

## CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, *NULL* CURRICULUM, LEARNING STRATEGIES, AND INCLUSIVENESS IN INDONESIA

Prasetiawati <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Palangka Raya, Indonesia  
\*Corresponding Address: [prasetiawati77@gmail.com](mailto:prasetiawati77@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** Based on this research, this paper sought to showcase the work of the zero curriculum in light of the rapid curriculum changes in Indonesia. Christian education has not been an exception to the curriculum changes over time. The curriculum and learning strategies for Christian Religious Education remain at the stage of compartmentalizing the curriculum for children, youth, adults, and the elderly. According to researcher, Null Curriculum becomes a counterweight when the null curriculum becomes implicit in homes, churches and schools. It attempts to be honest with the existence, culture, religion, customs of each learner and the locality of school, church and home. Null curriculum represents something of paradox in the midst of the onslaught of curriculum shifts. Curriculum paradoxes become crucial by incorporating procedures such as critical analysis, art and drama as interludes in the formal curriculum, such as the current curriculum development in Indonesia known as the independent curriculum. Research conducted in this study is categorized as qualitative research through a literature review, using secondary sources from a variety of recent journals that bring together Christian religious education, null curriculum, learning strategies and the dialectics of curriculum in Indonesia. Results showed that null curriculum at home, school and church levels ought to be reconsidered by curriculum users and beneficiaries as part of null curriculum participation in terms of content, flow of change and inclusiveness. Null curriculum as an ongoing curriculum through curriculum transformation in the midst of ignoring the urgency of the dimensions of Christian orthodoxy as finalities that get responses, responses and criticisms when encountering learning strategies in learning spaces.

**Keywords:** Christian Religious Education, Inclusiveness, Memorializing, Null Curriculum, Vulnerable Groups

## **INTRODUCTION**

Curricular issues in Indonesia, especially considering the curriculum in terms of church and age, frequently lead researchers to present and categorize the curriculum. An adult curriculum, such as (Simanjuntak & Tafonao, 2021). In addition, there were also categorical ones found within the Sunday School setting (Daud, 2022). Researcher further added that there were also categorical curricula that led to disability management (Graves, 2021; Mauleky, 2022). Curriculum balancing efforts within the church context were compared with those that approach or lead to non-categorical or non-segregative curricula upon encountering the transformational term of the curriculum itself without having to observe categorical barriers (Panggabean, 2022). Or, even generally speaking, sustainable curriculum within Christian religious education settings (Picanussa, 2019, 2020).

Based on the research phenomenon and the activities happening in the church through the curriculum on the basis of age and locality, the researcher arrived at a null curriculum review as comparative material as well as differentiating between the presence and discussion of the curriculum that has occurred so far in Christian religious education (Kartowagiran, 2010; Sriwijayanti, 2020b, 2020a, 2023). Null curriculum is an official-non-official curriculum, non-official curriculum or curriculum hidden or even in between. Null curriculum is embedded when the curriculum starts and operates in formal or informal educational activities in educational circles, including in Christian religious education in schools and churches.

As for the necessity of conducting research by answering the question, what do we learn from material, especially Christian religious education? To answer the question, the ontological question brings into question at the same time what curriculum has been used so far and what curriculum has been missed during the change of curriculum estapet from time to time. In other words, the question is questioning the content. Content context as the target of Christian religious education is the context of family, education and church. Families, education would need to be informed about the content that is served (Haloho, 2022; Hutapea, n.d.; Hutapea & Yusuf, 2023; Kyei-Arthur & Codjoe, 2021; Ligan, 2022; Malau, 2021; Munte, 2023; Pongoh, 2022; Tanyid, 2019; Wirawan, 2021). How significant and "how much does the context of Christian religious education know" compared to "knowing of". The researcher got this statement from Karen Tye's review and response to Christian religious education and its relationship with curriculum content (Tye, 2000).

The contents bring the perpetrators and beneficiaries of the curriculum to participation or involvement (witnessing Christ) in the concoction of life experiences, opportunities to learn. If the curriculum content as a whole leads to facts or information that only emphasizes cognitive, then there are aspects that are lost, such as attitudes, experiences, and subject narratives. To consider or as a

resistance tool to balance cognitive prioritization, the researcher contributes, although the null curriculum is actually not new material, it has been lost, namely the null curriculum.

