

THE PASTOR AS AN AGENT OF PANCASILA CHARACTER FORMATION: A THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL STUDY OF BIBLICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDONESIA'S NATIONAL IDEOLOGY

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengajukan pembalikan paradigma dalam memahami relasi antara Alkitab, Pancasila, dan peran pendeta Kristen dalam pembentukan karakter remaja usia 12 hingga 18 tahun. Berbeda dari asumsi umum bahwa nilai-nilai Pancasila harus 'dimasukkan' ke dalam gereja sebagai agenda negara, artikel ini berargumen bahwa nilai-nilai dasar Pancasila tidak dipaksakan kepada komunitas Kristen Indonesia, melainkan sebagian bersumber dari nilai-nilai Alkitabiah yang telah hidup di dalamnya. Bukti historis dari kontribusi tokoh-tokoh Kristen Indonesia Johannes Leimena, Alexander Andries Maramis, dan Gerungan Saul Samuel Jacob Ratulangi dalam perumusan Pancasila mendukung argumen ini. Dengan menggabungkan tinjauan pustaka sistematis dan observasi informan kunci, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pendeta sesungguhnya sudah memiliki mandat teologis untuk membentuk remaja yang menghidupi nilai-nilai Pancasila melalui praktik penggembalaan yang ada. Tantangannya bukan bersifat programatik melainkan hermeneutis: pendeta perlu menyadari bahwa khotbah, katekisasi, dan pelayanan pemuda mereka secara substansial sudah merupakan pembentukan karakter Pancasila. Reframing ini, yang bersumber dari dalam tradisi Kristen, menawarkan jalur kolaborasi gereja-bangsa yang lebih dipercaya dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci : Alkitab; Pancasila; Pendeta; Pembentukan Karakter, Remaja Kristen

Abstract

This study proposes a paradigmatic reversal in understanding the relationship between the Bible, Pancasila, and the role of Christian pastors in character formation among youth aged 12 to 18 years. Against the prevailing assumption that Pancasila values must be 'inserted' into the church as a state agenda, this paper argues that the foundational values of Pancasila were not imposed upon the Indonesian Christian community, but emerged partly from biblical values already embedded within it. Historical evidence from the contributions of Indonesian Christian figures Johannes Leimena, Alexander Andries Maramis, and Gerungan Saul Samuel Jacob Ratulangi in the formulation of Pancasila substantiates this argument. Combining systematic literature review and key informant observation, this study finds that pastors already carry the theological mandate to form youth embodying Pancasila values through their existing shepherding practices. The challenge is not programmatic but hermeneutical: pastors need to recognize that their preaching, catechesis, and youth ministry are already, in substance, an exercise in Pancasila character formation. This reframing, sourced from within Christian tradition rather than mandated by the state, offers a more trusted and sustainable pathway for church-nation collaboration.

Keywords: Bible; Pancasila; Pastor; Character Formation; Christian Youth

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian discourse on national character education, the Christian church is frequently positioned as a recipient of values, an institution that must be filled with Pancasila so that its members become good citizens. Government initiatives, including the religious guidance programs run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, are often designed on this logic, carrying national values from the outside into the church. The approach has shown limited

effectiveness in practice, and it rests on a historical and theological assumption that deserves scrutiny.

Several bodies of scholarship bear on this question. Latif (2011) argues that Pancasila is not an imported ideology but a synthesis of values already living within Indonesia's cultural, religious, and humanistic traditions. Comparative work in the *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* ("Pancasila Ideology," 2023) shows that principles such as humanity, unity, and social justice hold universal roots that cross any single religious tradition, while Dimiyati et al. (2021) frame Pancasila as a prophetic-transcendental basis that guides national policy. A parallel literature addresses the formative role of pastors. Tambunan and Iskandar (2024) report that Christian religious education, ministry, and pastoral counseling significantly influence adolescent moral development, and Geovani and Hermanto (2024) argue that pastoral guidance must answer contemporary challenges to youth identity and values. Chatlos (2023) questions identity-formation models and proposes spiritual transformation as a fuller ground for adolescent development. A third strand examines church–state relations. Qoumas (2024) analyzes the Ministry's religious moderation policy as an effort to draw closer to religious communities, and Yasmini et al. (2025) find that its implementation remains formalistic and rarely engages grassroots participation.

