology does not originate from ideas alone, but is formed through the ongoing relationship between faith and the culture in which that faith is lived and expressed. (Stephen B. Bevans, 2002a) In the field of education, this suggests that Christian teaching needs to understand biblical messages in their real historical and cultural contexts. For Indonesia, contextual theology serves as a way to connect Anabaptist ideas about peace with the real experience of living in a society of diverse

beliefs. By combining contextual theology with the educational values of the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, this study aims to create a peace-based teaching approach that can overcome the challenges of modern moral uncertainty and help build better understanding between different cultures. Although there are many writings from various parts of the world on modern education and Christian teaching, few combine Anabaptist Mennonite ideas with contextual theology specifically in Southeast Asia. Most existing works either view modern relativism from the perspective of traditional religious knowledge or study peace education without linking it to religious beliefs. (Compare, for example, Nancey Murphy, 1997) As a result, there is still a gap in academic work when it comes to constructing a holistic model that combines theological critique, contextual engagement, and practical pedagogy. This study enriches the field of contextual educational theology by integrating Mennonite Anabaptist theological insights with a critical response to postmodern educational paradigms. (Donatus & Setiawan, 2025) Unlike evangelical or philosophical critiques that simply reject postmodern relativism, this paper reconstructs a theological-contextual framework that affirms the authority of Scripture while engaging with the pluralistic reality of Indonesia. ( Christian teaching methods that focus on peace, rooted in real-life presence, community building, and teaching peaceful values, offer a new way of educating in places where societies are divided and there is tension between different religions. The combination of local Christian beliefs, the Anabaptist way of life, and modern ideas about knowledge change offers fresh and unique ideas that are rarely found in recent research on Christian education indexed in Scopus. (Nadhirah & Adiputra, 2023)

This study has three main objectives. First, to examine in depth the basic beliefs of postmodern education in relation to Christian theology. Second, to examine how Mennonite Anabaptist groups respond to postmodern understandings of knowledge and what this means for peace-focused teaching. Third, to place these ideas in the context of the Indonesian education system to create a new approach to Christian Religious Education centred on peace ( ). As a result, this paper is useful for theological studies and teaching practice, showing that peace-centred teaching methods, based on the idea of Christ becoming human, can support strong moral values and help people in times of division to unite. (Sumarno *et al.*, 2021) This research is based on three main questions. First, how does postmodern educational thinking challenge the basic beliefs and values of Christian teaching? Second, in what ways does the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition

provide theological insights and alternative ideas that critique the postmodern model of education? Third, how can Christian teaching methods focused on peace be used effectively in Indonesian schools to support biblical authority, develop moral character, and promote harmony between different communities?

The essence of this article is that the Anabaptist-Mennonite approach to teaching, rooted in theology and context, provides clear and meaningful answers to the issues raised by postmodern education.

By combining Christ's teachings from the Bible with ideas of peace, this approach allows Christian teachers to challenge the notion that all truth is relative, without becoming trapped in rigid and unchanging rules. This blend points to the way of the Gospel, where truth comes not only through ideas, but through relationships, community, and peace. ( Finally, this study proposes that education, when grounded in a theology of peace, becomes a sacramental act of cultural transformation that shapes learners who reflect Christ's love and justice in the midst of Indonesia's complex pluralistic society.

## **2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative theological-contextual method that combines critical text analysis, comparison with other theological traditions, and reflection on the current context. The focus is more on interpretation than data collection, with an emphasis on developing ideas and guiding principles rather than drawing conclusions based on numbers. This research is based on the idea that both theology and education focus on understanding meaning through dialogue with the Bible, long-held beliefs, and the current situation. ( Following Stephen Bevans' model of contextual theology, this research views theological reflection as an interaction between faith and culture. (Stephen B. Bevans, 2002a) Theology is not an abstract system, but rather a process of incarnating truth in concrete reality. When applied to Christian education, this means that pedagogical theory must be evaluated based on biblical revelation and the socio-cultural situation of Indonesian learners. Contextual theology thus provides a methodological bridge that allows researchers to interpret the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition through a postmodern and contemporary Indonesian lens without falling into cultural relativism. (Robert J. Schreiter, 1985) The contextual theology framework operates through two interrelated hermeneutical movements: critical correlation, which analyses the tension between

