



Strengthening Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou Values through Contextual Christian Faith Formation in the K3M Community

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Abstract

Christian faith formation within community life requires an approach that is relevant to people's cultural identity and social experiences. This community service program aimed to strengthen the values of Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou through contextual Christian faith formation among the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) community in Kupang City, a Kawanua diaspora community working to preserve Minahasan cultural identity in a pluralistic urban environment. The program employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through structured observation and photographic documentation during implementation. Activities included communal worship, a contextual biblical reflection session, facilitated discussion connecting faith and cultural values, and communal social activities designed to strengthen relationships among members. The results indicated that the program provided a meaningful space for participants to experience faith formation within community life. The integration of Christian values with Kawanua cultural values encouraged cooperation, care, mutual respect, and togetherness among K3M members. Engagement across all age groups demonstrated the relevance of the contextual approach. The program strengthened community identity by connecting spiritual development with local cultural wisdom and social responsibility. These findings demonstrate that contextual Christian faith formation can serve as an effective framework for maintaining cultural values while fostering stronger and more supportive community relationships among diaspora communities.

Keywords: Community engagement; Cultural identity; Diaspora community; Kawanua; Minahasa



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INTRODUCTION

Social changes occurring in modern society have created challenges for the sustainability of local cultural values, particularly for cultural communities living outside their regions of origin. Migration due to education, employment, and social needs has caused cultural communities to function not only as gathering spaces but also as places for maintaining identity, building social relationships, and developing values of collective life. In this context, migrant communities require developmental spaces that can connect cultural identity with spiritual life and social responsibility within the environment where they live.

Christian faith formation is one approach that can be used to strengthen community life because faith is not only related to understanding religious teachings but is also manifested through attitudes, concern for others, and involvement in social life. Contextual Christian faith formation enables Christian values to be understood through people's real-life experiences and connected with the culture that forms part of community life. In the perspective of Christian Religious Education, local culture can become a space for faith reflection because certain cultural values are related to

character formation, communal life, and social responsibility (Supit, 2023).

One cultural value that has relevance for strengthening community life is Mapalus within Minahasan culture. Mapalus represents a communal practice that contains values of cooperation, solidarity, responsibility, and mutual assistance. This value is not merely related to traditional social activities but can also be developed as social capital in responding to various challenges of modern society (Wagiu et al., 2023). In addition, the philosophy of Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou, which emphasizes that humans live to humanize others, provides an ethical foundation regarding the importance of respecting, developing, and caring for fellow human beings (Raintung & Susanto, 2021). These two values are closely related to Christian teachings that place love, service, and social concern as essential aspects of believers' lives.

This context is relevant for the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) Community in Kupang City as a Kawanua community living outside its Minahasan cultural homeland. Established as a diaspora organization in Kupang City, K3M has approximately 50 active members from Minahasan families residing across the city. The community plays an important role in maintaining family relationships and Kawanua cultural identity within the pluralistic society of Kupang City. However, the sustainability of cultural values within a community requires more than symbolic preservation; it also requires spaces for actualizing these values through collective activities that strengthen relationships among members, social awareness, and the practice of cultural values in everyday life. Despite its role in maintaining cultural bonds, K3M has faced challenges in sustaining the living practice of core Minahasan values, particularly Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou — within daily communal life, where engagement with these values has remained largely ceremonial rather than deeply integrated into members' lived experiences.

Based on this condition, a community service program is needed that does not only focus on communal activities but also integrates Christian faith formation with local cultural values. Previously, community development activities were often conducted through worship activities or social gatherings separately, creating a need for an approach that connects spiritual and cultural dimensions within a unified community experience. This community service program offers a contextual Christian faith formation approach by utilizing the values of Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou as foundations for strengthening communal life among K3M members in Kupang City.

The novelty of this activity lies in the integration of Christian faith formation and Minahasan local wisdom as an approach to strengthening migrant communities. While existing studies have explored Mapalus as a cultural value system (Wagiu et al., 2023) and its relevance in contemporary social contexts (Parengkuan, 2025), and others have examined contextual approaches to Christian Religious Education (Supit, 2023), few have deliberately integrated these two dimensions, faith formation and local cultural wisdom, within a migrant community setting. Furthermore, previous community service activities within similar communities have often addressed spiritual and cultural components in isolation, without a unified approach connecting both dimensions in a single program. This study fills that gap by designing and implementing a contextual Christian faith formation activity that deliberately integrates Minahasan cultural values as a framework for communal spiritual development. This community service activity aims to strengthen the values of Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou through contextual Christian faith formation for the K3M Community in Kupang City. The expected outcomes of this activity are increased awareness among community members regarding the importance of communal life based on faith, cooperation, care, and respect for others.

METHODS

This Community Service Program employed a descriptive qualitative approach to describe the implementation process, participant involvement, and community experiences throughout the activity. A descriptive approach is commonly used in community service activities to describe processes, interactions, and responses of participants based on field observations and documentation (Mofu, 2026). This approach was considered appropriate because the program focused on contextual Christian faith formation and strengthening community values rather than measuring changes through quantitative instruments.

The program was implemented for members of the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) Community in Kupang City. The activity was conducted on 16 August 2026 at Oesina Beach, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, involving approximately 50 members of K3M. The implementation was carried out through coordination with the K3M management regarding the objectives, participants, location, schedule, and activity structure.

