

# Christianization as a Challenge for Islamic Da'wah in Indonesia

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## Abstract

*The aim of this study was to evaluate the growth and impact of Christianity as a missionary religion on the Islamic da'wah in Indonesia, where the Muslim community has a long history of resistance to colonialization, which was initiated by the Christian community. Furthermore, a qualitative descriptive method was used with data predominantly obtained through the observation of facts in the Christianization field. In addition, the effects of Christianity on the Islamic da'wah were analyzed through a review of documentation and reference studies. The results showed that some of the methods used by Christians in spreading their religion and movements were occupation, politics, Western citizens, poverty, diseases, consciousness weakness, self-preparation, Muslims' indulgence, financial guarantees, Laziness in teachings, preparing the missionaries, and brainwashing. By utilizing these methods, Christians often proclaimed their denomination and congregation, ultimately leading to various community conflicts. The findings suggest the need for a healthy and productive dialogue from a new perspective to resolve conflicts, promote harmony, and create a fairer, peaceful, and innovative civilization that views religion through spiritual perspectives.*

**Keywords:** Christianization; Islamic Da'wah; Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

The current era of globalization and technology presents several challenges to the da'wah, including a lack of strong Islamic understanding among the Muslim community, the spread of misguided thinking from Western civilization, and the implementation of secular laws that contravene God's regulations. To overcome these challenges, various channels are employed to spread the message of da'wah, such as books, bulletins, social media, newspapers, and magazines. However, the development of these channels is facing challenges of its own among the Muslim population. In Indonesia specifically, the da'wah is facing challenges such as apostasy and movements towards secularization and nativization (Husaini, 2007). This condition is arguably in line with the statement of Allah in the Qur'an, indicating the following:

*“Most of the People of the Book wish that they could return you to disbelief after you have believed, because of the envy that (arising) from themselves, after the truth has become apparent to them. So, forgive and leave them alone, until Allah brings His command. Verily Allah has power over all things”* (Al-Baqarah [2] 109).

Since the inception of Islam, the People of the Book, meaning Jews and Christians, have consistently plotted against the religion and its Prophet. This is in line with the declaration made by God regarding the enmity towards Muslims, which is one of His *sunnatullah*. In Al-Baqarah [2] 217, God stated that *“They will not stop fighting you until they (can) return you from your religion (to disbelief) if they can”*. The declaration in Al-Baqarah [2] 105 also indicated that *“The disbelievers of the People of the Book and the polytheists do not wish to send down anything good to you from your Lord, And He told the Almighty that they are not satisfied with anything until we follow them in their religion”*. For Al-Baqarah [2] 120, it was then stated, *“The Jews and the Christians will not be pleased with you until you follow their religion.”*

Based on historical context, the Christians have waged war against Muslims since the Crusades. This background explains the long-standing opposition of the Indonesian Muslim community towards colonization initiated by Christian society. As a result, the Muslim community has endured deep wounds, with Muslims suffering from attacks on their religion, land, and honor. This represents a significant threat to the Islamic faith and its establishment in the hearts of Muslims (Abd Al-Wahhab, 1981; Hamilton, 1997; Christie, 2006; Chevedden, 2008). During the colonial era, Christians made significant efforts to convert the Muslim community away from Islam, using various methods and strategies. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the goals, means, and effects of Christianization, in order to prevent Muslims from abandoning Islam. In many areas of the world, Christianization has been present for a long time (Alpyspaeva et al., 2019; Hakobyan, 2021; Melnikova, 2018; Štih, 2015) and is still actively preparing for a fierce war with Islam (Daulay, 2015).

The politicization of religion often leads to conflicts among people of different and similar beliefs, particularly in multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities (Popovska et al., 2017; Slaveski et al., 2017). This is not a new phenomenon, as religious conflicts have been present throughout the history of human civilization. For instance, the US September 11 attack, the Arab-Israel conflict, the Iraq invasion, the Military Aggression in Afghanistan, and the Moslem-Buddhist dispute in South Thailand. Several cases are also experienced regionally, such as the Moro Moslem Conflict in Mindanao, South Philippines, as well as some racial, ethnic, religious, and group conflicts in Indonesia. According to the Setara Institute, a total of 160 incidents and 202 cases of religious freedom violation were observed across the 34 provinces of Indonesia in 2018. This included the Kalimantan Tengah Sampit case, the Sulawesi Tengah Poso conflict, the Maluku dispute, the 1998 riots, the Sunni-Shia believers' hostility

in Sampang, the Sumatera Utara Tanjung Balai Case, etc (Ismail & Uyuni, 2020; Mubarok, 2015).

The conflicts in human life arise from various factors, including religion, politics, and arms trade. In the context of religious conflicts, these often stem from differing interpretations and implementations of God's teachings, as well as subjectivity, self-interest, and competition between various groups (Seul, 1999; Spiro, 1966). However, it is important to remember that there is a principle of no religious compulsion, as only God provides and dictates the different paths for people to find the truth. This highlights the reality of human plurality and the importance of avoiding the imposition of religion on others (Madjid, 1998). Although many Muslim intellectuals write about Christianity, they do not have an anti-Christian stance and instead strive to bridge conflicts between the two religions, particularly in Indonesia. The lack of harmony between Islam and Christianity is often fueled by suspicion, leading to conflicts and damage to places of worship. Therefore, this study aims to examine of Christianization as a challenge to Islam da'wah in Indonesia. This topic is very important since Islam is the major religion in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive method, which is often implemented interchangeably with distinct interpretations. Based on the qualitative and descriptive analyses, a common denominator is the use of naturalistic data, implying that intervention or manipulation of variables is avoided when studying language acquisition and teaching. However, several distinctions were found between these experimental forms, such as objectives, oversight levels, and data analysis methods (Nassaji, 2015). For the descriptive method, the focus is often on characterizing a phenomenon and its peculiarities, with majority of the related analyses being more

concerned with the "what" than the "how" or "why" of the study emphasis. This showed that several techniques such as surveys and observations are frequently employed to compile information (Gall et al., 2006). Meanwhile, qualitative method was used in numerical analyses, where the results are typically examined statistically by calculating frequency distributions, averages, and other factual measures, to obtain conclusions about causal links. The method commonly employed a more all-encompassing approach and typically entailed a wealth of data collection from many sources, to acquire a deeper knowledge of individual participants, including their ideas, viewpoints, and attitudes. The information obtained and analyzed in the method is also qualitatively prioritized, leading to an inductive data analysis approach. This approach is used to describe and interpret the resulting categories that have been identified.