postmodern educational philosophy and Christian theological anthropology, particularly in relation to truth, morality, and human formation. and constructive synthesis that develops a peace-oriented pedagogical model integrating Anabaptist Mennonite insights with the ethical and communal demands of Indonesian Christianity. ( The primary data sources for this study are written materials and documents, such as important works by Anabaptist Mennonite thinkers on education and peace (such as Yoder, Sawatsky, Gerbrandt, and Murphy), key works in postmodern philosophy (such as Lyotard, Foucault, and Rorty), and important religious texts (such as the Bible). Other sources include academic journals, Indonesian-based religious writings, and official statements from Christian schools, which help to understand these ideas in a local context. To keep this study faithful to its religious beliefs and relevant to the real situation in Indonesia, the analysis uses a method that combines careful reading of texts, comparison of different ideas, and application of these ideas to the local context. The research approach is constructive and critical, not only maintaining old beliefs but also seeking to create a new practical understanding of religion for teaching. To maintain the strength and reliability of the study, several methods were used: analysing various sources simultaneously, examining ideas from well-reviewed research, and carefully considering the researcher's own religious beliefs. ( The reliability of the interpretation is based not on empirical replication, but on coherence, transparency, and fidelity to theological discourse. Ethically, this research respects confessional diversity in Indonesia and avoids missionary efforts. Its purpose is dialogical, to contribute to the common good through peace-centred education inspired by Christian theology. Thus, this research is in line with the *missio Dei* perspective, which views education as participation in God's mission of restoration in the world. (Lesslie Newbigin, 1989)

### **3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Anabaptist mennonite critique of postmodern education**

This study shows that the Anabaptist Mennonite theological tradition offers a profound and unique perspective on postmodern ideas of education. Postmodernism values diverse perspectives, local truths, and individual freedom from dominant narratives. However, Anabaptist beliefs question these ideas by focusing on Jesus Christ

and the importance of community in understanding knowledge. ( At its core, Anabaptist Mennonite theology views truth not as a human construct mediated by power relations, but as a living reality embodied in the person of Jesus Christ and recognised in the life of the faith community. ( This radically contradicts postmodern relativism, which dissolves the concept of transcendent truth into culturally dependent perspectives. By basing knowledge on the following of Christ (Nachfolge Christi), the Anabaptist tradition opposes both pre-modern dogmatic authoritarianism and postmodern subjective scepticism. (Alan Kreider, 1999)

Furthermore, Anabaptist pedagogy criticises the postmodern emphasis on learner autonomy when freedom is separated from moral responsibility and covenant relationships. Education, in the Anabaptist vision, is inherently communal and ethical: it shapes the person in relationships of mutual submission, reconciliation, and peace. (Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, 2011) This communal anthropology directly challenges postmodern fragmentation of identity and knowledge, offering a vision of learning as participation in God's work of reconciliation. (Burkholder, 1955) In this way, Anabaptist critique does not deny postmodern ideas about diversity and context; rather, it directs those ideas toward the theological. It accepts that there are many different voices, but sees them all within the larger story of the Gospel. This story shows that truth is about relationships and brings healing, not just about different points of view.( *Shalom: The Biblical Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace*, 1987) Therefore, Mennonite Anabaptist criticism of postmodern education does not stem from a reactionary or nostalgic perspective. This critique highlights the limitations of postmodern thinking in terms of knowledge while adopting its focus on context and inclusivity, seen through the theological concepts of incarnation and peace. By combining careful assessment with practical community engagement, this tradition encourages Christian educators, especially in diverse societies such as Indonesia, to move beyond the extremes of absolutism and relativism. It proposes a teaching approach that reflects truth through connection, goodness, and peace. (Gerald W. Schlabach, 2007) This forms the basis for a further synthesis between Anabaptist spirituality, contextual theology, and peace-oriented Christian education discussed in the following sections.