These literatures converge on a gap. Studies of Pancasila establish its plural origins but rarely trace how a specific religious tradition contributed to its formulation. Studies of the pastoral role demonstrate its formative power but treat national character as content to be added rather than as something the tradition already carries. Studies of church–state relations diagnose the failure of top-down, formalistic approaches without locating an alternative inside the religious community itself. The present study connects these strands by arguing that the values underlying Pancasila, namely belief in God, a just humanity, unity within diversity, deliberative leadership, and social justice, are not foreign to Christian tradition. They lived within the Indonesian Christian community before Pancasila was formally articulated on 1 June 1945, and several Christian figures who took part in its formulation carried these values into the construction of the national ideology. On this reading, the direction of transmission runs from within the community of faith outward rather than the reverse.

The study focuses on Christian adolescents aged 12 to 18. This range corresponds to Erikson's (1968) stage of identity versus role confusion, during which internalized values tend to become durable features of character. Pastors, as spiritual authorities trusted by adolescents and their families, occupy a strategic position for this formation. The objectives are threefold: to establish the substantive correspondence between biblical values and the principles of Pancasila, to describe the patterns that shape church–state interaction at the congregational level, and to propose a workable route by which pastors can form Pancasila character without waiting for an external mandate. To pursue these aims, the study integrates a systematic literature review with observations from a key informant serving as a religious extension officer.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design that integrates two sources of data, analyzed together within a single interpretive framework. The first source is a systematic literature review covering theology, history, character education, and church–state relations in Indonesia. Searches were conducted in Scopus and Google Scholar and were supplemented by academic books and primary historical documents on the formulation of Pancasila. The inclusion criteria

specified peer-reviewed publications from 2020 to 2025 for contemporary sources, with an exception for primary historical materials that cannot be substituted. Sources were excluded when they lacked verifiable bibliographic data or did not address the biblical–Pancasila relationship, the pastoral role in character formation, or church–state interaction. Retrieved items were screened by title and abstract, read in full, and checked against original sources so that no claim rested on an unverifiable attribution.

The second source is key-informant observation. Yan Pratama Tarigan, a Christian religious extension officer at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, contributed field observations on the patterns of church–state interaction encountered while accompanying congregations. Because the officer works inside congregational life, this vantage supplies access to internal dynamics that literature alone cannot provide. Observations were recorded as descriptive field notes and grouped into recurring patterns.

Data from both sources were analyzed within a hermeneutic framework, interpreting texts, namely scripture and academic literature, in the light of the field context of religious guidance, following the contextual-theology tradition associated with Groome (1980). In place of instrument tolerance, which does not apply to a qualitative design of this kind, analytical trustworthiness rested on source triangulation between literature and field observation, verification of every citation against its original, and consistency checks across the historical, theological, and empirical strands. The findings are presented in the same order used in this section.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Correspondence between biblical values and the principles of Pancasila

The analysis identifies a substantive correspondence between each principle of Pancasila and biblical teaching rather than a surface analogy. The first principle, belief in the one God, reflects a monotheistic confession that in Christian tradition draws on the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) and on the teaching of Jesus that love for God is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37). This confession functions as a moral foundation for how people treat one another. The second principle, a just and civilized humanity, rests on the doctrine of the *Imago Dei*, the teaching that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). This doctrine grounds human dignity and the demand for justice. The third principle, the unity of Indonesia, concerns cohesion amid diversity. Paul's metaphor of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–27) describes a community of many different members that need one another and form a single whole. The fourth principle, democratic life guided by wisdom through deliberation, aligns with the tradition of servant leadership and shared decision-making. Acts 15 records how the early community resolved a serious theological dispute through deliberation. The fifth principle, social justice for all, finds its parallel in the Old Testament concept of *shalom*, a well-being that spans relationships with God, with others, and with creation. The Hebrew prophets, notably Amos and Micah, voiced this concern for social justice.

Patterns Of Church–State Interaction At The Congregational Level

Field observation identified three consistent patterns.

The first is a hierarchical-protocol response. When senior government officials attend a church, the response is formal courtesy rather than substantive acceptance of the message they bring. When an extension officer arrives through a humble and relational approach, the

congregation responds more warmly at a personal level, yet still retains suspicion toward a perceived state agenda. The second is a transactional relationship. Congregations tend to read state presence as an opportunity for financial support or facilities rather than as an invitation to substantive partnership in formation programs.

The third is resistance to formational intervention. Preaching, catechesis, and youth programs are perceived as an exclusive church domain that outsiders, including the state, should not enter. This resistance is rarely stated openly and instead appears as low enthusiasm toward externally supplied curricula or programs. Taken together, these patterns produce a disconnect. The church holds substantial formative capacity through its existing programs, yet this capacity remains unlinked to national character goals because the church-state relationship is asymmetric and marked by distrust.