Quantitative method was mostly applied to the factual data acquired through a qualitative technique, where in-depth analysis was initially conducted to extract salient themes and ideas. These extractions were then transformed into numerical data for adequate comparison and evaluation (Nassaji, 2015). Based on this study, data were predominantly obtained by using factual observations in the Christianization field. Its impacts on Islamic da'wah were also analyzed through documentation and reference studies, specifically in Indonesia. The data originated from field notes, through the extended observations of official documents such as the Qur'an, Al-Hadith, and statutory regulation verses, as well as Islamic scholar analyses.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Christianization concept**

Christianization is the process of introducing Christianity to non-Christians or encouraging the embrace of the religion. This is a religious, political, and colonial movement that emerged after the

failure of the Crusades to spread Christianity among the different nations in the Third World countries, specifically the Muslims. In this case, the spread of religion emphasized the tightening of control over those people. Moreover, Christianization consists of a missionary group occupying a specific area, working to Christianize its residents, and establishing a national church. The administrative and financial responsibility of this establishment is mostly delegated to the people spreading Christianity in areas not reached by the missionaries. It is also established for the conversion of nonbelievers into Christians, with its good effect adequately sufficient to confuse them that religion is a route to humankind, joy, and happiness. Another term for Christianization is evangelism, which involves the introduction of Jesus Christ to people, to promote the abstinence from sins. It also involves the belief in God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, as well as obeying and practicing His teachings (Saleh, 1989).

Christianization is carried out by churches, evangelistic agencies, or individual Christians. Besides changing one's religious status, it also transforms the customs and associations of society to conform to Christian teachings. From this context, Christianity is only intended for atheists and those already having a specific religion. In ancient Indonesia, Christianity was mostly carried out by missionaries from the Netherlands. In this case, Christianization is considered a sacred duty in Catholicism, indicating a person's return to the right path. From a Christian perspective, it is explained as the return of the lost sheep to their shepherd. The mission of Christianization is also based on the commandment of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19, which stated the following, "Go, then, and make disciples of all nations, and wash them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit (Saleh, 1989).

*In addition, Christianity is widely understood as an organized, historical, and missionary religion. Firstly, as an organized religion, Christianity originally emphasized a church institution and not a*

religious practice. The "church" was selected due to being the religious institution in Christianity, where people without official cards are unrecognized as Christians ([van den End & de Jonge, 1997](#)). In 1474, Marsilio Ficino wrote a book, "*De Christiana Religione*", which implicitly marks the beginning of Christianity as a religious institution. From the book, one of the phrases indicated that "*that whoever they are, in worshiping and glorifying God, they must be as exemplified and taught by Christ*" ([Ficino, 1617](#)). In 1525, Zwingli, the leader of the Swiss Protestants, explicitly wrote about "Christian Religion" in the book, "*De Ver et Falsa Religione Commentarius*" (1525), where the span of years was quite far until Christianity was known as a religious institution ([Aulassyahied, 2019](#)).

Secondly, as a historical religion, the Christian doctrine evolved based on the experiences of its followers. For example, the doctrine was determined by the ruling authorities in that era. When Christianity became firmly established in the hearts of the Roman people, two sects, the followers of Arius and the followers of Athanasius, were in conflict with each other. The followers of Arius or Arianism believed that Jesus existed as a man ([Haugaard, 1960](#); [Lyman, 1989](#)), while the followers of Athanasius emphasized His existence as the Word of God made flesh ([Meyer, 1999](#); [Meijering, 2010](#)). These disputes prompted King Constantine to convene a Council, toward determining the appropriate belief to be established as the official doctrine. The Council ended with the election of the Arius belief by the majority of the community. Meanwhile, Constantine preferred to believe in Athanasius due to being closer to Greek mythology ([Aulassyahied, 2019](#)).

Thirdly, as a missionary religion, Christianity was essentially divided into different doctrines. In the beginning, it became exclusive teaching because the church power holders were authoritarian and dictatorial. This explained that the small states obtained from the

division of Rome were subjected to the power of the Church, which focused on economic authority. These practices were transformed after the outbreak of the French revolution, with the divisions between Christian sects continuously maintained until saturation. From this scenario, the ideology of pluralism was observed. accompanied by Evangelical Christianity with a strong character with the doctrine. This showed that salvation was unachievable except through religion, leading to the ability to persuade people toward embracing Christianity. In addition, the antithesis of Evangelism is Ecumenism, which recognizes the sects of various churches. Based on these descriptions, differences and similarities are only observed at the exoteric and esoteric levels of Christian values, respectively (Aulassyahied, 2019).

### **Christianization Fundamentals (the proposition of Christianization)**

The aim of Christianization is to Christianize or introduce Christianity to various people, focusing on only Bible verses than self-will. The following are some Bible verses emphasizing Christianization,

- a. Matthew 28:19-20: *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and make them do all things that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.”*
- b. Mark 16:15: *"Then He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'"*
- c. John 20:21: *“Then Jesus said to them again: 'Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, even so now I send you. '"*
- d. Luke 24: 47-48: *“Peace in His name, the news of repentance and forgiveness of sins is preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are a witness to all this.”*

- e. Acts 1: 8: "*But ye shall receive power, after that, the Holy Ghost comes upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

Based on these verses, Christianization is arguably an attempt to Christianize or introduce Christianity to all people, whose effort does not prioritize self-will (Betz, 1991; Stark, 1991).

