

# Decolonising theology: Reforming Christian faith towards freedom based on Ephesians 2:14–16



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The decolonial approach in theology presents an innovative paradigm in reforming Christian faith towards liberation, with a primary exegesis on Ephesians 2:14–16 as a key reference. This study aims to investigate how the decolonial approach can shape a more inclusive and just theological understanding while addressing the impact of colonial legacies within the narrative of Christian faith. The methodology applied includes qualitative analysis of theological literature and historical case studies. The findings indicate that the decolonial approach serves to challenge colonial theological structures that often ignore or suppress local and marginalised perspectives, emphasising the importance of unity and reconciliation in line with the teachings of Ephesians 2:14–16. The conclusions show that this theological reform not only removes colonial influences from Christian faith but also enriches theological understanding by acknowledging diverse perspectives. The decolonial approach makes a significant contribution to developing a more inclusive and equitable theology.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** Intradisciplinary, this research challenges conventional theological frameworks by integrating decolonial perspectives and encouraging a reassessment of historical and doctrinal assumptions in Christian theology. It promotes a more inclusive understanding of scripture interpretation, particularly regarding Ephesians 2:14–16, while connecting theology with critical historical analysis and fostering dialogue between religious studies and postcolonial theory.

**Keywords:** decolonising; reforming; theology; Christian faith; freedom; Ephesians 2:14-16; reconciliation.

## Introduction

Colonialism has left a profound mark on various aspects of life, including in the realm of Christian theology. For centuries, Christian theology has not only served as a means of spreading faith but has often been used as a tool to legitimise colonial domination. In this context, colonialism has not only oppressed politically and economically but also spiritually. Theologies that developed under the shadow of colonialism often reproduce power hierarchies that place European cultures and values above all else, while local traditions and understandings, including those in Indonesia, are viewed as inferior or even considered contrary to the 'true' teachings of Christianity. Thus, the impact of colonialism is not only evident in Africa but also in various regions, including Asia, which have experienced significant shifts in values and influences in their religious practices. As emphasised by Musa W. Dube, colonialism has brought to Christianity the negative practice of converting people into cultural forms of Christianity that prioritise Western values over those of other cultures (Dube 2000). This statement illustrates how colonialism created a version of Christianity tailored to colonial interests, ultimately obscuring the universality of the gospel and limiting the expression of faith within cultural diversity.

The influence of colonialism in Christian theology not only diminished the spiritual richness of non-European communities but also created a dividing wall between Christian faith and local cultural contexts. David J. Bosch discusses the relationship between mission and colonialism. Bosch acknowledges that the history of Christian missions is closely linked to colonialism, with missions often aligning with colonial expansion. He emphasises that Christian missions during the colonial era were frequently involved in imposing Western values on local communities, leading to the neglect of local cultures and identities (Bosch 1991). David J. Bosch's perspective on the relationship between mission and colonialism needs to consider the complexity of the historical and contextual circumstances in which Christian missions took place. On the one hand, Bosch is correct in identifying that many Christian missions during the colonial era

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were intertwined with colonial expansion and often carried Western values that disregarded, or even oppressed, local cultures and identities. This acknowledgement is crucial as part of a critical reflection on the history of missions, which necessitates a paradigm shift in contemporary mission practices.

Furthermore, Bosch criticises this approach and emphasises the need for a more inclusive and contextual mission paradigm that respects and values local cultures while avoiding domination and oppression. He advocates for missions based on justice, intercultural dialogue, and the appreciation of diversity (Bosch 1991). This view provides a foundational framework in theology, emphasising the importance of considering the context in which the truth is proclaimed. Thus, people living in a particular context can receive the truth within their own context. Unlike the principles of colonialism, which separate people from their culture and the truth, this approach avoids creating tension and alienation, where many communities feel disconnected from their own expressions of faith, now entangled with colonial norms and values. Ephesians 2:14–16 (NKJV) offers a profound perspective on unity and liberation, where Christ is portrayed as the one who breaks down the dividing wall and brings peace:

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

This verse can be interpreted as a strong theological foundation for reforming the Christian faith, freeing it from the restrictive chains of colonial legacy, and guiding the church to become an instrument of peace and reconciliation.