### 3.2 Truth and rejection of fundamentalism

The Anabaptist Mennonite response to postmodern thought begins with a careful review of its basic beliefs about knowledge. Postmodernism, by rejecting grand narratives, eliminates the idea of universal or absolute truth. ( Jean-François Lyotard's idea of "disbelief in grand narratives" is intended to free knowledge from the control of large and totalitarian ideologies, but this approach also makes truth dependent on local agreements or practical usefulness, which in turn weakens its absolute status. (Jean-François Lyotard, 1984) In education, this is seen as a reluctance to establish higher moral or religious rules. Mennonite Anabaptist beliefs, while not convinced of a strong authority imposed on people, disagree with the idea that all truth is merely personal opinion. For the Anabaptist tradition, truth is not about following strict rules, but about living and interacting through the life and character of Jesus Christ. ( The basis of knowledge is not Descartes' idea of "I think, therefore I am," but rather the living Word made flesh. John Howard Yoder says that the cross of Christ changes the meaning of authority: "truth is demonstrated by helping others, not by controlling them." ( So, the problem with postmodernism is not that it disagrees with the grand narrative that even Anabaptists believe in. The real problem is that it does not see how God's revelation offers a grand narrative that brings freedom and peace, based on God's selfless love.

In teaching and learning, this way of thinking leads to an approach to teaching that values humility and following God's guidance. Knowledge is not something we possess, but something we follow through the mind of Christ. (Rod Sawatsky, 1997) This perspective counters both modern arrogance and postmodern fragmentation by focusing learning on transformation and reconciliation. Therefore, the rejection of foundationalism must be replaced with a Christological foundation, known as "kenotic epistemology," which acknowledges the limitations of human reason while maintaining the reliability of divine truth. (Compare, for example, Nancey Murphy, 1997)

### 3.3 Power, Knowledge, and Non-Violence

Michel Foucault's claim that knowledge cannot be separated from power has profoundly shaped postmodern critiques of education. (Foucault, 1972) For Foucault, every discourse functions as an instrument of social control, perpetuating inequality and

exclusion. The Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, however, offers a different response by reinterpreting power through the theology of the cross. Yoder asserts that the “politics of Jesus” overthrows worldly systems of domination by establishing a new form of power: the power of suffering love. (John Howard Yoder, 1972)

This “cross” power transforms education into a field of service rather than competition. While postmodern pedagogy seeks liberation through deconstruction, Anabaptist pedagogy seeks liberation through discipleship. Authority, in this model, is not imposed but earned through relational trust and moral authenticity. (Gerbrandt, 1998) Teachers become facilitators of community and witnesses of peace rather than instruments of institutional control. Mennonite criticism agrees with postmodernism that power can corrupt knowledge, but it places true liberation not in constant suspicion, but in imitating the humility of Christ. (Craig Carter, 2009)

### **3.4 Moral relativism and character restoration**

One of the most pressing consequences of postmodern education is the loss of absolute moral values. When truth becomes relative, moral formation is replaced by preference and pragmatism. (J. M. Kelly, 2019) Alasdair MacIntyre warns that this state of affairs leads to an "emotivist culture," in which ethical judgements are reduced to expressions of feeling rather than rational moral reasoning. ( This erosion of moral cohesion is particularly acute in pluralistic societies where ethical consensus is fragile. The Anabaptist Mennonite tradition responds to this challenge through *the formation of virtue-based communities*. Ethics, for Anabaptists, is not an abstract system but the embodiment of faith in daily life. Gerald Gerbrandt identifies education as "training in the covenant community." ( By basing morality on the example of Christ and the shared practices of the faith community, Anabaptist pedagogy restores the relational dimension of virtue. The task of education is to shape character, not merely to transmit knowledge.

This emphasis is particularly relevant to the moral crisis among Indonesian youth, where corruption, individualism, and violence often reflect the absence of a coherent ethical vision.<sup>14</sup> By restoring community as the centre of moral formation, Christian schools can become models of an alternative society shaped by forgiveness, service, and integrity. In this regard, Anabaptist criticism of postmodern education is both

philosophical and pastoral, diagnosing moral relativism while offering concrete paths toward moral renewal.