### **The People of the Book**

The People of the Book is an Islamic term prioritizing Christians, Jews, Sabians (commonly identified with the Mandaeans) and Zoroastrians, which are mentioned in the Qur'an. This ideology is employed in Judaism for the surveillance of the Jewish people, with some Christian denomination members implementing it for themselves. The Qur'an also used the ideology in various contexts, from religious polemics to passages emphasizing the community of faith among possessors of monotheistic scriptures. Furthermore, the Qur'an focuses on the community of faith between monotheistic scripture possessors and occasionally considers the religious and moral virtues of early-revelation societies. In this scenario, Muhammad is called upon to ask them for information. Based on the refusal of Jews and Christians to accept Muhammad's message in His environment, the Qur'an stressed their inability to comprehend and practice the knowledge they already possess. It also showed that the Christians were unable to appreciate the appropriateness of His teaching (Vajda, 2012).

The following focuses on the People of the Book goals (Baidi, 2010):

- a. Barring from the path of God Almighty: "*Have you not seen those who have been given a share of the Book (Torah)? They buy (choose) misguidance (with guidance) and they intend for you to stray (deviate) from the (right) path.*" (An-Nisa: 44)

- b. The path of God is crooked, sloping, and straight in itself. *"Those who prefer the life of this world to the life of the hereafter, and hinder (people) from the path of Allah and desire that the way of Allah be crooked. They are far in error."* (Ibrahim: 3)
- c. Muslims follow their deity. *"The Jews and the Christians will not be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say: " Verily Allah's guidance is the (true) guidance". And verily if you follow their will after knowledge has come to you, then Allah will no longer be your protector and helper."* (Al-Baqarah: 120)
- d. The Islamic nation apostates and returns to its roots. *"They want you to be disbelievers as they have become disbelievers, then you become the same (with them). So do not make among them (your) helpers, until they emigrate in the way of Allah. So if they turn away, take them prisoner and kill them wherever you find them, and do not take any of them as a protector, and do not (also) be a helper."* (An-Nisa: 89)
- e. Being keen on the troubles of the Muslims and their difficulties, harms, and affair spoilage. *"And whatever good they do they are never prevented from (receiving their reward); and Allah is Knowing of those that are pious."* (Ali Imran: 115)
- f. The temptation of the Muslims, the plots against them, as well as their betrayal, religious abandonment, and long-term suppression. *"If (they went with you), surely they would not increase your (strength), instead they would only create chaos, and they would certainly rush forward in the gaps of your ranks to cause chaos (in your ranks); while among you there are those who are very fond of listening to their (words)."* (At-Taubah: 47)

Based on these verses, the missionaries often aim to achieve a set of goals in Islamic countries, due to their consideration of Islam as the only religion posing a danger to them. This indicates that other religions such as Judaism, Buddhism, etc, are not feared because they are national spiritual practices not extending outside their nations and people. Meanwhile, Islam is a dynamic and influential religion extending by itself and without any force, leading to being considered a threat to Christianity.

## **Christianization goals**

Christianization is generally intensified in a large environment with massive targets and is also unlimited to small groups. This shows that the international practice can spread Christianity in the world, with the distribution of specific beliefs considered the human right of every person. However, limitations need to be implemented regarding the respect for everyone's decisions. This explains that no action should be highly observed towards coercion.

Based on the statements of God Almighty, the People of the Book were accused of disbelieving the verses of their Lord, broke His covenant, and killed the prophets. This led to their hearts being completely sealed by God. Therefore, several actions were carried out against them due to their violation of agreement, disbelief in the statements of Allah, and killing of the prophets without a true reason except "*Our hearts are closed*". Allah had also locked their hearts to death because of the disbeliefs possessed, leading to many disbelievers except a small part of them (An-Nisa:155). The following features are generally the goal of Christianity:

- a. *Conversio gentilium*. *Conversio gentilium is an attempt to convert unbelievers from their sins toward repentance. This is the first goal of Christianity, and its results are very visible.*
- b. *Plantatio ecclesiae*. *The second goal is to develop the church, where the understanding of the Bible is outwardly obtained.*
- c. *Gloria et manifestation gratiae divinae*. *Christianization aims to provide divine gifts, specifically for the followers of Calvinism, and is observed to have the highest goal record.*

## **Christianization means**

Two strategies were applied by the Dutch in carrying out colonialism and Christianization missions. Firstly, buffer areas were considered the power guards weakening the authority of the Muslim ranks, due to having high loyalty to the Dutch government, such as

the Batak, Manado, Minahasa, and Maluku (Wibowo, 2018). Besides this, the foreigners also implemented ethical politics in several areas, where the forced cultivation policy was carried out. These political ideologies were considered part of the Dutch government's reciprocation, which was manifested into irrigation and education. This ethical policy is loaded with Christianization (Aritonang, 2019).

Secondly, the Dutch strategy was carried out by separating ethnic and religious identity. This strategy emphasized an essential success known as *kejawen*, which is a circular path implemented by the Dutch to shield people away from Islam (Wibowo, 2018). In 1830, the Dutch founded the *Instituut Voor Her Javaansche Taal* (Javanese Language Institute) within Surakarta, which consisted of Javanese experts (Dutch Javanologists) on a mission to rediscover ancient native literature, language, and history. This rediscovery activity emphasized the reconnection of the native artifacts with people's lives, for traditions and culture to overshadow the Islamic teachings that were becoming valuable and customary. Besides this, the Netherlands attempted to eliminate traces of Islamic culture and civilization, toward achieving the Christianization mission smoothly (Aulassyahied, 2019). These elimination efforts included the collection of all the tombstones containing Islamic history information, which were subsequently arranged into fortresses. From this context, the removal of Islamic foundation from the historical facts of Indonesia was prioritized (Rohmah, 2019).