3.3 A theological reframing generated from within

Bringing the two sets of findings together yields a proposed route that this study calls theological reframing. Rather than a new program or an external intervention, the reframing works from within the church's own tradition. Its core is to help pastors recognize that what they already do, namely preaching about love of neighbor, teaching human dignity as the image of God, and guiding adolescents in honesty, responsibility, and service, is in substance the formation of Pancasila character. For adolescents aged 12 to 18, a pastor who teaches the Law of Love can connect that value explicitly to the second principle of Pancasila, not as an added state agenda but as a deeper reading of Christian faith within national life.

DISCUSSION

The correspondence reported in Section 3.1 supports and extends Latif's (2011) argument that Pancasila is a synthesis of values already present in Indonesian traditions. Where Latif establishes plural origins in general terms, the present analysis specifies one tradition's contribution in concrete scriptural terms. This reading is consistent with the finding in the *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* ("Pancasila Ideology," 2023) that Pancasila's core values carry universal roots crossing single traditions, and with Dimyati et al. (2021), who describe a prophetic-transcendental basis for the state. The correspondence also aligns with the argument in the *Pharos Journal of Theology* ("Synergy of Pancasila Humanism," 2022) that Pancasila does not conflict with Christian teaching because scripture affirms the dignity of persons created in God's image.

The claim that biblical values contributed to Pancasila is not only theological but historical. Johannes Leimena (1905–1977), a physician and politician from Maluku and a member of the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence (BPUPKI), defended the inclusive character of Pancasila and tied his political engagement to Christian faith, treating service to the nation as a concrete expression of love for neighbor (Aritonang, 2018). Alexander Andries Maramis (1897–1977), one of the nine drafters of the Jakarta Charter, worked to ensure that the foundation of the state would not discriminate against non-Muslim citizens, reflecting the conviction that human dignity as the image of God crosses religious and ethnic boundaries. Gerungan Saul Samuel Jacob Ratulangi (1890–1949) articulated the Minahasan principle *si tou timou tumou tou*, that a person lives to humanize others, a value consonant with the second principle of Pancasila (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008). These figures were not applying Pancasila; they were carrying values of faith into the construction of the national ideology. This historical record reframes the church-state relationship as one of

contribution rather than reception, which directly addresses the assumption criticized in the introduction.

The relational patterns reported in Section 3.2 correspond to difficulties documented in the church–state literature. The transactional pattern echoes the finding of Yasmini et al. (2025) that religious moderation policy has not engaged grassroots participation, and the general asymmetry is consistent with Qoumas's (2024) observation that the policy still meets resistance in the field. What the present study adds is a congregation-level account of why the disconnect persists, locating it in distrust of external agendas rather than in a deficit of values within the church.

The reframing proposed in Section 3.3 speaks to the literature on the pastoral role. Tambunan and Iskandar (2024) show that Christian religious education, ministry, and pastoral counseling jointly influence adolescent moral development, which supports the claim that existing pastoral practice already carries formative weight. Geovani and Hermanto (2024) argue that pastoral guidance must answer contemporary challenges to youth identity, and Chatlos (2023) proposes spiritual transformation rather than identity formation alone as the deeper aim. Read together with Erikson's (1968) account of adolescent identity, these studies indicate that the years from 12 to 18 are decisive for durable value formation, which strengthens the case for locating Pancasila character formation within ordinary pastoral work rather than in additional external programs.

This study has limitations. The empirical component rests on a single key informant, so the three relational patterns describe recurring observations rather than statistically generalizable frequencies. The theological correspondence is interpretive and remains open to alternative readings within and beyond Christian tradition. These limits define the scope of the claims advanced here.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to establish the correspondence between biblical values and the principles of Pancasila, to describe the patterns shaping church–state interaction at the congregational level, and to propose a route by which pastors can form Pancasila character without an external mandate. The relationship between the Bible and Pancasila is better understood as contribution than as reception, a reading supported by the participation of Leimena, Maramis, and Ratulangi in formulating the national ideology. Pastors therefore already hold a theological mandate to form the character of adolescents aged 12 to 18 through preaching, catechesis, and youth ministry, and the binding constraint is interpretive awareness rather than a shortage of programs. Theological reframing addresses this constraint from within the tradition, which makes it more likely to be accepted because it respects ecclesial autonomy while showing that national and biblical values express a shared commitment. For the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its Christian extension officers, the practical implication is a shift from delivering Pancasila to congregations toward helping congregations recognize the Pancasila values already present in their scriptural tradition. Future research could test the reframing across multiple congregations and regions, incorporate the perspectives of adolescents and parents, and measure changes in character outcomes over time.

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