Null curriculum has become necessary to investigate the existing curriculum content that has long been used as a tool to live out learning activities. For example, in the context of congregations, school-level education, and individual families, each subject sees and appreciates the life stories of each subject that have been lost in the reading of the Bible. Furthermore, the consideration of the lost heritage of virtues, sciences, and philosophies is crucial and receives attention from time to time as an act of maintaining the bastion of consistency of Christian values across contexts.

Null curriculum, apart from being on the issue of discussion, also rests on assignment activities from Christian religious education teachers to students across educational levels. For instance, making self-reflection, reflection on the material that has been presented and discussed, material that has been dissected and discussed and assignments at the beginning and at the end of class meetings (if the null curriculum is at the formal or informal education level). The multi-disciplinarity of services at school or in schools shows that there are individual thoughts of learners and teachers that need to be heard and responded to by curriculum makers or users in general. Then - both learners and teachers concerned - are able to reflect and combine or elaborate on them with the availability of existing theories related to Christian education. Diversity of theories has been useful to the extent that the ministry needs to be contextualized and sharpened by the availability of theories. Gilligan's, Kohlberg's, Hess' and Piaget's theories could be used as examples.

In terms of value-giving activities, null curriculum functions insofar as they are accepted and get multi-party appreciation for the existence of the existing curriculum. An example of an independent curriculum is as far as the researcher observes while living in the Kalimantan Tengah region. Although it looked as if a thorough reading, the delivery of questions when students faced the exam, but meant that loyalty became a valuable treasure as a complement to the existing curriculum.

Alejandro Lopez has mentioned, although not directly about the null curriculum, that decolonizing the imagination is an important activity or even an approach when encountering humans (Brouillette, 2020; Lauterboom, 2019; Lopez, 2020; Schultz et al., 2018). Human itself, including how it rubs against learning, especially in Christian religious education in schools and churches, the approach model according to Lopez is part and parcel of the null curriculum process. The decolonialization of the human being itself is a systemic analysis of the persistence of dehumanizing or oppressive despite being in the post-modern era (Attia & Marhun, 2023; Fitriana, Elisabeth, Esa, Nopraeda, & Munte, 2023; Lopez, 2020; Manik et al., 2023; Munte, Saputra, & Guilin, 2023; Rahmelia, Haloho, Pongoh, & Purwantoro, 2022; Rahmelia & Prasetiawati, 2021; Tamara, Ramada

R, Saras, Ronaldo, & Abidondifu, 2022; Tentolouris, 2023). Hegemonial dehumanization through oppression of the human life sphere according to Lopez necessitates an encounter through the struggle for justice and emancipation of human existence, basically favoring a liberating education that uses imagination for every curriculum change.

As comparisons and differences between previous research and researcher, the researcher displays three previous studies. Previously, the researcher looked at Johannes Waldes Hasugian's work which presented the Christian education curriculum through design, development, and creativity that focused on self-concept when encountering life and responsibility for oneself and one's life (Hasugian, 2019). Hasugian's research has emphasized Christian education itself through and focused on adults as members of the congregation (Hasugian, 2019). Hasugian's research, according to the researcher, criticized curriculum programs in the church through the context of the congregation in the category of the congregation as the church's lack of professionalism (Hasugian, 2019).

Discussing professionalism, Hasugian was less detailed in explaining the extent of the term professionalism itself in the context of the curriculum which is in the mature category. In fact, in the subsequent paragraph (the introduction), Siagian mentioned the unavailability of learning materials. Based on this context, the researcher has not found the extent to which the availability of curriculum in a particular church can be used as a "professional" standard, what are the benchmarks or whether there are churches that really do not have any curriculum design or perhaps the researcher suspects that the term availability itself is already in the worship activity itself and the concept embedded in accordance with the denominational teachings of the churches in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the researcher questioned the term adult itself. Is the measure of adulthood age or mindset or ability to solve problems? if yes, then, youth and even children are also capable and also live in the criteria of "adulthood" itself. Even if, Hasugian said and quoted Earl F. Zeigler's view regarding maturity, how extent the adult curriculum has been able to make adult humans more mature? Or maybe the term adult itself is an activity in biological human biology and the attachment of the term as a marker for living and developing beings.

