

## Portrait of Graduate Theology In Indonesia: The Conflict Between God's Needs and Self-Life Needs

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**Abstract:** The background study explores Portrait of Graduate Theology in Indonesia as it relates to the dilemma between serving God and your own needs, particularly in light of the increasing number of theology graduates and their employment challenges. The increase in the number of theology majors by 13% raises concerns, given that 42% of these graduates face unemployment. This situation highlights a significant gap in theological education, where the quality may not meet the job market demands. The objective research aims to understand how theological education can better prepare students for spiritual service and practical life needs. This research employs a literature review approach, examining existing theoretical frameworks and empirical data on the social dynamics surrounding theology graduates. It examines various customs, norms, and societal expectations influencing these graduates' educational experiences and career paths. The increasing number of theology graduates juxtaposed with high unemployment presents a critical challenge for theological education. By adopting holistic approaches integrating spiritual formation with practical applications, institutions can better prepare students to navigate their dual roles in serving God and fulfilling personal life needs. This alignment could ultimately reduce unemployment rates among theology graduates while enriching their contributions to society.

**Keywords:** graduate theology, conflict, god's need, self-life need, serving god

### A. Introduction

The cliché and most significant challenge to learning as a servant of God in a theological high school is secularism. The life of students or scholars of theology, even God's servants, always experience life mixed with spiritual values; it is found that many servants of God live their lives full-time, but not a few of God's servants

depend on their secular work. Philosophical and psychological values illuminate their faith and ignore Bible values<sup>1</sup>.

Alistair Mackenzie divides life into three parts: contemplation (*vita contemplativa*) for God's servants, including students of theology, active life/work (*vita activa*) for workers (worldly), and a mixture of both for people who live as servants and work<sup>2</sup>.

Becoming a theology student means learning to study Christianity and encouraging students to think critically about the contents and verses in the Bible so that they can adapt and apply them according to the times. Generally, knowledge of theology can be a leadership foundation that will be very helpful for those of you who have plans to become Christian pastors and preachers<sup>3</sup>. Subjects obtained are basic: Logic, Sociology, Church History, Ecumenical, Church Management, Pastoral Counseling, Systematic Theology, Missiology, Philosophy, Homiletics, and others. After graduation, they are prepared for job opportunities as Pastor, Religion Teacher, Lecturer, Evangelist, and so on<sup>4</sup>. Career opportunities for theological scholars can open up as church workers, lecturers, deacons in parishes or religious institutions, editors in religious publications, religious teachers, staff in churches or religious agencies, and theological journalists<sup>5</sup>.

The theological scholar longed for him to become a pastor, a respected and loved figure. The pastor's duties include being a shepherd, teacher, and leader to provide services and guide the congregation. Some pastors' lifestyles are rich, and some are very simple. But before discussing the pastor's salary, he said that the

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<sup>1</sup> G. P. Harianto et al., "Honor Dei as a Learning of the Need to Appreciate God's Servants in the Church," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 1 (2022): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.46222/PHAROSJOT.10426>.

<sup>2</sup> Alistair Mackenzie, "By," no. December (1997).

<sup>3</sup> G. P. Harianto et al., "Opus Dei: A Challenge for Church Leadership," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 2 (2023): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.224>.

<sup>4</sup> Frederich Oscar Lambertus Lontoh and Philip Suciadi Chia, "The Role of Preaching in Congregational Organizational Commitment: GKI Dasa Surabaya's Case Study," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 1 (2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.46222/PHAROSJOT.10414>.

<sup>5</sup> Frederich Oscar Lambertus Lontoh and Philip Suciadi Chia, "An Evaluation of Christian Education in Indonesia in Light of Targum: A Cognitive Psychology Approach," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 1 (2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.1044>.

happiness of a pastor does not depend on his economic condition. So, it is common to find a pastor whose economy is simple but still happy<sup>6</sup>.