In this context, the decolonial approach becomes crucial. Decolonising theology is not merely about rejecting the colonial legacy, but also about re-examining and reconstructing Christian theology from a more inclusive and just perspective. It involves recognising that the theology developed during the colonial era may contain biases that need to be corrected and acknowledging the urgent need to return to the foundational principles of the gospel, which value cultural diversity and promote true spiritual freedom. Decolonisation, according to postcolonial theologian Robert J.C. Young, is the process of rethinking history and interpreting culture from a postcolonial perspective. Its aim is to move beyond the colonial past and envision a future free from the dominance of colonialism by uncovering the narratives and values that were marginalised during that period (Young 2001). In the context of Christian missions, this paradigm demands a more critical and reflective approach to how missions were conducted in the past and how they should be carried out in the future. A truly contextual and inclusive mission must involve an appreciation for local history and

culture, as well as a willingness to listen to and learn from local communities rather than imposing external viewpoints.

The need for a decolonial approach in the reform of Christian faith is increasingly urgent in today's era of globalisation, where churches worldwide are becoming more aware of the importance of acknowledging and embracing cultural diversity as an integral part of their faith expression. With this approach, Christian faith can be reformed into a truly liberating force that transcends cultural and social boundaries, while respecting the dignity of every individual and community. Ephesians 2:14–16, with its message of peace and unity, serves as a solid theological foundation in this endeavour, guiding Christians to move beyond colonial legacies and towards a more inclusive and liberated faith. Thus, the church can become a place where everyone, regardless of their cultural background, can experience peace and unity in Christ.

The purpose of this writing is to explore how Ephesians 2:14–16 can serve as a theological foundation for liberating the Christian faith from the legacy of colonialism in Indonesia. These verses emphasise that Christ has broken down the dividing walls between groups, creating peace and unity. This understanding challenges the domination and exclusion that suppress local traditions and affirms that in Christ there is no separation based on race, culture or social status. Thus, the Christian faith is expected to pursue peace and justice, respect the dignity of every individual, and embrace the cultural diversity of Indonesian society.

The methods employed in this study include qualitative analysis of theological literature and historical case studies. The qualitative analysis involves a comprehensive examination of various theological texts, including scholarly articles, books and theological discourses, to identify prevailing themes, arguments and perspectives related to decolonisation within Christian theology. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how colonial legacies have influenced theological interpretations and practices.

## The concept of decolonisation in theology

Decolonialism is an intellectual and political movement aimed at liberating societies from the dominance and influence of colonial powers. Generally, decolonialism focuses on efforts to dismantle the colonial legacy embedded in various aspects of life, including culture, politics, economics and education. Robert J.C. Young explains that decolonisation is the process of reflecting on history and culture from a postcolonial perspective in order to address the colonial past and envision a future free from the dominations of colonialism (Young 2001). Decolonialism demands the restoration of the identity and dignity of societies long marginalised by colonial powers, as well as critical reflection on narratives dominated by colonial viewpoints.

In the context of theology, decolonialism seeks to dismantle and critique the colonial influences that have long shaped the understanding and practice of Christian faith. Decolonial theology aims to identify and challenge elements within theology that have been developed or used to support colonial oppression, replacing them with more inclusive and contextual approaches. This concept focuses on appreciating local cultures and spirituality and encourages dialogue between Christian theology and non-Western traditions. According to theologians such as Willie James Jennings, the decolonial project in theology is about unearthing the colonial dynamics embedded in Christian theology and practice, and reimagining a faith that is liberative and contextually grounded (Jennings 2010). Jennings highlights that many aspects of Christian theology and practice have been shaped within a colonial context, often carrying the burdens of cultural dominance and oppression. In Indonesia, this colonial legacy is evident in how Christian teachings often overlook or suppress local traditions. By exploring the colonial dynamics embedded in theology, there is an opportunity to reconstruct a more liberating and contextualised Christian faith that honours cultural diversity and strengthens the identity of Indonesian society.