Even if the grouping of adults according to Kenneth O. Gangel is in the age range of 18-35 years as or in the early adult category, ages 35 to 60 years are in the adult category at the middle-aged level and age 60 years as or in the late adult category (Gangel & Benson, 2002; Gangel & Wilhoit, 1998). The question is, on what basis is the classification a measure of maturity? The researcher responds that the age category according to Kenneth O. Gangel is only in the age range that can be accumulated or systematized through numbers. Furthermore, the researcher suspects that these numbers are only a marker of daily life's work according to shifts in activities, hobbies or endurance.

Therefore, whether the category of Christian religious education for adulthood is important and equal or higher than that of children or adolescents? whether the thought of the term adulthood itself is a biological development that is a ladder as a hierarchy of faith, endurance and thought? these reflective questions become important to look back at the model of Christian religious education as an act of age-segregation and the relevance that arises from it. These questions are not only as reflective questions, but also as a constructive and destructive lens on something that is considered final on a religious, social and cultural construction even when it is in a compartmentalization or practice of absolutism.

The second previous study, the researcher looked at Vinnervik's thoughts that reported the curriculum process through documents in Sweden by teachers by focusing on the argument (the extent of relevance and purpose), the specification of curriculum activities, and the content of curriculum realization (Vinnervik, 2023). Such qualitative research demonstrated the usefulness of curriculum in general through and only when encountering interdisciplinarity (Vinnervik, 2023). Fragmentation, superficiality and loss of curriculum content as something that inevitably becomes the locus of the logical consequences of minimal teacher work when meeting with strategic and important decisions in a program (Vinnervik, 2023).

Data searches by Vinnervik have become increasingly significant as both researcher and Vinnervik look at and explore the curriculum and see teachers as actors in the success of curriculum work in the educational space. In addition, the realization of the curriculum becomes successful when the curriculum itself according to Vinnervik meets the maximum work of the teacher and there is a conscious effort to avoid the superficiality of delivering curriculum expectations. The difference is that Vinnervik talks about the curriculum in a specific context or in the context of programming while being located in Sweden and not focusing on the religious space. Meanwhile, the researcher explores and analyzes the null curriculum, as one of the important types of curriculum, and contrasts it with the specific educational context of Christian religious education.

Researcher looks back at the third previous research elaborated by Scaramanga, Scaramanga argues that accelerated Christian education (not Christian religious education) sees curriculum work and accelerated segregation when learning work lies in learning strategies in the form of memorization and closing the space for learners to explore unexplored spaces related to climate change (Scaramanga & Reiss, 2023). Consequently, Christian education in terms of learning in schools rarely touches on issues of creationism and climate change and human participation in them. Thus, both the relationship between Christian education and the environment, creationism is reduced

and according to the researcher, null curriculum participation is also stalled (Scaramanga & Reiss, 2023).

Scaramanga's data exploration of the closure of null curriculum participation to Christian education brings Scaramanga and the researcher closer in terms of concerns over the deactivation of null curriculum participation for learners. Downstream impacts of null curriculum fixation are in the segregation of narrow knowledge on issues that touch humanity, such as environmental issues. Despite the similarities, Scaramanga's research has a significant difference in that Scaramanga's research does not deeply discuss the null curriculum and is only at the level of the curriculum in general and the impact of ignoring environmental issues without the presence of a null curriculum in Christian education. Meanwhile, the researcher is at a locus that is not limited to the issue and level of classification of the null curriculum even though it focuses on Christian education.

Purpose of this research is to show what kind of content is missing in a curriculum. Content is facts and information, but not all learning processes are crammed with content that contains cognitive elements. The experience of the learner subject becomes necessary in this part, namely by the appearance of the null curriculum. In addition, we have to postulate that content is a set of curriculum resources, including the null curriculum that is lost in curriculum work in Christian religious education. The researcher adds that the content needs to display the testimony of the faith experience of the predecessors to the subjects present today in the church, education and in the family. The logical consequence of the responsibility of Christian religious education also does not only lie with church administrators, parents and educators or counseling teachers or school principals. The responsibility is a shared property and a shared workload. In addition, Christianity itself is both the curriculum and the content of Christian religious education.