Then that means the faculty or department of theology has never formed a pastor. Pastor is a way of life born of an existential struggle, more than just a profession (Latin: *profiteer*, profession, a person who has unique skills and makes promises in public). Thus, anyone can achieve a priesthood if he continues to desire and direct himself to serve God; he is a Pastor. The pastor profession is different from other professions. Pastors give themselves to preach God's Word, serving various kinds of people for the glory of God's name. They must always be willing to be placed anywhere, educating and fostering the congregation.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that as of February 2022, Indonesia's unemployment rate was 5.83 percent of the total working-age population of 208.54 million. Of the 5.83 percent, almost 14 percent are residents with diploma and bachelor degree (S1) graduates.<sup>8</sup>

This study aims to critically analyze the dilemma theology graduates face in Indonesia as they navigate the tension between their vocation calling to ministry and the practical demands of everyday life. By exploring this intersection, the research seeks to uncover the challenges, motivations, and potential pathways that influence their decisions and professional trajectories.<sup>9</sup> Bangun Munte said that many seminaries are completely irrelevant to the world of ministry because their graduates contradict the mission values and theological foundations taught in the Bible.<sup>10</sup> This is due to (1) the low quality of most of the prospective. Students who are "input" at the High School of Theology. (2) curriculum that is less relevant

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<sup>6</sup> Frederich Oscar Lambertus Lontoh and Philip Suciadi Chia, "The Religiosity and Self-Awareness Effect On Chinese-Christian Worker Professionalism in Indonesia," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103, no. 2 (2022): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.46222/PHAROSJOT.103.2049>.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Charing et al, "Christianity Today," in *Six World Faiths*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350933897.0036>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bps.go.id/en/pressrelease/2022/05/09/1915/february-2022-the-unemployment-rate-was-5-83-percent-and-the-average-labour-wage-was-2-89-milion-rupiahs-per-month.html>

<sup>9</sup> Alonso, Antonio Eduardo. *Theological Education between the Times: Reflections on the Telos of Theological Education*. USA: American Academy of Religion, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Bangun Munthe et al, "The Role of the Teacher in Implementing Christian Religion Education in Growing Christian Faith for Early Age Children," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 7, no. 3 (2023): 2641-49, <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i3.4484>.

to the challenges of the times. (3) Graduates from the Theological High School who have not been able to fill the church's resource needs. (4) Universities only complement students academically but are less successful in equipping students with service skills<sup>11</sup>. To strengthen the introduction regarding theology and ministry in Indonesia, particularly in the context of societal development, it is essential to reference a variety of relevant literature that captures the evolving dynamics of religious practice and theological discourse in the country. The construction of contextual theology in Indonesia has been ongoing since the 1970s. Early efforts focused on Old Testament theology, highlighting a one-way interpretative model where biblical texts were authoritative sources without significant engagement from local contexts. Recent scholarship calls for a more dialogical approach that bridges biblical texts with contemporary Indonesian realities, recognizing readers' diverse backgrounds and experiences today.<sup>12</sup> Indonesia's multicultural landscape significantly influences its theological discourse. Religious moderation has emerged as a critical framework for fostering harmony among various faiths. This approach emphasizes interreligious dialogue and mutual respect, which are essential for navigating the complexities of Indonesia's diverse religious environment. Research indicates that peace-based Christian education is pivotal in promoting religious moderation, addressing conflicts, and enhancing social cohesion within this multicultural society.<sup>13</sup>

To enhance the introduction of a study on theological education in Indonesia, it is essential to delve deeper into the issue's significance, particularly by incorporating relevant statistical data and social trends. The results of Pasaribu's analysis showed that the number of students interested in studying theology majors increased by 13% between 2014 and 2024. The promotion of various theological high schools has also been evenly distributed on various social media

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<sup>11</sup> Sugjianti Supit, "The Revolution of Christian Religious Education in Indonesia: A Historical Liberation Perspective," *International Journal of Education, Information Technology, and Others* 7, no. 2 (2024): 226–37.

<sup>12</sup> Agustinus Setiawidi, "Indonesian Journal of Theology 5/2," *Indonesian Journal of Theology* 2, no. 5 (2017): 147–77.

<sup>13</sup> Djoys A. Rantung, "A Proposal of Multicultural Relation: Christian Religious Education and Religious Moderation," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (2024): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9868>.

along with their understanding, influencing students' interest in entering college.<sup>14</sup> This means that many open spaces will be available to qualified theologians. However, other data show that there are so many unemployed graduates of theology. Data from the Labor Market Outcomes of College Graduates by Major said that 42% of graduates from the Department of Theology and Religion were unemployed. The number of unemployed theological graduates needs to be taken seriously. Meanwhile, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that as of February 2022, Indonesia's unemployment rate was 5.83 percent of the total working-age population of 208.54 million. Of the 5.83 percent, almost 14 percent are residents with diploma and bachelor degree (S1) graduates.