## The history of colonialism's influence on Christian theology in Indonesia

Colonialism significantly influenced the formation of Christian theological understanding, particularly during the period of European expansion into various parts of the world, including Indonesia. In the Nusantara region, Christian theology was often used as a tool to legitimise and justify colonial actions, such as territorial conquest, resource exploitation and forced conversion of local populations. The Dutch colonialists, for example, linked missionary work with their economic and political agendas, so that the Christian theology that developed in Indonesia tended to reflect Western cultural dominance and values. Colonialism not only shaped political and social structures but also influenced the formulation and application of theological doctrines, often disregarding local culture. In Indonesia, Dutch colonialism introduced Western theology applied without considering the unique culture of the Nusantara. Theological concepts such as sin and salvation were presented with a foreign approach, creating tensions with traditional beliefs and altering how communities perceived Christianity as something separate from their own traditions. This resulted in a religious mindset that often overlooked local wisdom. Bosch acknowledges that 'mission during the colonial era often involved the imposition of Western values on local communities, leading to the marginalisation of local cultures and identities' (Bosch 1991). In this context, colonialism not only shaped political and social structures but also influenced how theological doctrines were formulated and implemented.

The influence of colonialism on Christian theology has left a deep and lasting impact, both on the interpretation of biblical

texts and on the practice of faith. Colonialism often disregarded, or even oppressed, local cultures and traditions in an effort to impose Western values. This resulted in biased and less contextual interpretations of the Bible and Christian doctrines. As noted by Lamin Sanneh, 'colonialism distorted the Christian message by entangling it with Western cultural supremacy, thus alienating it from the realities of local cultures and traditions' (Sanneh 2003). This negative impact is not only evident in historical contexts but continues to influence how churches and Christians around the world understand and practise their faith today.

## Challenges and opportunities in implementing a decolonial approach

While the decolonial approach in theology offers significant opportunities for renewal and inclusivity, its implementation is not without challenges. One major challenge is that decolonisation threatens oppressive and dominating power structures. In this regard, John R. Slattery observes that the decolonial project faces rejection from those who see it as a deviation from the Bible, as they fear it may weaken or alter core Christian teachings (Slattery 2020). Other challenges include difficulties in finding a balance between respecting local traditions and maintaining the universal essence of the gospel.

However, behind these challenges lie significant opportunities to create a broader space for dialogue within theology. The decolonial approach opens doors for new voices and perspectives that were previously overlooked, offering a chance to enrich theological understanding with diverse experiences and viewpoints. As stated by Kwok Pui-lan, the decolonial turn in theology offers an opportunity to engage in a more global and interconnected theological discourse, where diverse voices can contribute to a richer and more nuanced understanding of faith (Pui-lan 2017). Thus, despite the challenges, the decolonial approach holds great potential for reforming theology to become more relevant and responsive to the needs of the time.

## Analysis of Ephesians 2:14–16 in the context of decolonisation

Ephesians 2:14–16 offers important insights into the concepts of peace and unity within Christian theology. These verses state that Christ is 'our peace', who 'has broken down the dividing wall of hostility' and 'has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility' (Ephesians 2:14, NIV). The theological analysis reveals that through his death, Christ not only removed sin but also bridged the divisions between separated groups.

## Historical, cultural and linguistic background of Ephesians 2:14–16

Ephesus was a strategic city in Asia Minor that served as a centre for trade, culture and religion during the New

Testament era, famous for the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Here, the Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the local congregation in the 1st century AD, at a time when the Christian church faced various challenges from diverse philosophical currents and religious practices, including paganism and Jewish traditions. The cultural life in Ephesus was marked by ethnic diversity, including Greek, Roman and Jewish communities, which influenced the social and religious dynamics of the city. In Ephesians 2:14–16, Paul emphasises unity by stating that Christ has abolished the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles, creating a new community (Ch Abineno 2009). This letter was written in Koine Greek, reflecting the potential for cross-cultural communication. Paul's teachings on reconciliation and unity are relevant in the context of decolonisation, serving as an impetus to dismantle oppressive social structures and recognise the diversity of identities. Understanding Ephesians 2:14–16 can serve as a foundation for deeper cross-cultural dialogue, fostering appreciation among communities and addressing the colonial legacy that still affects social relationships today.

## The concept of peace and unity

The theme of peace and unity is central to the message of Ephesians 2:14–16. The concept of peace here encompasses not only internal tranquillity but also harmonious relationships between previously divided groups. According to scholar N.T. Wright, 'peace in the New Testament is more than the absence of conflict; it is the presence of reconciliation and unity that transcends previous divisions' (Wright 2004). Christ forms one new body, integrating various ethnic and social groups into a single harmonious community.