Hence, the purpose of the research is more about knowing, presenting testimonies, learning the experiences of previous witnesses of faith in the Bible, the history of Christianity. According to researcher, the purpose of this research is to borrow Daniel Aleshire's term in Christian religious education, namely that each subject (particular schools) gets and obtains a shared experience (Aleshire, 2008). Shared experience becomes critical when users or beneficiaries of the curriculum see the extent of curriculum content that has been implemented and that is lost or crushed (for example, the silence of the null curriculum).

## **METHODS**

The approach of this research was using the null curriculum analysis knife to explore the content gap that has been lost in the process of using Christian religious education materials in Indonesia.

Analysis through the null curriculum approach also exists and as a learning strategy becomes a counterweight when the researcher provides arguments and presents data through journals as previous research as a secondary source. Primary sources, researchers use books that talk about Christian religious education, namely books originating from Karen Tye. Karen Tye's book highlights the necessity of null curriculum participation to address the gap in outcomes as an evaluation of curriculum work that prioritizes cognitive content over experience, history, and the cultural context of education, family and church.

Basically, this research presents the research as qualitative research (Khoa, Hung, & Hejsalem-Brahmi, 2023; Shaw, 2023). This qualitative research is based on the search for data as a source of previous data through secondary sources, namely the search for data on the analysis of Christian religious education, the null curriculum and criticism of the segregated Christian religious education curriculum through the compartmentalization of age and locality of the curriculum which basically according to the researcher that the participation of the null curriculum is important even though it seems to be a shadow or located in an informal space, but the search for data by focusing on the null curriculum enables teachers, learners, principals and curriculum workers to be able to adapt and not be surprised when one curriculum appears or changes.

Extracting data in this literature review research would show as well as a critical reflection in response to the development of the curriculum that despite the changes in the curriculum from time to time, the response of the Christian religious education curriculum in general remains and is almost the same by enforcing the old pattern in the form of age separation and the locality of the curriculum itself. Thus, the researcher's analysis through this research method shows the null curriculum as an analytical knife as well as novelty in the discussion space or at the level of methods to analyze the educational situation in schools as a learning space and also the church as part and included in the Christian religious education section.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Null curriculum has even been identified as the curriculum that escapes the teaching of Christian religious education. Null curriculum was even in the outer activity spaces of learning. In discussing the experience of null curriculum activities, the researcher saw experience as a key basis for the success of the null curriculum. Experience matters as a reward for being an active subject as a user and beneficiary of the curriculum itself (Munte, 2022b; Rahman, 2021; Saputra, Fransiska, Dina, Sihombing, & Eric, 2023; Supriatin et al., 2021; Trisiana, Munte, Betaubun, & Malau, 2023; Wirawan, Maling, Malau, & Ullo, 2023). Although the null curriculum is located at the level of

churches and schools. It itself does not stop at the age categorial barriers, it even transcends and even transforms the existence or change of curriculum from time to time.

### **Towards Inclusiveness of Null Curriculum Content and Christian Religious Education**

Google scholar's search engine showed that there were 10,400 results informing about the existence of and studies focusing on the null curriculum. According to researcher, these multidisciplinary studies are at a considerable level (as far as researcher's measure). The number of sources that inform the discussion of the null curriculum according to researchers shows that the existence of the null curriculum crosses borders (countries, cities, regions, levels of education and across multi-disciplines).

Thoughts outlined in the book by Wesley Null showed that curriculum traditions consist of varieties according to traditions of consistent use globally (Null, 2023). For instance, the liberal curriculum in one-size-fits-all education (occurring in the era of Christianity and the rise of democracy). In addition, there is the existentialist curriculum that considers teachers, learners, contexts, and curriculum makers. Furthermore, the pragmatics curriculum initiated by Ted Sizer, Horace Smith, and Harry K. Wong (Null, 2023).

Furthermore, there is the systematic curriculum that shows children are not behind the scenes of the curriculum, but the curriculum itself is a system. This curriculum displays two sides, namely between weaknesses and strengths. The next curriculum is the radical curriculum initialized by Paulo Freire which often presents education as an oppressed (Freire, 2020; Manuputty, Penti, Agustina, Anjelia, & Rinie, 2023; Monica, 2023; Munte, 2022a; Pouwels, 2019). Finally, researcher Wesley Null's work showcases the presence of a deliberative curriculum that considers rhetoric, humanity, and the trajectory of relationships in and through commonplaces (Null, 2023).