This study aims to critically analyze the dilemma theology graduates face in Indonesia as they navigate the tension between their vocation calling to ministry and the practical demands of everyday life. By exploring this intersection, the research seeks to uncover the challenges, motivations, and potential pathways that influence their decisions and professional trajectories. To strengthen the introduction regarding theology and ministry in Indonesia, particularly in the context of societal development, it is essential to reference a variety of relevant literature that captures the evolving dynamics of religious practice and theological discourse in the country. The construction of contextual theology in Indonesia has been ongoing since the 1970s. Early efforts focused on Old Testament theology, highlighting a one-way interpretative model where biblical texts were authoritative sources without significant engagement from local contexts. Recent scholarship calls for a more dialogical approach that bridges biblical texts with contemporary Indonesian realities, recognizing readers' diverse backgrounds and experiences today. Indonesia's multicultural landscape significantly influences its theological discourse. Religious moderation has emerged as a critical framework for fostering harmony among various faiths. This approach emphasizes interreligious dialogue and mutual respect, which are essential for navigating the complexities of Indonesia's diverse religious environment. Research indicates that peace-based Christian education is pivotal in promoting

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<sup>14</sup> Budiman, "Habitus Dalam Mengikuti Kristus: Kaitan Antara Etika Karakter Dan Spiritualitas Kristen."

religious moderation, addressing conflicts, and enhancing social cohesion within this multicultural society.

## **B. Method**

The methodology used in this study is a literature study, but this stage is used to establish the direction of analyzing the problem. The research methodology described involves a bibliographic review, essential for understanding the theoretical frameworks and social norms relevant to the study of theological scholars and their professional trajectories. This approach allows researchers to systematically gather, analyze, and interpret existing literature related to their specific research questions, particularly in contexts where gaps in knowledge exist.<sup>15</sup> This research is related to theoretical observations and other references related to numbers, customs, and norms that grow in the social atmosphere being watched. Bibliography research is significant in conducting research<sup>16</sup>. Information is obtained by studying and linking literature related to cases experienced about portraits of theological scholars, looking for gaps in graduates serving full-time and working as seculars, and looking for ways to overcome these problems. This stage is used to establish and direct the analysis of the problem. The research methodology described involves a bibliographic review, essential for understanding the theoretical frameworks and social norms relevant to the study of theological scholars and their professional trajectories. This approach allows researchers to systematically gather, analyze, and interpret existing literature related to their specific research questions, particularly in contexts where gaps in knowledge exist.<sup>17</sup>

## **C. Finding and Discussion**

The Bachelor of Theology degree (STh.) is an academic degree given to someone who has completed higher education majoring in Theology at the Strata

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<sup>15</sup> Sugiyono, "Sugiyono Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif," *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif*, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> John W. Creswell, *Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan Campuran* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar, 2021).

<sup>17</sup> Yolvi Ocaña-fernández and Doris Fuster-guillén, "The Bibliographical Review as a Research Methodology" e Bibliographical Review as a Research Methodology," 2021.

1 (S1) level. Bachelor's degrees in Theology are tiered, starting from the level of S1 (Bachelor of Theology/S.Th.), Masters (Master of Theology/M.Th.), and Doctoral (Doctor of Theology/D.Th.) levels.<sup>18</sup>

Theology means the science of the things of God, not according to human reasoning but divine revelation, which shows who God is in himself and what he relates to a person.<sup>19</sup> Theology from *theo* and *logos* refers to the Word about God (*Peri theou logon*).<sup>20</sup> Theology is the mother of all sciences; therefore, theology is the application of God's Word to human life,<sup>21</sup> as learning aspects of one's faith,<sup>22</sup> and values God's truth.<sup>23</sup>

Theology is a life expectancy that has a closer relationship with God, the Creator. This hope places the function of theology as a solution to human problems in the world, namely, giving humans life in holiness, life in eschatological victory, and life as Salt and Light of the World.<sup>24</sup>