### **The form of the Christianization movement in Indonesia**

The Christianization movement in Indonesia is carried out by several organizations, which are specifically responsible for the distribution of Christianity. An example is the Christian organizations observed during the Dutch colonial era. During this era, the Dutch attempted to spread Protestantism by acquiring zending from the

Netherlands. Some of these protesting figures in Indonesia were Dr. Nomensem, Hernius, and Sebastian, which effectively contributed to the spread of Protestantism. This led to the present knowledge of Protestant Christianity by the wider community. They also formed many Christian organizations in various regions (Doeka, 2018; Aritonang, 2019).

Spain and Portugal obtained the blessing and mandate from Pope Alexander VI in 1493, as affirmed in the Treaty of Tordesillas 1494 (Bennassar, 1992; McCourt, 2010), when the two countries wanted to colonize the world. This essentially required explorers and merchants from both Catholic Christian countries to spread the religion. Compared to the Portuguese and Spanish, the State and The Netherlands had never physically met the people and authorities of Islam before arriving in Asia. Despite pursuing economic benefits and helping to build the Dutch empire, VOC still obtained a mandate from the Protestant Church, to spread the Christian belief under the contents of Article 36 of the Dutch Confession of Faith in 1561 (Aritonang, 2019).

To conquer and defend its power, the Dutch colonial government at that time read Islamic teachings into three categories, according to the advice of Snouck Hurgronje (Benda, 1958; Burhanudin, 2014). These categories included (1) pure religion and worship, (2) social field, and (3) the political field. Snouck Hurgronje's advice is known as "political Islam" or the government colonial policy employed to handle Islamic problems in Indonesia. This led to the authoritative provision of flexibility to Muslims based on all distributions, except in the political field. In this case, all the efforts leading to fanaticism and Pan-Islamism were also prevented (Effendi, 2012; Hasan, 2014; Khotimussalam, 2019; Hendriani, 2020).

The main issue encountered by the Netherlands was the developmental patterns of the feelings capable of pleasing the

Indonesian people about the Dutch government. This led to the development of the following two perspectives. Firstly, cultural elements, where Indonesians accept the Western culture without sidelining their native customs. This aims to tightly develop the bonds of the colony than the colonizer, leading to the provider of a colonized population with benefits embedded in the colonizers' culture. Secondly, "Christianization", emphasizing the patterns by which the religion of the population, is transformed into Christianity. According to the mission (Christian), Christianization was easier when the first sight met, leading to the benefit of the Dutch government. This was because the native population understood the close relationship between religion and government order. After converting to Christianity, citizenship is provided to the people physically and mentally loyal to the Company (Noer, 1973).

Based on these descriptions, some Christianization companies were observed in various regions during the Dutch colonial era, such as the following (McCurry, 1979):

- a. *Nederlands Zendeling Genootschap* (NZG), an organization tasked with carrying out evangelism, toward introducing and spreading the Protestant religion.
- b. Establishment of church organizations in Indonesia, such as GPM (*the Maluku Protestant Church*), HKBP (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestant*), and GKJW (*Jawi Wetan Christian Church*). This shows that GPM is an organization considered a forum to accommodate Protestants in Maluku.
- c. *The Herlege Hart Order*, an organization with the responsibility for the Christian community in Papua.
- d. *Societeit van het Goddelijk Woord*, served in Timor and Flores.
- e. *The Capuchin Group*, which covers areas in Sumatra and Kalimantan (Kristianus, 2022).

f. Christian schools playing a role in the spread of Protestantism.

Christianization flourished, as well as became intensive and expansive in Indonesia after the independence period, especially after the collapse of The Old Order. The New Order inception headed by President Soeharto provided blessings to Christianity, indirectly supporting Christian freedom than Islam. From the 1970s to the 1990s, Christianity significantly progressed because many communists converted to the religion. This led to the protection of those involved in communist activities by the Indonesian churches. The Christian development was also supported by modernization and propaganda, through service to the poor, orphans, etc. This caused suspicion, worry, and anxiety among the Muslims against the Christianization movement, leading to inharmonious and heated relationships between Islam and Christianity. In this scenario, the emergence of conflict was observed during the New Order, causing worship centre destructions and Christian losses worse than the experiences of 1995-1997 (Mansur, 2014).

**The most important means of support for evangelization and evangelists**

Among the direct measures implemented by the missionaries to reach Islamic and non-Islamic societies, some conditions prepared for the missionaries and the incursion patterns into other societies were observed. These conditions were very supportive in the achievement of missionary goals. The methods included old and contingent, renewed, and new elements. The most important supportive measures for evangelization and evangelists were observed as follows:

*The occupation*

The first and most powerful supportive measures are occupation and colonialism, with the missionaries often calling for the colonists to occupy Islamic and non-Islamic countries. When the country was

occupied, the occupiers humiliated the challenges encountered by the missionaries, leading to the easy establishment of their institutions in Muslim nations. This shows that Christianization and occupation are two sides of the same coin, with history proving that the seizure of people's lands was often accompanied by the initiatives of church development (Gray, 1982; Kahlout, 1992; Okon, 2014).