## Integration of Ephesians 2:14–16 with decolonialism

Ephesians 2:14–16 is a passage from the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus that highlights the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles through the work of Christ. In its historical context, the dividing wall between these two groups was not only social and cultural but also theological, particularly concerning the Mosaic Law, which restricted their interactions. In this passage, Paul emphasises that Christ has torn down this dividing wall not just symbolically but also in reality through his body.

From a grammatical perspective, this passage has a complex syntactic structure with subordinate clauses that reinforce Paul's central message of unity in Christ.

Verse 14 begins with the main clause, 'For He Himself is our peace' (ὅς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν), where 'ὅς' (hos) as a relative pronoun refers to Christ as the primary subject. The main predicate 'ἐστιν' (estin) is a linking verb that signifies Christ's identity as peace, affirming that unity does not stem from human effort but from Christ himself. The nominal phrase 'ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν' (hē eirēnē hēmōn) uses the definite

article 'ἡ' to emphasise that the peace being referred to is not an abstract concept but something concrete and sourced from Christ. Furthermore, the phrase 'ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐν' (ho poiēsās ta amphotera hen) underscores Christ's active role in creating unity between the two groups, with the use of the aorist participle 'ποιήσας' (poiēsās), which indicates an action that has been definitively completed (Sutanto 2010).

In verse 15, the participial structure 'καταργήσας τὴν ἐχθρὰν' (katargēsās tēn echthran) describes Christ's action in abolishing enmity, with 'καταργήσας' as an aorist active participle showing that this action has been completed with ongoing effects. The term 'τὴν ἐχθρὰν' (tēn echthran) refers to the hostility between Jews and Gentiles, which was reinforced by the exclusivity of the Mosaic Law. Thus, the phrase 'τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν' (ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin) affirms that Christ has nullified the law that served as a barrier to reconciliation not in the sense of abolishing the entire Mosaic Law but in terms of its function as a dividing instrument between these two groups (Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia 2014).

Verse 16 concludes with a final clause introduced by 'ἵνα' (hina), indicating the purpose of Christ's action: 'to reconcile both of them to God in one body' (καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ). The verb 'ἀποκαταλλάξῃ' (apokatallaxē), which is in the aorist subjunctive, signifies the ultimate goal of Christ's work—the restoration of relationships between Jews and Gentiles, as well as between humanity and God. This grammatical structure emphasises that Paul seeks to highlight Christ's action as the primary cause of reconciliation, using aorist participles and final conjunctions to construct his theological argument. Moreover, the use of the word 'σταυρῷ' (staurō), meaning 'through the cross', underscores that the crucifixion was central to this reconciliation effort, where hostility was abolished through Christ's sacrifice (Susanto 2010).

Thus, the grammatical analysis of Ephesians 2:14–16 reveals that Paul deliberately employs a syntactic structure that underscores Christ's work in establishing peace and uniting believers from diverse backgrounds. Through this analysis, Ephesians 2:14–16 can be interpreted as a text that supports decolonial discourse by emphasising liberation from oppressive segregative structures. Paul, through his use of complex syntax, deliberately formulates a theological argument against systems of domination based on legality and ethnicity. Therefore, this section is not merely a narrative of theological reconciliation but can also be understood as a call to build a social order free from colonial influences such as exclusivity and hierarchy. Instead, this order should be based on the principles of equality and peace in Christ.

## Liberation from colonial laws that restrict faith

Ephesians 2:14–16 can also be understood as a call for liberation from colonial laws that constrain Christian faith. In

the context of colonialism, these laws were often used to control and restrict the spiritual and cultural freedom of colonised societies. According to theologian Michael F. Bird, Paul's message in Ephesians challenges the legalistic and oppressive structures that have been imposed upon communities, advocating for a return to the liberating and inclusive vision of the gospel (Bird 2016). This concept underscores the need to renew Christian theological understanding so that it aligns with the values of justice and liberation taught by Christ, while also eliminating the constraining influences of colonialism.

## Reforming Christian faith towards freedom

The reform of Christian theology towards freedom is a crucial step in addressing the impact of colonial legacies that affect faith and church practices today. Through exegesis, findings from the text can be linked to the context of colonisation, highlighting how an inclusive theological understanding can dismantle oppressive structures. This reform not only focuses on doctrinal improvement but also on responding to the effects of colonialism in the life of faith and recognising the diversity of identities within the church community.