### **1. *Portrait of the Theological Education Gap Between Service Fields and Work***

Many interested students study theology majors but find many graduates who become unemployed or do not work in their field. The Bachelor of Theology diploma is considered the same as other diplomas and is used to apply for employees in banks, supermarkets, finance, tourism places, etc. There is a shift in interest from "theology" as God's servant to "secular" as the fulfillment of the world's (physical) needs. So, there is a gap between the vision of theological education and graduation in the field. The research results by McKinsey, UNESCO, and ILO (2008) found a gap between the education system and the world of work

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<sup>18</sup>Fredrik Dandel, "Differences in Bachelor of Theology (S.Th.) and Pastor" (2021); <https://www.kompasiana.com/fredrikdandel/61bb243f15739521c63dcd42/perbedaan-sarjana-theologi-sth-dan-pendeta>.

<sup>19</sup>Richard Muller, *Post-Reformed Dogmatics Reformed. Vol One: Prologomena to Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003).

<sup>20</sup>Bradley C. Hanson, *Introduction to Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 4.

<sup>21</sup>Stanley J Grenz, *Who needs theology?* (England: IVP, 1996).

<sup>22</sup>Shirley C. Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Michigan: IVP, 1999).

<sup>24</sup>GP Harianto, "The Function of Theology to Overcome Human Suffering in the Era of the Industrial Revolution 5.0"; *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 3 (2022).

in Indonesia. The gap is that the graduates produced by universities are not what job users need.<sup>25</sup> In Indonesia, the number of Theological Colleges (Theological Colleges, Christian Religion Colleges, and Bible Colleges) reaches 380 institutions with a minimum of 3-4 study programs. Much theological education has just emerged and has not been accredited at BAN-PT.

## **2. Quality of Theological Education**

The quality of theological education determines graduation. If the quality is high, the graduation is also of high quality. Ronda said that the current quality of theological education is as follows: (1) The quality of education as a whole must be good from the start of education, and a good process ultimately produces quality graduates. (2) Theological education is made in the style of Bible courses, where one or two lecturers teach most subjects. (3) The amount of instant theological education in giving degrees, for S1, is enough to take 1-2 years, for Masters, 6 months to one year, and S3 is enough for 1 year. (4) there is a theological school that manages education to be used as a source of funds for managers of theological education. The title is then commercialized and "sold" to pastors and church leaders who feel that their prestige has risen with the title they bear. (5) other motives emerged later, namely the euphoria of building STT or the church having to have its own STT. (6) Many lecturers do not have the quality of their competence.<sup>26</sup>

Theological Colleges experience extraordinary challenges, not only from the external side due to the dynamics and development of higher education in Indonesia and globally, but also from the internal side. The unavailability of lecturers and educational staff with adequate qualifications, the infrastructure that is still far from the standards set by the government, and many other things will show the internal weaknesses of the university.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>M. Choirul Anwar, "Why are many graduates unemployed and finding it difficult to find work?", Kompas (2008); <https://money.kompas.com/read/2022/03/23/182849126/why-multiple-sarjana-menGGir-dan-gulung-mencari-kerja?page=all>.

<sup>26</sup>Daniel Ronda, "The Quality of Theological Schools and Their Impact on the Church"; Indonesian Gospel Tent Church (2016), <https://kemah-injil.org/2016/11/29/mutu-school-teologi-dan-dampaknya-bagi-church/>

<sup>27</sup>Thomas Pentury, "PTKKI, Present Struggles and Future Hopes: Symbiotic Relations between BMPTKKI and PTKKI", Bunga Rampai Moving From Local to Global Connections: Innovation and



### **3. The Bible is a Teaching Source**

The Bible is a teaching resource in theological education. In developing theological education, Tan Giok Lie said that theological education is: (1) believing in and upholding the Bible as absolute truth because the Bible is God's written revelation; (2) believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, so that Christian education begins with salvation or new life in Christ. (3) believes that every student is God's creation in the image and likeness of God, that is, as a very good creation before Him, but who has fallen into sin; (4) believes that graduates who are smart/wise are not measured by possessing natural knowledge without knowing Christ as the true wisdom of God.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the theological college will be able to become a bridge between educators and students to relate Biblical values in conveying the truth and recognizing it biblically.<sup>29</sup>

The Bible enlivens theological education because the Bible is life, the work of God, and the values that God instills in His people.<sup>30</sup>

### **4. The Expanding Role of Theological Colleges**

Today's theological education is no longer the business of the church alone but also the affairs of the world of education, the scientific world, the political world, and the ecumenical world in an increasingly broad sense. Theology is a common problem that does not need to be taken care of alone. All managers and implementers of theological schools would realize this dimension.<sup>31</sup>

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Transformation of Christian Religious Higher Education in Indonesia (Jakarta: BMPTKKI, 2022), 15-16.