The synergy between the occupiers and the evangelists is an aspect imposed by the Church, which emphasizes revenge for those expelled from the remnants of the Crusades. Therefore, the famous phrase declared within Jerusalem in the fourth decade of the 14th century AH emphasized the end of the Crusades in the second ten-year period of the 20th hundred-year era. This phrase was launched by Lord Allenby when he walked to the heart of the holy city in Jerusalem, after the British occupied it in the late 1917 AD. When he supervised the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the following famous phrase was stated, namely "*Today the Crusades ended*". This was similar to the statement of General Gouraud to a Frenchman when he arrived at Damascus, the Levant, and stood on the tomb of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi. Based on the historical context, the General immediately went to the grave of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi at The Umayyad Mosque when the Maysaloon army was defeated outside Damascus al-Sham. Standing over the tomb and kicking him, the following statements were produced by the General, "*Here we are, Salah al-Din*". This statement was in response to the efforts of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, regarding the liquidation and expulsion of the Crusaders to their country after the Battle of Hattin (Saleh, 1989).

The missionaries and colonial politicians also had direct confrontations regarding the groups capable of advancing the other. Historically, the missionaries were the first set of people to enter the country, accompanied by the colonists. However, the missionaries wanted the armies to advance over them at the beginning of the

thirteenth (AH) to the nineteenth (AD) century, after the local rulers realized that the entry of the evangelists emphasized the occupation of the country. This led to a very massive hardship for the missionaries. Based on "Evangelist Watson", the Western governments cooperated to prevent the spread of Islam among the pagan tribes in Africa. This prioritized easier Christianization tasks when Islam was eliminated, although the evangelists had great fear for the competition (Saleh, 1989).

The missionaries also believed that Western sovereignty in an Islamic country did not mean facilitating the transition of Muslims to Christianity, although the loss of this authority mostly led to a completely reverse movement (Khalidi & Farukh, 1953). This was in line with the declaration of Father de Foucault, where a national movement, similar to the observation in Turkey, was likely to occur when the Muslim population in North African colonies are unable to be not Christianized. In this case, an elite group of intellectuals in major cities were likely influenced by French ideas, without having their unique thoughts. For example, under French colonial rule, little remained of the Algerian tradition of Islamic education and scholarship, and although a significant movement of reformist Islamic religious scholars emerged in the 1930s, religious scholars and their institutions played no significant role after Algeria regained its independence (Meuleman, 2011).

The favour of every efforts made to the missionaries were also returned when they prayed and paved the path for it. From this context, active attempts to use missionaries were only carried out for the service of colonization and slavery. These missionaries were of great help in Asia, Africa, and America, regarding the collection of information on the diagonals. Their clothing also protected them and hid any economic or political intentions (Furley, 1965; Andrews, 2009).

## ***Politics***

A supportive measure of Christianization is the Western governments, which are theoretically known as "secular" authorities due to their nonchalant attitudes toward religion. However, they commonly guarantee religious freedom and personal practices of spiritual rites, indicating that the secularism of the state does not emphasize their non-religiousness. Since the theoretical perspective does not involve religion in the affairs of the state, an impact is often served on its internal and external decisions. Despite the assumptions about the secularism of Western countries, their efforts to support missionaries through gifts, facilities, and project adoption should not be ignored. They are also responsible for the involvement of the missionaries in national news operations and the input of intelligence men among the religious groups (Khidr, 1997).

## ***Western citizens***

The missionaries are strongly supported by the Western citizens through high budgets and institutions, irrespective of their reputation as representatives of commercial and economic systems. In this case, fundraising campaigns are frequently featured in media, on the streets, and through mail, with increased activities observed on Sundays when people attend church and the spiritual aspect is heightened after enthusiastic sermons. Those not privileged to be in the church are also exposed to the sermons through linked television or local radio stations for a fee. This is because local radio and television stations often comply with the broadcast time rental system, enabling churches to rent hours on Sunday mornings and other religious occasions. In this case, a famous priest known as Billy Graham frequently use of this medium to preach to people for long hours without interruption from commercials, news, etc. Although

some Islamic centers attempted to follow this method locally, various technical and financial capabilities were still inadequate.

### ***Poverty***

The conditions of poverty and destitution left by a group of human factors and "natural" disasters are considered the situation of Muslims by God's decree and predestination. From various perspectives, the circumstances in this society highlights the means of support for Christianization campaigns, due to being a powerful assistance tool. These missionaries have the material capabilities to reach afflicted areas irrespective of the ruggedness or remoteness of the region, as long as the destitute poor eat drought from their skin. In this case, they are ready to accept any relief reaching them without examining its source and underlying goals. The thoughts about the doctrinal and intellectual affiliations are also not condoned. When the mind regains the ability to distinguish, these missionaries are often left with various questions, such as "Where are the Muslims among us?".

### ***Diseases***

The outbreak of diseases and epidemics is a fertile ground for evangelization and missionaries, as well as any invitation or direction. This highlights the use of medicine and nursing evangelization as a means of converting people. For instance, a mother carrying a pale-faced infant with prominent ribs and an enlarged abdomen is willing to seek help from anyone capable of improving the child's health, regardless of the ideology behind the aid. This highlights the use of medical treatment as a tool for evangelization.

The evangelists often exploit this situation by attributing the attempts to heal the child to Jesus bin Maryam, peace be upon them. In this case, the family of the patient was told that when God wanted the child to be cured, it was due to Jesus. This indicated that Jesus was willing to carry out the desires in exchange for their conversion to

Christianity. This tragedy is often repeated daily and shown on satellite TV screens in the painful and sad scenes developed by humans ([Bakhit, 2011](#)).