## Identifying colonial legacy in contemporary theology

The colonial legacy in Christian theology can be observed in various doctrines and church practices influenced by power structures and Western culture. One prominent example is the application of church hierarchies that often reflect colonial power structures, as explained by postcolonial theologian, Robert J.C. Young: 'Colonialism has left a profound impact on Christian doctrine, embedding hierarchical structures that reflect the power dynamics of the colonial era' (Young 2016). Doctrines such as racial or cultural supremacy promoted by colonial missions have often shaped theological understanding and practices that disregard or undermine local cultures and beliefs.

Additionally, church practices that adopt Western methods of worship and organisation often overlook the richness of local traditions. For example, Christian theology developed during the colonial period and frequently rejected or disregarded local rites and traditions deemed inconsistent with Western standards. According to theologian Tinkham, 'missionary practices often disregarded indigenous religious practices, imposing Western liturgical forms that marginalised local expressions of faith' (Tinkham 2018). Tinkham highlights the importance of critically reflecting on the colonial legacy in Christian mission practices. Tinkham's observations underscore a significant issue in the history of Christian missions: the imposition of Western liturgical forms often led to the marginalisation of indigenous religious practices. This imposition not only disregarded the rich spiritual traditions of local cultures but also contributed

to broader patterns of cultural suppression and assimilation. As noted by Tinkham, such practices reflect a broader colonial mindset that prioritises Western norms and values over local traditions, creating a theological and cultural hegemony that persists in various forms today.

To address this issue, it is crucial to adopt a more inclusive and respectful approach in mission and theology. This involves recognising and valuing the contributions of indigenous religious practices and integrating them into a more diverse and contextually relevant expression of Christian faith (Siahaan 2023). Thus, the church can work towards a more equitable and enriching dialogue between various cultural and religious traditions. This approach aligns with contemporary movements in theology that seek to decolonise and reform Christian practices in a way that respects and integrates diverse cultural expressions.

## Theological reform strategy

In the context of today's globalisation and cultural diversity, the Christian church faces the challenge of reforming its theology to be more inclusive and relevant. The 'Theological Reform Strategy' seeks to identify and implement practical steps that can help liberate Christian theology from colonial influences and doctrines that have been deeply entrenched in the long history of Christian missions.

## Practical steps to free theology from colonial influences

Effective theological reform in Indonesia requires practical steps to liberate the understanding and practice of the Christian faith from colonial influences. The first step is a critical evaluation of doctrines and practices that still contain colonial elements, including historical narratives, liturgy and theological teachings. In the context of the church in Indonesia, this becomes especially important as many of the theological frameworks and practices inherited from the colonial era continue to shape the faith experience of local congregations. Through this critical reflection, Christians in Indonesia can identify and dismantle remnants of colonial thought, allowing for a more authentic expression of their faith that resonates with the local context. This reform is essential not only to reclaim the theological integrity of the Christian faith but also to affirm the cultural and spiritual identity of Indonesian Christians, empowering them to engage with their faith in a way that reflects their unique history, struggles and aspirations. Additionally, dialogue between traditional beliefs and contemporary theological insights will empower local communities to reclaim their religious identity and nurture a faith that is both culturally relevant and biblically grounded. As expressed by the theologian Richard Twiss, 'decolonizing theology involves critically examining and revising doctrinal positions and practices that have been shaped by colonial ideologies' (Twiss 2015). This evaluation must involve an in-depth study and dialogue with local communities to understand how colonial influences have shaped theology.

The second step is to integrate local and cultural perspectives into Christian theology. This includes recognising and valuing local traditions and practices that can enrich theological understanding. As outlined by theologian Johannes M. Luetz, 'the integration of local cultural practices and perspectives into Christian theology can lead to a more inclusive and contextually relevant faith' (Luetz 2020). Johannes M. Luetz emphasises the importance of integrating local practices and cultural perspectives into Christian theology to create a more inclusive and contextually relevant faith. Luetz suggests that by valuing and incorporating local cultural elements into Christian theology, the church can develop a more comprehensive understanding that respects the diverse cultural backgrounds within its community.