<sup>28</sup>Tan Giok Lie, "Challenges of Present Christian Education and Teaching in the Formal Realm", *Stulos Journal of Theology* 12, no.1 (2013), 9-16.

<sup>29</sup>Mark Phillips Eliasaputra, Martina Novalina, and Ruth Judica Siahaan, "Challenges of Christian Religious Education in the Era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and After the Truth", *Bonafide: Journal of Theology and Christian Education* 1, no. 1(2020), 1-22.

<sup>30</sup>GP Harianto, Benjamin Metekohy, Novita Sahertian, and David Ming. 2023. "Honor Dei as a Learning of the Need to Appreciate God's Servants in the Church." *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104(1). [https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_26\\_vol\\_104\\_1\\_2023.pdf](https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_26_vol_104_1_2023.pdf).

<sup>31</sup>Robert Setio, "Issues of Theological Education in Indonesia"; *Researchgate* (2012); [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334042016\\_Isu-isu\\_Pendidikan\\_Teologi\\_di\\_Indonesia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334042016_Isu-isu_Pendidikan_Teologi_di_Indonesia).

Ott said that the essence of theological education is education centered on God, God's Word, and mission.<sup>32</sup> Homrighausen conveyed that Christian education is a Bible-based, Christ-centered educational process that guides each individual through each stage of growth and knows and experiences God's plan and will through Christ in all things, depending on the power of the Holy Spirit in the learning process.<sup>33</sup> Sijuang said that Christian education aims to guide and encourage individuals and groups to know, love, respect, obey, and glorify God as shown by Jesus Christ to God the Father with the help of the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup>

But theological education, at this time, has widened. The government has opened new study programs into 28 branches, from undergraduate to doctoral study programs, with the uniqueness of each graduation, such as Theology, Pastoral Counseling, Missiology, Mission and Christian Communication, Christian Leadership, Religious Anthropology, Studies of Religions, Bible, Biblical Linguistics and Language, Church Management, Bible Interpretation, Christian Religious Education, Early Childhood Christian Education, Church Music Education, Religious Extension Education, Christian Education Management, Christian Religious Teacher Education, Christian Guidance and Counseling, Religious Arts Education, Sociology of Religion, Church Music, Christian Psychology, Religious Performing Arts, Religion and Culture, Cultural and Religious Tourism, Library and Christian Religious Information Science.<sup>35</sup> It can be said that some graduates graduate full-time as servants of God in churches, educational institutions, or secular jobs, only using the name "Christian."

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<sup>32</sup>Benhard Ott, *Understanding and Developing Theological Education* (Carlisle: Langham Publishing, 2016).

<sup>33</sup>EG Homrighausen and IH Enklaar, *Christian Religious Education* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2011), 44.

<sup>34</sup>BS Sidjib, *Teaching Professionally* (Bandung: Kalam Hidup, 2009), 228.

<sup>35</sup>"Attachment to the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 35 of 2019 concerning the Second Amendment to the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 33 of 2016 concerning Academic Degrees of Religious Higher Education". Jakarta: Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia.

### **5. *Efforts to Overcome Dilemmas of Undergraduate Theology Between Serving God with Self-Life Needs***

Bachelor of Theology who is indeed a servant of God. When he surrenders his life to serving God, God Himself will provide for all the necessities of daily life. The servant of God doesn't need to think about anything more than working secularly to get the necessities of daily life because God has provided a means of integrity for himself as a servant. Harianto GP said that God's servant must have a comprehensive picture of integrity for himself. Studying at the seminary has formed integrity as a servant whose life only relies on God in the field of his servant.<sup>36</sup> However, if a servant of God is found who still wants to live for the world and allows himself to be plunged into the world's life, then this servant of God needs to rearrange how the image (integrity) of himself is like that of Christ.

