

# Doxological Aspect: Concept of Intercultural Mission in Indonesians Chinese

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**Abstract**— Christian mission emphasizes the joyful aspect of God to men because of His presence, which brings salvation. Awareness of the grace aspect has encouraged believers to undertake mission efforts. However, recent studies seek to present the doxological aspect as a motivation for the mission. This writing attempts to raise an awareness about the doxological dimension in *guanxi* as a motive aspect for believers on doing the mission. To discover this thought, the writer applies a qualitative descriptive method with an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach. In cultural studies on *guanxi* there is a value of 'face' regarding to 'honor' or dignity on someone we respect. This cultural value has a strong implication of honor and glory (doxology) of God. How the glory of God can be understood in the perspective of *guanxi*, so it could be a motivational aspect for the believers in today's mission endeavors? Relating to the Chinese Indonesian context, this work depicts a harmonizing culture and theology between the West and the East on perusing God's glory. **Research Contribution:** This research illuminated by the intercultural theology that could contribute to an advance of Christian scholars and many others, both in theory and praxis regarding to mission fields of study. *Guanxi* and doxology are the harmonizing idea of the West and East for the sake of God's glory.

**Keywords**—doxology; *guanxi*; mission; face; honor

## I. INTRODUCTION

All believers call to take a noble responsibility from God on mission efforts. Paul states God has appointed us as His fellow-workers (1 Corinthians 3:9). He has, previously, given us an amazing grace that saves us from our sin. The primary purpose in our Christian life is to share good tidings of the saving grace for all nations.

Historically, since two thousand years ago the Church obeyed this calling. The Church is associated with the disciples of Christ. As disciples of Christ, they humbled themselves and submitted their life to fulfil the great command of our Lord Jesus Christ [1]. Jesus has commanded his disciples to proclaim the gospel to all the people. The New Testament proved the marvelous devotion of the disciples in several passages of the Bible, such as in Matthew 28:1-19, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:47, John 20:21-22, and Acts 1:8.

The great motivation for working out God's mission is to present the saving grace for sinners, and restore them from a broken relationship with God through His begotten Son, Jesus Christ. For centuries, churches offered their excellent response with amounts of method and strategy inventions for the evangelism to carry out this honorable mission [2]. Unfortunately, currently these endeavors seem to decay. Christianity in the West, for instance, mission works were declining and needs to reach again [3]. Secularization and prosperity were suspiciously becoming the 'enemy' defeated missions work.

In Indonesia, Christians are relatively increasing. Tortures and cruelties to the church's communities were not avoided in the 'Christ Body' to proclaim the gospel [4]. Besides the indigenous Indonesian Christians, there are also Chinese Indonesian Christians in Indonesia. In social interactions, Chinese Indonesians frequently face obstacles regarding legal and political issues. One of the historical evidence was carefully researched by Cangbai Wang and Jing Huang concerning to the emancipation Indonesian Chinese women in the past decades [5]. Another research also depicts that the disparage toward Chinese Indonesian ethnic is still occurring in Indonesia [6]. According to Hoon, the May 1998 anti-Chinese riots proved the failure of the assimilation policy in the Suharto era [7]. This condition is worsened for a multi-minority status of Chinese-Indonesia Christian.

Interestingly, in the marketplace and church communities, Chinese Indonesian Christians are growing significantly. In Chinese culture, they knew *guanxi* to make a good deal in every business strategy [8]. However, in the church strategy they seem to conduct Western model for church life and missions. Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, on reviewing the book of "A History of Christianity in Indonesia" carried out a remarkable statement. The Western Christians had dominant influences in the Indonesian Churches. Since then they had attempted to free itself from post-colonial dependencies and form its own character as an innovative minority in the largest Muslim country in the world [9]. My curiosity in this research is how the *guanxi* values will enhance their mission concept, correlating with the doxology idea of mission? According to his explorations, it convinced the writer that *guanxi* has a unique value regarding the 'face', which means honor concept

in Chinese culture. This idea can communicate with the doxology concept in Christian theology to enhance missiological enterprises.

## II. METHOD

This study applies a qualitative research based on the applicable literature. An *Appreciative Inquiry* (AI) theory of Diana Whitney and David L Cooperrider [10] will be the operational method to doing constructive theology of mission. This method emphasizes positive aspects that enabled researchers to obtain the change. The 4D cycle – *Discovery, Dream, Design* and *Destiny* will be elaborated to this project on pursuing the doxological aspect in guanxi.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. General Context

Over the past decade, numbers of Christian scholars have realized that missions are ‘the unfinished task’ [11]. The data depicts that more people are still unreached for the Gospel of Christ. It comparison approximately 8/3 percent of world population [12]. Mission Frontier stated that 70 million people are “deaf” for the Gospel of Christ [11]. Some called the unengaged and unreached people group as the people of Gospel poverty [13].

Christian mission proves the progressive relationship between God and His creations. It was established in the covenantal narrations of Israel as a chosen people. These story climax is in the incarnation and the work of salvation through Jesus Christ [14].

Michael W. Goheen stated that engagement between Gospel and the cultures started around five hundred years ago. In the sixteenth century, Roman Catholic began the cross-cultural missions. Protestants echoed it movements in the eighteenth century. In the past, Western Christians assumed that non-Western cultures are pagan and inferior [15]. For these reasons, proclaiming the Gospel to all nations influenced by the culture identity of Westerners.

Referred to Lesslie Newbigin, Goheen affirms that Jesus is the light of all nations (*Lumen Gentium*). This truth will bring powerful impact on proclaiming the Gospel with words and deeds - multidirectional; from west to east and from the north to south [15].