### ***Weakness of consciousness***

The weak awareness of religion and life is the “absolute” ignorance among people, where the truth is mixed with falsehood and superstition for many of them, leading to the spread of heresies. This enhances people's receptiveness to missionaries and their ideas, which are based on religion. From this context, the missionaries do not promote rejection of religion, although encourage prayer and fasting, as well as maintain the connection between the servant and the Lord. However, the missionaries promote these concepts personally, not in the natural patterns that people are born or raised. According to Zweimer, the persistence of amulet belief and its effects delayed the conditions of Islamic people and increased their misery. This showed that the existence of religious awareness, as well as the causes of civilization and civic were challenges to Christianization campaigns. It was also supported by the declaration of Zweimer, where “The corrupt and dangerous plan led to the direct broadcast of civility principles and then distributed Christianity. The introduction of civilization and civility before Christianity was ineffective and caused more negative consequences than positive outcomes” ([Châtelier & Majerczak, 1912](#)).

The result was also supported by the saying of one of them in the Colorado conference 1398 AH-1978 CE, where the majority of Muslims were likely to convert to Christianity ([Lausanne Movement, 1978](#)). This was because they were animists, believed in evil spirits and jinn, as well as understand very little about authentic Islam. Many Muslims also held strong beliefs in the spells providing them with the strength to confront the difficulties and challenges of life. Although they

believed in the existence of jinns, the beliefs in evil spirits and spells should not be accommodated in their hearts and daily lives. This is because monotheistic doctrines do not condone superstitious activities nor allow them to destroy lives. Based on these descriptions, the spread of incantations and superstition prevalence in some Muslim societies, is only an inevitable result of the distance from the pure creed. This underestimates the value of its advocates, as well as accuses them of backwardness, deviation, reaction, and fundamentalism (Hill, 1965; Ali, 1999; Khalaf & Abid, 2022).

### ***Self-preparation***

The missionaries in their entirety have the self-willingness to engage in Christianizing campaigns for distinguished motives, specifically adventure, trips, and entry into the communities different from Western society. This intended religious motives often originate initially from behind the campaigns. Despite their effectiveness, these motives are not the first self-preparedness indicators of all missionaries. This is because a limited number of them often abandon the missionary goal, and are most likely to convert from Christianity to Islam or another religion. From this context, they are likely to spread the new trend, specifically Islam, among Christians and Muslims. These are in line with previous few and limited cases, although the sentiments of these missionaries toward their call to Christianity were observed. For example, some cases were found in the United States of America, Germany, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where potential missionaries converted and became advocates of Islam. This is a phenomenon that is continuously increasing with time and awareness (McCurry, 1979).

### ***Financial guarantees***

Missionaries frequently obtain financial and social support from Christian organizations and institutions, which helps provide for

themselves, their families, and their children. This support includes securing housing, sustenance, education, and scholarship opportunities at prestigious universities. It is also in the form of subsidies for the poor and needy, such as food, clothing, and money (Shalaby, n.d) This becomes evident when societies are exposed to adversities, disasters, floods, famines, volcanoes, earthquakes, or wars. Moreover, the missionaries often capitalize on these calamities by providing material or housing services to feed and shelter the afflicted. This was to evangelize them, while providing supplies, clothes, and tents as a blessing from Jesus, peace be upon him (Ramli et al., 2018).

Missionaries use either inspirational messages, slogans, and symbols or discreet methods to attract people, to deter them from their message. The missionaries are also gradually winning over the recipients of their aids, by building friendship through their assistance and then moving on to presenting Christianity to them (Khalidi & Farukh, 1953). When the missionaries provide aid, they often communicate with each other to set a plan to organize funding programs for charity to Muslims. This showed that they are obligated to spend generously and wisely to attract Muslims to their ranks. In this process spending should be gradually reduced and stopped when they completely convert to Christianity (AlNamlah, 1993).

### *Laziness in teachings*

Christianity has been subjected to distortion since ancient times, during the intervention of the Jews, which was represented by “Shaul” or “Paul” in the conduct of Christian affairs. These constant distortions led to flexibility, which emphasized Christianity's loss of teachings. The willingness to quit some religious teachings also existed, such as those related to strictness, divorce, pluralism, tolerance, etc. Moreover, the abandonment of principles and ideals supported the missionaries

in entering the communities and establishing themselves among the tribes. These tribes were controlled by the sheik and encountered constant pressure from missionaries to adopt Christianity, while preserving their religiously unaligned local customs and traditions (Dallu, 1989). When the sheiks do not accept Christianity, most missionaries commonly attempted to encourage them to abandon Islam. In this case, no objection is observed for the missionaries to achieve the goal of sacrificing the inherited teachings of Jesus Christ son of Mary, peace be upon them. This trend does not seem to prevail among faithful Christians (AlNamlah, 1993).

### *Preparing the missionaries*

In the evangelism phase, two stages need to be passed, namely (1) the pre-evangelism phase and (2) the evangelism procession. Firstly, schools or educational institutions are often founded by the Christian activists not on a religious mission. This only emphasizes the subsequent discussion about Christianity and provides a positive impression on the matters related to the Christian community. Besides the introduction and positive imaging phase, this stage is very important in determining the success of the Christianization mission. This is due to the development of the method had been applied since the beginning of independence. In this case, several positive results were obtained after independence. Around 70%-80% of Indonesians who "converted to Christianity" had criticized and attended Christian schools between 1958-1970 although the schools did not directly convert them to Christians (Aulassyahied, 2019).

The provision of the missionaries with equipment supplies is one of the principles of Christianization and observed as an irreversible opportunity. This is because the demand of the needy causes the missionaries to succeed in their perspectives, which often emphasizes apparent and hidden Christianization. The evangelists also

understands that the field of sedition is fertile for spreading ideas and poison. This is because the truth is commonly confused with falsehood in temptation, with the soul living in confusion and turmoil. The confusion state also becomes attached to any matter deluded toward salvation and sincerity (Al-Fassi, 1973; Arifin, 2016; Ma'sa, 2018).