"Because we are made by God, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared beforehand. He wants us to live in it" (Eph. 2:10). "Many thoughts are in the heart of man, but the decrees of the Lord are carried out" (Prov. 19:21). This verse reminds us that God wants every human being (His people) to live in Him and walk according to His plan. Everything His people decide is in God's design so that God will protect, care for, and provide for all their life needs. Theological education cannot be separated from God's design, so it carries out holistic-integrative learning for theology students, learning spiritual formation as a servant, and learning theory and practice in the job field.

### **6. *Holistic-Integrative Learning for Theology Students***

Theology is a means of sharing in the church congregation community so that it can connect local communities of worship. Sharing aims to proclaim that Jesus, crucified and resurrected, will form a certain social imaginary.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, theological education is not about dry academic knowledge but stewardship of

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<sup>36</sup>Harianto GP, "Knowledge Integrity and Everyday Life of Believers according to Calvin"; Silver & Diamond: A Collection of Writings in the Context of the 25th Anniversary of the Bandung Theological College and the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (Bandung: STT Bandung, 2017), 505.

<sup>37</sup>Geoff Thompson, "The Functions of Theology: Loosening the Nexus Between Theological Education and Ministerial Formation," *Colloquium* 47:2 (2015): 208-220.

God's mysteries, work, a disciple of Christ, witnessing, and issues of physical need (hunger and thirst).<sup>38</sup>

Sabdono said that theology students were made to be disciples of Jesus, not students of the Church or priests. The main problem is how the life of theology student graduates inspires the congregation in the Church and the general public to become disciples of Jesus.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Himawan provides a solution to holistic-integral learning: (1) intellectual formation, (2) ministry skills formation, and (3) spiritual, relational, and personal formation.<sup>40</sup>

### **7. Learning Spiritual Formation as a Servant**

A theology scholar should have laid down his life only to serve God. His soul belongs to God. His property is God's. Everything he has belongs to God. He has no right to bargain for changes in his life status, including his economic situation. Whatever God gives and entrusts to him is what he must do. "Because if we live, we live for God, and if we die, we die for God. So whether we live or die, we belong to God" (Rom. 14:8).

Alonso said that a scholar of theology and even a theological college must: (1) carry out a vision that refers to God's hope, not human hope. (2) refers to the limits of what humans can do with the depth of what the world needs: learn how to live in the world. (3) referring to the fear of God is the beginning of the wisdom of every theological scholar (wider: Christian theology education).<sup>41</sup>

Several factors determine commitment to life as a servant of God: (1) religious factors, which have a positive impact; (2) teacher/lecturer factors, who

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<sup>38</sup>Domenic Marbaniang, "The Significance of Theological Education"; *Researchgate*(2016), 5; [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341450998\\_Significance\\_of\\_Theological\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341450998_Significance_of_Theological_Education).

<sup>39</sup>Erastus Sabdono, "Projection of Indonesian Christian Religious College Students"; *Bunga Rampai Moving From Local to Global Connections: Innovation and Transformation of Christian Religious Higher Education in Indonesia* (Jakarta: BMPTKKI, 2022), 145.

<sup>40</sup>Andreas Himawan, "Theological Students Formed Holistically in High Schools of Theology as a Seminary"; *Bunga Anthology Moving From Local to Global Connections: Innovation and Transformation of Christian Religious Higher Education in Indonesia* (Jakarta: BMPTKKI, 2022), 151.

<sup>41</sup>Antonio Eduardo Alonso, *Theological Education between the Times: Reflections on the Telos of Theological Education* (USA: American Academy of Religion, 2017), 28.

care about students/students; (3) teacher/lecturer factors, who set an example, and (4) communication factor, which supports spiritual growth.<sup>42</sup>

### **8. Learning Theory and Practice of the Job Field**

Theological education learning must balance theory and practice. Theory (cognitive) must be well mastered, but practice (psychomotor) must be honed into an all-around ability to answer ministry needs at church and school. Because when he was in the position of a scholar, he was confronted with his knowledge, morals, and skills in the service field.

Thompson said a pastor's job is to help people live their lives to the fullest. Pastors must have hope and work, as necessary, for a meaningful life. Pastors work with young people to generate hope, as a unique foundation, and create plans to find work so they can have a sustainable livelihood and live life to the fullest.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the balance of theory and practice is significant for theological scholars ready to use it in ministry.