### **3.5 A Peace-oriented pedagogical model for Indonesian Christian schools**

After examining theological critiques, this section develops a constructive framework: the Peace-Oriented Pedagogical Model (POPM), rooted in Mennonite Anabaptist theology and contextualised for Indonesia. This model translates theological principles into educational practice, integrating biblical truth, community formation, and social engagement.

### **3.6 Theological foundations of peace pedagogy**

At the heart of the Anabaptist vision is *shalom*, a holistic peace that reconciles humanity with God, one another, and creation. (John Driver, 1986) Education, therefore, is a ministry of reconciliation. According to Yoder, “peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a redeemed form of community.” ( This theological anthropology defines human beings not as autonomous agents, but as relational beings called to serve one another.

A peace-oriented approach to education in Indonesian Christian schools must begin by affirming Christocentric authority. The Scriptures, interpreted through the lens of love and non-violence, become the moral compass in learning. Teachers represent Christ's presence through humility, patience, and compassion. Authority in the classroom is exercised dialogically rather than coercively, reflecting Jesus' servant leadership. (Parker J. Palmer, 1983)

The second foundation is communal ethics. Education shapes not isolated individuals, but a community bound by covenant. Small groups, communal worship, and collaborative learning reflect the ecclesial nature of knowledge. Students are invited to discuss together, practise forgiveness and accountability. This counters the competitive ethos of modern education and the atomisation of postmodern individualism. (Huebner, 1998) Peace pedagogy is based on missionary practice. Learning extends beyond the classroom into acts of service and reconciliation. Theological formation becomes

incarnational, realised through concrete participation in the healing of society. (Rod Sawatsky, 1997)

### 3.7 Key components of the peace-oriented pedagogy Model (POPM)

The proposed model consists of five interrelated components, designed to transform theological beliefs into educational structures:

1. Incarnational Learning (Presence as Pedagogy)  
The teacher's life becomes the primary curriculum. Following John's vision of the Word becoming flesh, incarnational learning views education as a relational encounter.<sup>20</sup> Teachers model humility and empathy; students learn that truth is lived, not merely spoken. In Indonesian schools, this approach requires educators to exemplify justice and compassion in their interactions with students from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. (Rantung, 2022)
2. Community Building (Learning as Fellowship)  
Referring to Gerbrandt's insight that education is inherently communal, schools form small "cell" groups or fellowship circles that function as micro-communities of learning and mentoring. In these groups, students share experiences, study the Scriptures, and reflect on moral challenges. These groups foster solidarity across ethnic and class boundaries, providing an essential corrective to Indonesia's fragmentation. (Gerbrandt, 1998)
3. Dialogical Hermeneutics (Truth as a Shared Discovery)  
Inspired by contextual theology, learning is dialogical rather than doctrinal. (Stephen B. Bevans, 2002b) Students are encouraged to explore the meaning of biblical truth in relation to local culture and contemporary issues. This process develops critical awareness without sacrificing theological integrity. Teachers guide reflection so that cultural contextualisation remains Christ-centred rather than relativistic. (Robert J. Schreiter, 1985)
4. Service Learning Practice (Faith in Action)  
Following Rod Sawatsky's principle of "education through service,"<sup>25</sup> schools integrate community service projects into their curriculum. Students engage in social activities such as visiting orphanages, cleaning up the environment, and interfaith collaboration to manifest Christian love in a tangible way. (Rod

Sawatsky, 1997) This educational approach transforms the classroom into a place of mission and reconciliation.

#### 5. Peace and Conflict Transformation (Learning as Reconciliation)

In a country periodically plagued by religious and ethnic violence, Christian education must deliberately train peacemakers. Referring to Yoder's *Politics of Jesus* and Huebner's theology of peace, schools implement programmes on conflict resolution, restorative justice, and intercultural dialogue. (Huebner, 1998) By learning to forgive and make peace, students internalise peace not as an ideology, but as living followers of Christ.