## The role of church communities and academics in the reform process

Church communities and academics play a crucial role in the process of theological reform. Church communities need to engage in open dialogue about the colonial influences on their faith and actively work on designing more inclusive practices. Academics, on the other hand, can contribute by providing in-depth research and critical analysis of the colonial legacy in theology. According to scholar David Bosch, 'both church communities and scholars must collaborate to address the legacy of colonialism and to foster a theology that is genuinely liberative and contextually sensitive' (Bosch 2011).

## Collaboration between church communities and academics

This collaboration allows for the integration of diverse perspectives and expertise, which can, in turn, lead to more inclusive and contextual theological approaches. The church can provide practical insights into how colonial influences manifest in daily life and faith practices, while academics can offer theoretical frameworks and in-depth critical analysis. By working together, both parties can identify and address elements of the colonial legacy in Christian theology, while promoting the development of a more just and relevant theological understanding. This approach supports efforts to decolonise Christian theology, enabling the development of a theology that is not only liberating but also responsive to local contexts and diverse cultures. This collaboration is expected to facilitate more sustainable and significant changes in how Christian theology is practised and understood, positively impacting both church communities and the broader society.

## Implementation of freedom principles in Christian faith

The principles of freedom contained in Ephesians 2:14–16 can be integrated into church life by emphasising unity and reconciliation as core values. The concept of peace and the

removal of dividing walls in Ephesians can be translated into concrete actions within church communities by facilitating cross-cultural dialogue, creating spaces for diversity and promoting inclusivity. As theologian Miroslav Volf suggests, 'the integration of reconciliation and unity into church life requires intentional practices that foster understanding and respect across cultural and social divides' (Volf 2016). This approach indicates that church unity cannot be achieved merely through good intentions or slogans but requires concrete actions that support cross-cultural dialogue and integration. Deliberate practices might include educational programmes on cultural diversity, forums for discussing social issues and activities that bring together church members from different backgrounds. By involving all church members in this process, the church can address existing tensions and divisions while building a more harmonious and supportive community.

The integration of reconciliation and unity into church life, as suggested by Volf, is also crucial for creating an inclusive environment that values diversity. This approach helps the church to become a space that not only accepts but also celebrates differences, and is committed to deep, mutual understanding and respect. In this way, the church can advance its social mission and provide a positive example to the wider community of how living together in diversity can be done constructively and lovingly.

## Case studies of churches successfully implementing this approach

Several church communities in Indonesia, such as the Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW), have successfully implemented principles of freedom and inclusivity in their faith practices. These churches adopt a theological approach that emphasises the importance of unity and justice, similar to the churches in South Africa involved in the post-apartheid reconciliation process. According to a report published by *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 'churches that embraced a decolonial approach to theology have made significant strides in fostering reconciliation and unity in post-apartheid South Africa' (Smith 2021). Case studies show that the application of the principles from Ephesians 2:14–16 can bring about positive changes in the life of the church, promoting peace and addressing the lingering colonial legacy, which is also relevant to the efforts of GKJW in the context of Indonesia.

## Conclusion

The decolonial approach in theology introduces a crucial paradigm for reforming Christian faith towards freedom, as outlined in Ephesians 2:14–16. Within this framework, the decolonial approach serves to challenge the structures and narratives of theology that have emerged from colonialism, which often overlook or suppress local and marginal perspectives. Ephesians 2:14–16 portrays Christ as the bearer

of peace who unites humanity and removes all forms of division. Therefore, this approach emphasises the need to build an inclusive and just theological understanding that values and accommodates the diversity of faith experiences across cultures. From a decolonial perspective, Christian faith is called to pursue authentic freedom that not only addresses colonial oppression but also creates space for diverse voices and spiritual experiences. This aligns with the message of Ephesians 2:14–16, which prioritises unity and reconciliation as the core of Christ's mission. The theological reform proposed by the decolonial approach not only liberates theology from limiting colonial influences but also enriches faith understanding by recognising and integrating diverse local and global perspectives.

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## Authors' contributions

All authors, M.W., M.M. and A.L.M., contributed equally to every stage of this research, including planning, data collection, analysis and writing of the article. Each author played an active role in discussions and the development of ideas, as well as in the review and editing of the final manuscript.

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## Data availability

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

## Disclaimer

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