The institutions of evangelization of associations and organizations are found to deliberately equip the evangelists completely, capitalizing on their readiness for the journey and adventure. These institutions work on teaching them languages, temperaments, customs, prevailing religions, and the aspects of weakness. When weaknesses are not possessed, their positions on Islam are often emphasized through the fabrications of ancient and modern orientalists. In this case, orientalists and missionaries are eligible to proceed due to being familiar with the societies presented to them. They are also ready to confront difficulties and challenges about dealing, living, eating habits, or housing. Moreover, the evangelists need to share their food, livelihood, housing, and clothing with people regardless of the conditions, specifically in the areas of various customs and traditions. In Arab societies, the meat of carrots is often eaten while drinking the milk of the "relicts". Besides this, camels are also milked with cats and quails serving as food sources. Locusts and wild animals are rarely eaten in Arab societies, with camels believed to be a savage and rough animal. This pattern of evaluating situations is common in other societies in Asia and Africa, which inspires missionaries to have a psychological readiness for new experiences and a love of adventure (Shalaby, 1991; Muttaqin, 2004).

### ***Muslims' indulgence***

The willingness of some Muslims, local rulers, tribal chiefs, and sheiks to tolerate the spread of Christianity is one method to support its spread. This approach often attracts missionaries and provides

them with the resources to establish mission institutions. Some Muslims also opened the doors wide for the missionaries, promising them saviors from backwardness, reaction, ignorance, and introversion (Ziegler, 1990). According to Salama bint al-Sayyid Saeed al-Busaidi, the level of tolerance for missionaries had led to the high establishment of churches in a predominantly Muslim society, such as in Zanzibar. This princess was born on 14/8/1260 AH of a Circassian mother. Her brother, Sayyid Majid, assumed power after her father's death, with she and his brother, Sayyid Barghash (Frankl, 2006), became involved in plots against him. Salama bint al-Sayyid Saeed al-Busaidi fled to Aden by sea, and was accompanied by Herr Henrik Ruete, the German secretary of the Hansing Company in Zanzibar. After fleeing by sea, they traveled to Hamburg, Germany, and settled as a married couple, where she was then known as Princess Emily Roth. When her husband died, she was devoted to writing, and came out with her diaries.

Furthermore, Salama bint al-Sayyid Saeed al-Busaidi returned to Zanzibar and died on 7/23/1342 AH, with her age well over eighty. She was survived by three sons and two daughters, including Rudolph Said Rueti, which worked as a lecturer in the history of Oman and his grandfather, Saeed, at a university in Britain. Based on these descriptions, missionaries need to be allowed to work in these societies, by confronting, warning, and restricting those challenging them. Although Salama bint al-Sayyid Saeed al-Busaidi had converted to Christianity and moved to a Christian community, her memoirs still dripped with grief in Zanzibar. Salama bint al-Sayyid Saeed al-Busaidi remained loyal to her family, country, and first religion despite converting to Christianity, living in the West for a long time, and being rejected at home. When forced to mention an issue in the East that Westerners did not like, such as women's veiling, polygamy, or slave ownership, Salama bint al-Sayyid Saeed al-Busaidi vehemently

defended and justified the idea. In this case, the ideas did not detract from the nobility of her intent, which was characterized by innocence and naivety (Bhacker, 1991; Romero, 2012; Reute, 2017).

In addition to the princess's memoirs, other Arab princes also had instances where they facilitated opportunities for missionaries to achieve their goals, even when resistance was anticipated. This was specifically observed when they disguised in the clothes of doctors, nurses, etc. This was included in the hidden phase, due to the expectation that the Arab princes and rulers were against the explicit Christianization of all Muslim societies. The history of the East African coast was incomplete, with the Sultan of Zanzibar facilitating Christian missions despite being a Muslim (Akinola, 1972; Pawelczak, 2020). This indicated democracy in Islam, which did not interfere in the affairs of any other religion. This was in line with the Qur'an, where no compulsion was found in religion. From this context, the Sultan provided all assistance and facilities to the Christian missions when contacted. This assistance was carried out in good faith and complete adherence to the principles of Islam.

The distortion of other religious communities' aqidah specifically led to divisions or frictions between fellow spiritual society in Indonesia. This indicated that the government need to protect the diverse community, specifically Muslims, from division or conflict attempts. Besides this, the emergence of deviant sects was also a causal agent of conflict. Blasphemy and the establishment of unregulated worship houses were subsequently the part of the factors causing disputes and divisions. The missionary movement also attempted to influence Muslims through educational assistance, by using charitable projects. This movement fostered relationships with local governments and residents, leading to the development of businesses in various fields. Some missionaries also pretended to be Muslim to carry out their missions (Ma'sa, 2018; Pelkmans, 2021).

This entails appointing Christian leaders over a predominantly Muslim population, reducing the majority to a minority and allowing missionaries to freely travel throughout cities, villages and rural areas, safeguarding them at the cost of the Muslim citizens. According to evangelist Kenneth Latworth, no widespread transition was observed from Islam to Christianity in a country until the Islamic government was replaced with a Western Christian authority capable of pursuing an effective policy in helping missionaries. In this case, the Western governments did not emphasize direct control, which had ended with the cessation of the occupation from Muslim countries ([AlNamalah, 1993](#)).

### ***Brainwashing***

Brainwashing is a tactic used by missionaries to undermine, divide, distort, and deceive the Islamic foundation, population, roles, and future generations of a nation. This includes casting doubt on the authenticity of the Prophet Muhammad and His message. In this case, many within the missionary community denied the Prophet's status as holy and a messenger of God. This was due to the floundering in the interpretation of the revelational manifestations. Some of the masses also attributed this denial to the epilepsy periodically suffered by the Prophet. However, they did not deny the phenomenon of revelation in human reality, due to the prophetic acknowledgment in their books ([Usudullah, 2015](#)).

