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and the Batak religious identity**

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EDITORIAL: NAVIGATING CONTEXTUAL, DIALOGICAL, AND PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

We offer our deepest gratitude to Almighty God, by whose grace Vol. 7, No. 1 (2026): June of *KAMASEAN: Jurnal Teologi Kristen* has been successfully published and presented to our readership. The publication of this issue is inseparable from the full support of the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Toraja, which consistently facilitates our commitment to the dissemination of knowledge. We also extend our highest appreciation to the editorial board for their dedication and meticulousness in maintaining the quality of each manuscript, as well as to our peer reviewers, who have provided critical, objective, and constructive evaluations amidst their demanding academic schedules.

This current issue presents a highly rich and dynamic theological discourse. We have published five original research articles, representing the intellectual contributions of seven authors. The diversity of perspectives in this issue is tangibly manifested through the representation of two countries, namely **Indonesia** and **the United States**, and in a cross-institutional collaboration encompassing **six distinct academic affiliations**. This reaffirms KAMASEAN's position as a forum for both national and global academic encounters.

Each article in this issue offers a sharp theoretical and practical contribution to contemporary theological, missiological, and pastoral discourses:

Bonnarty Steven Silalahi opens this issue with a bold postcolonial critique of Johannes Warneck's missiological perspective on Batak religious identity. He critically deconstructs the bias of civilizational hierarchy inherent in the colonial categorization of "heathenism," proposing instead a contextual and redemptive missiological approach—one that preserves Christian theological convictions while deeply respecting the structures and richness of local cosmology.

Subsequently, **Tri Astuti and Joko Priyono** present a profound encounter between Javanese spirituality and Christian soteriology. They successfully transcend the trap of syncretism by employing the framework of *Theosis* (participation in the divine nature) to interpret the mystical concept of *Manunggaling Kawulo Gusti*. Through an intercultural hermeneutical approach and the theology of the incarnate *Logos*, this article demonstrates that Javanese ascetic aspirations can be transformed and find their fulfillment in Christ.

Responding to social crises and religious polarization, **Styven Bill Chevyn Tambunan and Riris Johanna Siagian** offer a pathway out of dogmatic exclusivism toward dialogical inclusivism in the nurturing of plurality. By applying Raimon Panikkar's typology of dialogue, this study provides a compelling argument that religious dogma can indeed be maintained intact while simultaneously opening spaces for authentic interreligious encounters that respect the dignity of different groups.



In the realm of pastoral praxis, **Ismail Banne Ringgi** introduces a hybrid breakthrough for grief management within the context of Toraja culture. Through the integration of the theology of lament and cultural anthropology, he demonstrates that *retteng* (traditional lamentation poetry) is not fatalism; rather, it possesses profound cathartic and theological healing power. This article proves that local wisdom can be adopted as an adaptive pastoral instrument that directs grief toward eschatological hope.

The issue is then concluded with a global public theology discourse by **Ted Peters**, a prominent theologian, who highlights the crisis of truth in the post-truth era. He offers a provocative and solution-oriented new alliance concept: the SST Alliance (Science, Skepticism, and Theology). Peters reminds us that theology is not an adversary of science but an essential partner in defending evidence-based reasoning, combating disinformation, and striving for the common good in the public square.

In closing, we hope that the intellectual offerings in this issue will ignite broader spaces for discussion, provide inspiration for future research, and bless the ministry of the church. We wish you an engaging read.

Deflit Dujerslaim Lilo
Editor-in-Chief



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