Collectively, these components represent a transformative pedagogy that transcends both authoritarianism and relativism. They implement theology into concrete educational practices that are appropriate for Indonesia's pluralistic environment.

### 3.8 Contextual application in Indonesia

Indonesian contextuality requires that Christian pedagogical models be theologically faithful and socially sensitive. Indonesia's Pancasila ideology, which embraces belief in one God and unity in diversity, provides a framework in which peace-oriented Christian education can flourish. (Eka Darma Putra and Th. Sumartana, 1996) POPM aligns with this national ethos by fostering tolerance based on theological conviction rather than secular neutrality. For example, Christian schools in Indonesia often operate alongside Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities. Peace-oriented pedagogy equips students to interact respectfully with peers of other faiths while maintaining their Christian identity. Through *service-based learning*, joint cultural events, and interfaith projects, schools become agents of reconciliation. (Eka Darma Putra and Th. Sumartana, 1996)

Furthermore, contextual factors such as rural poverty, digital fragmentation, and intergenerational disharmony demand holistic formation. By combining cognitive learning with character and community development, POPM offers an alternative narrative to utilitarian education that prioritises achievement over virtue. (Yohanes B. Siahaya, 2023)

In practical implementation, this model recommends three institutional strategies:

1. Curriculum Integration: incorporating modules such as "Peace and the Ethics of Jesus" and "Contextual Hermeneutics" into the PAK curriculum.
2. Teacher Training: conducting workshops on peace theology, dialogue facilitation, and trauma-sensitive pedagogy.
3. Community Partnerships: collaborating with local churches and interfaith organisations to create service-based learning networks.

This initiative not only strengthens theological depth but also fosters social trust, an irreplaceable asset in Indonesia's multireligious democracy.

### **3.9 Comparative reflection: moving beyond postmodernism**

POPM does not merely react to postmodernism; it learns from it. Postmodern critique exposes the dangers of absolutism and all-encompassing systemic violence. The Absolute in the Absolute ( Anabaptist theology affirms this insight while redirecting it towards the non-violent truth of Christ. In this synthesis, postmodern concern for marginalised voices unites with Anabaptist commitment to the marginalised.

Where postmodern education dissolves truth into plurality, the pedagogy of peace reconstructs truth as relational fidelity to Christ and community. (Nancey Murphy, 1997b) Where postmodernism deconstructs authority, Anabaptism redefines it through service. And where postmodern relativism rejects the possibility of moral formation, POPM shows that true freedom arises not from autonomy but from love. ( This dialogical engagement demonstrates that the Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective is neither pre-modern nor reactionary; it is a prophetic postmodernism, accepting criticism while offering an incarnational alternative. The result is a pedagogy that honours diversity, confronts injustice, and remains rooted in divine revelation.

### **3.10 Synthesis: towards a contextual-theological educational paradigm**

The findings indicate that the Anabaptist Mennonite critique of postmodern education is not merely oppositional, but reconstructive. This critique challenges educators to distinguish between destructive relativism and liberating contextuality. By integrating peace theology, virtue ethics, and contextual hermeneutics, POPM represents *a third way* that is neither authoritarian modernism nor nihilistic postmodernism. In

theological terms, this paradigm reflects what Bevans calls "praxis theology": a dynamic interaction between faith, context, and action. (Stephen B. Bevans, 2002a) This paradigm places Christian education within God's mission (*missio Dei*), transforming schools into communities of reconciliation. For Indonesia, this synthesis offers intellectual and moral renewal: intellectual, because it restores the authority of truth in an era of scepticism; moral, because it shapes peaceful citizens in a fragmented nation. (Kusman, 2015) Thus, the Anabaptist Mennonite vision becomes a living contribution to global educational theology, a testimony that faith and learning, when united by peace, can heal the cracks of postmodern humanity. (

### 3.11 Theological implications

The results of this study have important implications for contextual theology and Christian education research. They show that educational theology based on the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition not only offers a way to challenge modern ideas about knowledge, but also provides practical examples of how discipleship and peace can be realised. This combination helps to expand the boundaries of current theological thinking by showing that education can be a place where faith, moral values, and community come together in ways that bring about real change.