The balance of theory and practice is achieved on campus and when theological scholars serve in God's field. Cloete says to get through the church. The church can help the unemployed by confirming their identity and self-worth (human dignity). Fundamental theological challenges and questions need to be contemplated and followed up by the church in its efforts to help restore and affirm human dignity today, especially in the context of youth unemployment.<sup>44</sup>

Turan said that theological issues are employment issues related to physical needs, so an interesting issue from theology is discussing employment, such as where you want to work after graduating with a degree in theology. So, theological education is more likely to create jobs (offer job opportunities).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Junianawaty Suhendra, "Young Generation and School Spirituality", *Spirituality Dynamics of Indonesian Christian Young Generation* (Jakarta: Yayasan Bilangan Research Center, 2002), 105.

<sup>43</sup>Yulianus Bani et al., "The Advantages of Christianity in the Era of Disruption," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 3 (2023): 0–1, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.325>.

<sup>44</sup>Gloria Marsay, "Pastoral Response to Unemployment: Hermeneutics of Hope and Work Pastoral Response to Unemployment: Hermeneutics of Hope and Work e Question Posed as a Background to This Paper Is: Can the Church" 6, no. 1 (2020): 457–76.

<sup>45</sup>I. Turan, "Theology Education in Turkey: An Overview of the Relationship between Teaching Programs and Employment Opportunities". *Journal of Istanbul University Faculty of Theology* (2017): 59-77

The relationship between education and employment is determined not only by the function of education to prepare to learn for subsequent work assignments and other areas of life but also by the fact that education chooses: in an educational meritocracy, monetary resources, and social recognition are largely determined by levels of attainment individual education and their competencies that are fostered during learning. However, the level and type of education never 'fit' with the professional position and job requirements. Imperfection is unavoidable, as individuals must be trained to cope with imperfection and be able to change jobs and work on their own proactively. National education and training traditions persist to the extent that education can vary from being understood as a general foundation for professional learning in the workplace to being understood as specific training for each job. The rapid expansion of education is interpreted as serving the needs of the knowledge society as an excess supply that can be absorbed and as stimulating changes in employment and employment systems.<sup>46</sup>

The author can significantly strengthen their discussion by enhancing logical connections between arguments, engaging critically with existing literature, and incorporating empirical research on theology graduates in Indonesia. These improvements will make the argument more compelling and give readers a richer understanding of the complexities involved in theological education and its impact on graduates' lives.

#### **D. Conclusion**

To strengthen the conclusion regarding the implications of challenges faced by theological education in Indonesia, it is essential to reiterate the main findings and suggest how theological institutions can adapt to these challenges. The Bachelor of Theology (BTh) is an undergraduate degree that typically spans two to five years and focuses on theological disciplines. Individuals seeking ordination or leadership roles in religious organizations often pursue this degree. The curriculum generally includes coursework in biblical languages, systematic theology, ethics, and practical ministry skills, equipping graduates to apply theological principles in various contexts, including church and community

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<sup>46</sup>Ulrich Teichler, "Education and Employment"; International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (2015), 127-131, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.92059-2>.

service. There are notable disparities in theological education between service and employment fields. Key issues include: 1. Quality of Education: Many theological programs are criticized for not meeting educational standards, which can hinder the effectiveness of graduates in ministry roles. 2. Use of the Bible: In some institutions, the Bible is not treated as a primary teaching resource but is instead integrated superficially into the curriculum, which can diminish the depth of theological training. 3. Expanding Role of Theological Education: The scope of theological education has broadened to encompass various disciplines beyond traditional theology, diluting core theological training. To overcome the challenges faced by theology students in balancing their commitment to serve God with personal life needs, several strategies are being implemented: 1. Holistic Integrative Learning: This approach emphasizes a comprehensive educational experience that integrates various aspects of theology with practical application. 2. Spiritual Formation: Students are encouraged to engage in spiritual formation practices that prepare them for community servant leadership roles. 3. Theory and Practice: Programs increasingly incorporate theoretical knowledge and practical skills relevant to contemporary ministry settings, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for real-world challenges. These efforts aim to enhance theological education's relevance and quality and better equip students for ministry and personal growth.

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