Based on the thoughts and quantitative research of Desi Eri Kusumaningrum, Kusumaningrum mentioned that the types of curriculum consist of hidden curriculum, phantom curriculum, rhetorical curriculum, null curriculum, and curriculum in use (Kusumaningrum, Sumarsoso, & Gunawan, 2019). Null curriculum based on the thinking of David J. Flinders informs that the presentation of ideas on the particles of the null curriculum is useful insofar as it meets and intersects with the value that is judged to be essential (Flinders, Noddings, & Thornton, 1986). Null curriculum is not even defined when it encounters value processes and clashing issues in education.

Based on Flinders' thinking, the researcher sees that the process itself is so immersed and sucked into the activities of the null curriculum that it cannot be defined even though its processes can be described. However, the researcher argues, although the null curriculum appears ambiguous in

process, it is useful insofar as it encounters a diversity of theories to examine, investigate and trace practice and research in education, including Christian religious education.

Mai-Anh Tran describes null curriculum as a curriculum design in theological education (and Christian religious education: the researcher adds) in an increasingly evolving age (Tran, 2021). According to the graduate of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, the development of this null curriculum model was more about the questioning pattern that aims to develop the imagination of each party involved in the world of education. Development of this imagination pattern is subsequently capable of anesthetizing, awakening and even creating meaning as well as transformative through the activity of the intellect (Tran, 2021). Null curriculum transformation according to the researcher is in the form of an art in a transformative space, a variety of leadership models even though there are curriculum changes according to the needs of the school.

### **Christian Religious Education: Koinonia, Didache, Diakonia, Leiturgia, and Kerygma**

Carl Procario-Foley mentioned Maria Harris as a curriculum developer in the church as *koinonia*, *didache*, *diakonia*, *leiturgia*, and *kerygma* (Procario-Foley, n.d.). Further, Foley through Harris mentioned that curriculum development in contemporary era ("post-modernity") is located and focused on moral relativity, case studies (Holocaust and environmental oriented education [compound care: emphasis added by researcher]), inter-religious separateness or relations, diversity of achievement, consumerism, spirituality formation, loss, culture and its deconstruction (Procario-Foley, n.d.).

Foley's developmental spectrum through Harris informs and questions on the extent of respectful activity through and around educational and religious development and activity. As far as the implications. According to Foley through Harris, the curriculum activities include participating in seeing historical monuments, or Holocaust heritage buildings (in Indonesia it remains rare in research) that contain or sharpen memories and strengthen self-reflection and critical of the history of education in Christian contents.

Memorializing dark memories according to Foley through Harris is affiliated with strengthening Christian faith, both in the educational space and within the scope of the church. Furthermore, remembering according to Foley through Harris signifies the infinite space of God's love that penetrates the frame of time, space and location even though it meets with scary memories. Researcher observed that there is no error or mistake when encountering historical relics in the space or activities of Christian education that have been around for a long time. Recollection of memory or as an activity of adding knowledge is becoming vital and even the activity of remembering through

memory itself is not found in the structuralization of Christian religious education materials as far as the existence of the curriculum itself.

### **Null curriculum, Memorializing and Vulnerable Groups**

Null curriculum activities according to Foley through Harris necessitate the movement of reciprocal discussion. Both between teachers and learners, teachers with teachers or teachers with principals, as well as learners with teachers (Hasan et al., 2023; Li & Ruppap, 2021; Loheni et al., 2023; Nicki, 2018; Putri, Suriani, Sefle, & Munte, 2023; Susila & Risvan, 2022; Trisiana et al., 2023; Wulan & Sanjaya, 2022). Discussion itself requires democratic struggle over the reading of various materials from Christian religious education through reading, critical reflection, reflection on service in church and school, responsibility, attention, respect that cross each semester in the learning space in the classroom.

Null curriculum participation in inclusivity space by Zac Guo happens in the context of reinvigorating learning through play. In addition, it boils down to an expression of joy. However, according to the researcher, this expression becomes essential when the subject-based curriculum is independent, joyful, and works with maximum effort. Guo's research context is based on children engaged in play without having to take on the responsibilities of working parents. Children are subjects who are less concerned with the seriousness of work than with play. Basically, children are in the activity of play. Inclusivity in the null curriculum has a place in a shared process that is not only located in activities inside the school, but outside the school becomes a locus of children's availability and giving trust to vulnerable groups, including children.