The creation of minds among Christians was also apparent through the use of place or personal names. For example, some individuals often select names for their children, which reflected foreign identities. This indicated that the name found in a street was likely to resemble those found in non-Christian/infidel countries. The provision of infidel names was also a massive issue, specifically for girls. Although a name is familiar to Muslims, it is still likely to be

similar somewhere else with a huge difference. This indicated the difficulties encountered in mere name distinction. For them, the end justifies the media found to be common Islamically. This proved that the media with the rule of ends or purposes were possessed by Islam (Ismail & Uyuni, 2020).

Other methods, which are not transparent to everyone, are also used to support these efforts, such as incorporating Christian symbols and rituals, especially crosses and bells, into religious and cultural events, etc. Continuous attempts were also observed regarding the establishment of churches for missions, schools, and clubs, which are high and distinct in affecting the minds, emotions, and imaginations of the visitors. This adequately provided non-Christians closer to Christianity, according to the beliefs of the missionaries (Ali, 1999).

### **Reaction of Indonesian Muslims to Christianity**

Natsir wrote extensively about Christianization and mobilized Muslim supporters to counter and overcome the religious activity. Despite being friends with several Christian figures, Natsir did not want Muslims to become targets of the apostasy movement through Christianization (Rahmah, 2020; Rohmah, 2019; Setyani, 2008). The following is an example of M. Natsir's appeal to Christians in Indonesia (Hubeis, 1983, pp. 28–29; Mansur, 2014):

*"We only have one request: Isyhaduu bi anna Muslimuun. Watch and admit that we are Muslims and have completely embraced Islam. The people already have Islamic identities. Do not disturb our identity, brothers and sisters, do not disturb us in this matter of religion. Do not let religion become the subject of disputes, which should not be the case. Let's respect each other's identity and integrity, hence, we can stay in our place and be good friends in the "Iyalullah" environment of the one God family. We Muslims do not a priori consider non-Muslims as enemies. But Allah SWT strictly forbids us to be friends with people who interfere with our religion, Islam. In fact, we will be considered unjust if we do so (al-mumtahinah). We wholeheartedly hope that the brothers and sisters should not have desires like those of the Nashara people blamed in the Qur'an that are not happy already when they have not been able*

*to Christianize the Muslims. Hopefully not so, because when the cord of friendship is broken, the cord of love and sorrow that has been forged between us all will be broken. Lest our path will intersect with all the sad consequences. It is okay for us to be bitter, sometimes between brothers and sisters it is good for us to talk bitterly, that is, we cannot just see that while holding hands. Because, if there is one property that we love from everything it is our religion and faith. That is what we want to pass on to our grandchildren and descendants. Gentlemen do not try to cut this heritage rope either.*

According to Natsir, "The treasure highly emphasized from everything was the religion and faith." This indicated the seriousness of a Muslim that cared about the beliefs of the people. For a Muslim, maintaining the faith is the most important thing, accompanied by the performance of amar ma'ruf activities and nahi munkar, which prioritizes fighting for the truth and preventing evil. This is often known as the activity of "*binaa'an wa difaa'an*" by Natsir. As a religious person, nothing is wrong with sharing love, the truth, and good news to/with other people. However, limitations need to be practiced when sharing and conveying news only, without coercion, seduction, or curses (Mansur, 2014). God Almighty informed the People of the Book that they disbelieved in the verses of their Lord, broke His covenant, and killed the prophets, leading to their hearts being sealed. From this context, the missionaries mainly targeted Islamic countries, because they considered Islam the only religion posing a threat to them. Since the Crusades failed in their Christianization efforts, missionaries resorted to more direct methods to achieve their goals by infiltrating societies (Farhan, 2019).

The dialogue also represented a new and major effort to understand and cooperate with others in increasingly interdependent and religiously diverse countries. This proved that the newness of dialogue and the absence of conceptual clarity required experimentation. Moreover, careful consideration and collaboration are needed for questions related to planning, organization, representation, and topics. A new perspective, which suits modern

opportunities and challenges, is also needed for the present dialogue. This includes a healthy and productive dialogue with a good intention, to understand other beliefs and their problems. The economic, political, and sociocultural development of a better and more peaceful life is also emphasized (Ismail & Uyuni, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results, Catholicization, Protestantization, Pentecostalization, etc, were carried out according to the Christian perspective. This indicated that Christians did not spread their Christianity although proclaimed their denomination and congregation. In this case, their respective churches often clashing and conflicting among themselves were being preached. This was because they both claimed to be the most religious and authentic in their teachings. Furthermore, dialogue and partnership were increasingly important in this new era of globalization, where intercultural communication was essentially developing. The ability to interact with anyone, anywhere and anytime, had also portrayed communication as a crucial factor in success. Despite this, the importance of dialogue was still not a priority in a narrow, argumentative perspective. In this context, dialogue emphasized a healthy and productive form of communication. This new perspective is capable of solving conflict issues, as well as developing synergy for a fairer, just, peaceful, and civilized world. As religious people, compliance with various regulations need to be practiced, accompanied by the development of followers with being open-minded to dialogue. As a complex society, the outlines within the guidelines should be followed and obeyed, toward harmony, peace, and unity. Therefore, Islam was responsible for teaching open-mindedness and tolerance toward other religions.

Based on these results, the importance of intensifying advocacy programs is implied through the conscious readable and audio-visual media in several languages and dialects. A need is also required to raise the awareness of the public and students about the methods and means of Christianization, to avoid missionaries, as well as expose and nullify any form of suspicion. Moreover, the financial support for Islamic goals should be enhanced toward spreading the true religion and providing privileges for those working in the field. Indonesian Muslims also need to learn from some Islamic countries where intellectual colonization was enabled, with its effects highly emphasized in the educational curricula, media, and among the youth. In this case, Muslims should understand that the media is a double-edged sword and should be used optimally for both religious and worldly interests.

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