### B. Chinese Indonesian Context

In Indonesian context, Jan Sihar Aritonang [16] refers to the scholar’s conclusion that early Christians arrived in Indonesia approximately in a seventh century in the region of Northern Sumatra. Besides Christianity, there are other religions acknowledged legally according to the state laws. Islam religion is dominant in its numeral and political influences for this country. The other religions, such as Traditional Beliefs, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, distinguish as minority people groups.

Chang You Hoon states that based on the 2000 census, roughly 35% of Chinese Indonesians are Christians. This number emanates after Buddhism population in Indonesia, around 54%. The census data on 2010 recorded Chinese Christian increasing population reached almost 43% of Indonesia population [17]. The progress of its fixed data seemed ambiguous. Relating to the international data, Chinese Indonesian population is almost ten million people. There is about a third of Indonesia’s ethnic Chinese addressed to be Christians [18]. However, based on the Indonesian scientific report, there are around 4 million Chinese Indonesian population in Indonesia [19].

Interestingly, Operation World states that approximately 50 percent of Chinese Indonesian are Christians [20]. The data provides a significance of Chinese Indonesian Christians for the further advancement of church and its missions.

Today, Chinese Indonesian are developing in some features. One of its proven progress is the organization establishment called Communion of Chinese Churches in Indonesia (COCCI), or *Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Tionghoa di Indonesia* (PGTI). Lukas Jethrokusumo, the COCCI president, currently reports that there are about one thousand Chinese Indonesian churches in Indonesia [21].

Although organizationally the Chinese churches in Indonesia are developing, they are far yet fighting multiple stereotypes. In the socio-historical feature, they meet stigmatization regarding ‘left’ and ‘right’ political issues dealing with their forefathers, who was alleged of conspiracy with socialists. From a socio-economic perspective, they are determined as a gathering of people who stand with the Indonesian elites. The depiction of social structure classifies Chinese Indonesian as outsiders. They are repeatedly running into obstacles in accessing constitutional documents in their own country. In the socio-religious sector, they were placing a minority complex ailment, – as Chinese Indonesians and as Christians.

### C. Guanxi and Evangelism

Guanxi (关系), according to Vincent Lo, is a Chinese term for connections. In the Chinese culture, literally guanxi means relationships [22]. Lo also observed that relationships based on guanxi occur among interpersonal, family, company members, and political parties [22].

In a family and close friend relationship, guanxi is performed at wide open. In particular contexts, such as the business and politics domain, guanxi could be utilized secretly [23]. In the lens of business and management fields, Yadong Luo and S H Park discovered several significances of guanxi. Some companies need to realize these values, such as long-term oriented, interchangeable, profitable, contextual, personal, reciprocal [24].

Reciprocal in guanxi has a unique implication on ‘face’ (*mianzi*). Someone will lose their face when he or she failed to gain trust from others. In other words, distrust leads to shame

for someone. Positive nuance of the face in guanxi means honor or dignity. The others will give you honor when they find you are trusted people and have a better relationship with anyone [24].

In doing contextual theology related to the Chinese culture, Jackson Wu did remarkable works titled *Saving God's Face*. He elaborates the concept of honor and shame with soteriology and the glory of God in Christian context [25].

#### D. Doxological Guanxi

This section are elaborative steps in doing intercultural theology of mission in guanxi that utilizes AI approach.

##### 1) Appreciative Inquiry and the Values of Guanxi

There are four explorative questions of AI that applicable to identify the positive values of guanxi [26].

TABLE I. AI AND GUANXI

AI	AI and Guanxi	
	Appreciative Inquiry	Guanxi Values
Discovery	What gives life?	relationship, love, kind, just
Dream	What might be?	peace, harmony
Design	How can it be?	mutualistic, trust
Destiny	What will be?	honor, face, dignity

##### 2) Appreciative Inquiry and Doxology

In his writing Intercultural Theology - Theologies of Mission, Henning Wrogemann conveys a doxology concept for mission. This attitude is regarding to God's exaltation [27].

TABLE II. AI AND DOXOLOGY

AI	AI and Doxology	
	Doxology as...	Doxology Significances
Discovery	prophetic denunciation	signify in political arena
Dream	a source of strength	theological-anthropological significance
Design	communal-physical experience	aesthetic significance
Destiny	honor, face, dignity	identity-forming significance

##### 3) Appreciative Inquiry, Guanxi, and Doxology

How cultural values of guanxi have doxological implications for the enhancement of mission effort? The next table depicts it.

TABLE III. AI, GUANXI AND DOXOLOGY

AI	AI, Guanxi, and Doxological Mission	
	Guanxi Values	Doxological Mission and Biblical References
Discovery	relationship, love, kind, just	God is love, kind and faithful (John 3:16, Ps. 86:5, 1 Cor.1:9)
Dream	peace, harmony	God provides peace and harmony (John 14:27, John 17:11, Eph.2:14)
Design	mutualistic, trust	Mutual love and trust in God (1 John.4:19, Luke 19:24-26)
Destiny	honor, face, dignity	Doxology, honoring God, present of God (Psalm 150, Rom. 11:36, Gen.32:30, John 1:18)

Echoed by Wrogemann ideas of doxology, Stefan Pass expressed vulnerable and confidence loss for God's mission in West Europe. Christians in the secular context are a minority on the society's impact. However, he recognizes a doxological aspect as a solid root for believers from all backgrounds to dare in the mission endeavors [28].

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The data and arguments provide a significant point for this investigation. Chinese Indonesian Christians are performing an important part for the Churches missions in this current time. Chinese Indonesians also experienced the guanxi values and employed this for their business enterprises.

When doxology was aiming to re-extend missions in the Western context, guanxi has also involved of Eastern virtues that prospectively to be the vessel for mission endeavors. In this harmony making, guanxi and doxology exist to one another for reciprocal enrichment to enhance the concept of mission for the sake of God's Kingdom.

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