#### 3.11.1 Restoring education as a theological practice

The first point concerns changing the way we view education from a religious perspective. In both modern and postmodern views, education is usually seen as merely passing on knowledge or discussing it. However, this new approach restores the idea that education is about participating in God's work to bring healing and restoration to the world. Learning becomes a way to grow spiritually, where students encounter truth more deeply and become people who help bring peace. This is in line with Bevans' idea that theology and action complement and support each other. In this approach, teaching itself is a spiritual act, demonstrating God's presence in real life. Teachers live out the message of the Gospel through their presence, and students learn about faith not only as an idea, but as something real and meaningful. This shift helps to mend the broken pieces of

modern education by integrating the way we know things with our spiritual lives, knowledge with care, and truth with harmony.

### *3.11.2 Contextual theology and peacebuilding*

Second, this model helps develop contextual theology around the world, especially in areas experiencing conflict and cultural diversity. The Anabaptist-Mennonite focus on peace (shalom), community, and non-violence supports the idea of peace-oriented theological dialogue ( ) that respects different cultures. However, this model also prevents it from becoming too flexible or uncertain by linking it to the moral values of Christ's peace. In this way, the Peace-Oriented Pedagogical Model (POPM) demonstrates a prudent approach to context, listening to culture without being controlled by it. For Indonesia, this model provides a religious basis for education that is appropriate to the diverse nature of the country. On a broader scale, this model adds value to the global discussion on the theology of peace by showing how Christian education can help unite divided communities. This method may encourage similar changes in other regions facing inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflicts, such as parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, or Latin America, where schools often help manage inter-religious relations.

### *3.11.3 Renewing christian educational theology*

POPM helps refresh Christian education as a theological subject. In the past, the study of educational theology often swung between teaching facts and promoting moral convictions. However, this new model places education within the narrative of God's kingdom of peace. Learning is viewed through the lens of Christ-centred understanding; goodness is developed through group activities; and education aims to repair broken relationships. These ideas of truth, goodness, and reconciliation provide a way of thinking that transcends Enlightenment logic and modern scepticism. This encourages Christian universities around the world to view education as church formation, not just learning. This means that teaching and theology are interconnected, and the classroom can be a place where spiritual change occurs.

In short, this research has theological ideas that transcend Indonesia.

By combining Anabaptist teachings of peace with local methods of interpretation, this study offers a comprehensive view of faithful and relevant education. It suggests that true local theology is always about teaching, and true Christian education is always about faith. Both are part of Christ's work to bring peace to a broken and divided world.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide a theological and contextual critique of postmodern education from the perspective of the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, leading to the development of a Peace-Oriented Pedagogical Model (POPM) for Christian schools in Indonesia. In a world marked by postmodern uncertainty and moral confusion, the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition provides a clear theological response based on Christ-centred truth, community formation, and the practice of peace. The study shows that when education is rooted in theology, it becomes a way to participate in God's mission to unite humanity. Theologically, this study supports the idea that postmodern doubts about power and authority are reasonable, but should not lead to a total loss of meaning. The cross of Christ shows that power is about serving others and authority is about self-giving love. This understanding frees education from the strict control of the past and the unclear direction of the present. By demonstrating humility and faithfulness in relationships, Christian teachers can be examples of peace rather than merely passing on certain beliefs. In terms of application, POPM provides a useful structure for Christian Religious Education (PAK) in Indonesia. This model focuses on learning that takes place in real situations, building strong communities, interpreting ideas through dialogue, learning through service, and working to resolve conflicts. These elements help overcome the challenges of living together in a diverse society, facing moral struggles, and dealing with social differences. When applied within the framework of Indonesia's Pancasila values, this model enables Christian schools to help unite people within the nation while remaining faithful to biblical teachings.

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### **Authors' Contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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