Regarding inclusivity, inclusivity itself is often placed on the struggle of vulnerable groups, including children, women and people with disabilities. It does not stop at the acceptability of the curriculum in the community space, in this case the congregation. But it also penetrates and shifts to inclusive education (Amiani, 2022; Carbonara & Scibetta, 2022; Istinia, Syakema, Susanti, Merlina, & Julianti, 2023; Pengky, Octavia, Seruyanti, Endri, & Munthe, 2023; Siburian, Amiani, & Munthe, 2023; Stone, Ramos, Aragon, & Linger, 2023; Tekerop, Istinia, Elisabeth, & Munte, 2019). Inclusive education is fundamentally about all children. Both equal opportunities, equal respect for children and non-discriminatory diversity. Inclusive education as far as researchers understand does not only stop at vulnerable groups, but also at the equality of children while in the acquisition of educational opportunities.

Researcher explored thought outlined through the book that the curriculum content containing the null curriculum is at the level of the imagination of students and teachers, the selection of props or materials. Esoteric, sensational, and mature. Content in the curriculum is seen through the

presentation of mutuality of facts, deliberation, low generalization, having criteria and following trends. Thus, the researcher sees that inclusivity itself not only refers to victims but also to the activities of vulnerable groups in their development. Opening the widest possible access for learners is the foundation as well as the principle of education through policy packaging by related parties. These policies then process and involve a curriculum that is integrative, comprehensive and touches untouched spaces tersentuh (Ariaini & Sanaya, 2023; Hopmann, 2023; Munte, 2022c; Sarmauli, Timan Herdi Ginting, Colina, & Haloho, 2022; Veronika, Camelia, Febriliana, & Yapen, 2023). These untapped spaces, according to the researcher, represent opportunities for null curricula to participate, including when encountering Christian religious education. The researcher connects this with the participation of Christians including students and church members who care and participate in inclusiveness.

Dehumanization itself through the null curriculum becomes powerless when stakeholders, beneficiaries and users of the null curriculum are in complementarity, building and seeing constructive gaps both across institutions, learning strategies, teaching methods, evaluation and intertwining with other disciplines. Although curriculum development in the context of Christian education is more about certain themes, through the null curriculum, the researcher reflects that even though it is now using an independent curriculum, the discovery of key issues that develop, which looks at who is the victim and who is the ruler and relates it through critical reflection from students, teachers and the local community becomes the main in null curriculum efforts.

As far as the researcher's observation and experience shows, the age-segregated curriculum (curriculum that focuses on children, youth, adults, elderly and disabled) is basically good, but incomplete. The incompleteness of the curriculum toward age segregation is a concern of the researcher by finding a void of experience during the process of working on the learning life of Christian religious education in Indonesia. Although the null curriculum is more of an additional curriculum that unofficially appears in the development of the curriculum from time to time, the vibration of the null curriculum is also an important concern as well as a contribution to the sustainability of Christian religious education learning in Indonesia.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the researcher's reflections and searches during his time as a researcher focusing on the world of Christian religious education, the researcher found paradoxes at the practical level and even the methodological and phenomenological levels of data when encountering the massive curriculum based on age-focused segregation, categorical learning strategies and the separation of the

term Christian religious education itself between church, school and home. In fact, Christian religious education, null curriculum, and even the diversity of learning strategies are a non-segregative, intertwined and complementary unity despite the uniqueness of each curriculum change from time to time, the diversity of learning strategies in and out of school, and the null curriculum across denominations, across levels of education and the diversity of Christian education lifestyles in the homes of Christians.

Null curriculum, as far as the researcher was concerned, was not merely about giving advice, giving input and acting as a single transformer. Activation of the null curriculum that transcends the level of education, the diversity of educational activities at home and the presence of multidisciplinary church denominations in the world and even in Indonesia is vital as a reflection, balancing, inclusive, prioritizing experience, avoidance of massive oppression, and resistance to hegemony that perpetuates the hierarchy itself in and in the location of churches, homes and schools as the locality of the presence of Christian religious education.

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