The implementation process consisted of preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages. The preparation stage involved coordination with the K3M management and development of Christian faith formation materials that connected biblical teachings with local cultural values. Materials prepared for the faith formation session included a printed worship order (liturgy), a contextual Bible study guide based on Jeremiah 29:7 connecting the biblical message to the community's diaspora experience, facilitated discussion questions designed to bridge faith and cultural values, and communal games and competitions prepared as part of the celebration of the 81st Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia. These materials emphasized the relationship between Christian faith, Mapalus values of cooperation and solidarity, and the philosophy of Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou, which highlights respect and responsibility toward others.

The implementation stage began with communal worship and Christian faith formation. The activity included Bible reading and reflection based on Jeremiah 29:7, which was contextualized with the social life of K3M members as a Kawanua community in Kupang City. The program was then continued with communal activities designed to provide opportunities for interaction, cooperation, and strengthening relationships among members.

Data were collected through observation and documentation. Observation focused on participant involvement, interaction among members, participation during communal activities, and the atmosphere of togetherness developed throughout the program. Documentation was conducted through photographs and activity records. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to illustrate the implementation process and the contribution of the activity in strengthening Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou values within the K3M community.

Program evaluation was conducted descriptively based on several operationalized indicators. Active participation was defined as physical attendance and engagement across all stages of the activity, from worship through communal activities. Interaction was assessed through observable verbal and non-verbal communication among members throughout the program, including conversation, expressions of mutual support, and collaborative engagement. Cooperation was identified through observable collaborative behavior during group and communal activities, including willingness to work together and assist other participants. The activity did not use pre-test or post-test instruments; therefore, evaluation was not intended to measure statistical changes but to describe the process and community responses during the program.



Figure 1. Publication of the Community Service Program Implementation with the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) Community in Kupang City

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Christian Faith Formation through Worship and Reflection on God's Word

The Community Service Program (PkM) conducted with the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) community in Kupang City began with a joint worship service as the main part of Christian faith formation. Worship was positioned as the spiritual foundation that initiated the entire series of activities, so that faith formation did not only take place through the delivery of religious teachings but also through experiences of fellowship and togetherness among community members. In this activity, the worship service was led by Ronny Runtu, M.Th and Rev. Beni Mundung, S.Th, and was attended by K3M members in a family-oriented atmosphere.

The faith formation activity focused on the interpretation of God's Word from Jeremiah 29:7, which conveys the calling of God's people to seek the welfare of the city where they live and to pray for its prosperity. This message was connected with the life context of K3M members as a Kawanua community living in Kupang City. Through the reflection on God's Word, participants were encouraged to understand that Christian faith is not only related to an individual's personal relationship with God but is also manifested through concern, social responsibility, and positive contributions to the surrounding environment (SABDA, 2026).

The approach to faith formation implemented in this activity demonstrates that Christian faith can be developed through the context of community life. Faith formation is not merely oriented toward increasing religious understanding but also toward character development and strengthening social relationships. Christian Religious Education plays an important role in developing faith through prayer, Bible reading, worship, and the application of Christian values in daily life (Berasa et al., 2024). Therefore, worship activities in this PkM program became a space for strengthening spiritual relationships while encouraging participants to embody faith values in communal life.

This faith formation activity also demonstrated the relationship between Christian faith and Kawanua cultural values, particularly the spirit of Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou. The message of God's Word was not limited to theoretical understanding but was connected with the

identity and life experiences of K3M members. The values of togetherness, care, and concern for others embedded in Kawanua culture are aligned with the Christian calling to build a supportive and caring community. The contextualization of local culture within Christian Religious Education can help communities understand faith values in a way that is closer to their lived experiences (Supit, 2023).

Based on observations during the activity, the implementation of worship and Christian faith formation provided opportunities for K3M members to experience fellowship that strengthened their relationship with God and with one another. This indicates that faith formation within a community does not only occur through formal religious activities but also through shared experiences that build social relationships and a sense of belonging within the community (Parningotan, 2024).



Figure 2. Implementation of worship and delivery of Christian faith formation to K3M participants

Actualization of the Mapalus Spirit through Togetherness and Participation of K3M Members

Following the implementation of worship and Christian faith formation, the PkM activities continued with various communal activities involving all members of K3M Kupang City. These activities provided opportunities for participants to interact in a more relaxed atmosphere, strengthen communication among members, and enhance family relationships within the community. Based on observations during the activity, participants from various age groups were involved in the prepared activities, including communal activities and competitions held as part of the celebration of the 81st Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia.

The involvement of participants indicates that the PkM activity was not merely a program received by the community, but also became a space for active participation among community members. Participants supported one another, interacted, and took part in various activities carried out together. This condition reflects the spirit of togetherness that represents an important aspect of K3M community life. Through interactions developed during the activity, community members had the opportunity to strengthen social relationships and rebuild a sense of togetherness as a Kawanua family living outside their region of origin.

The spirit of togetherness emerging from these activities can be understood as an actualization of Mapalus values within the context of modern community life. Historically, Mapalus represents a

system of cooperation and mutual assistance among the Minahasa people, emphasizing solidarity, participation, and shared responsibility. Although its practices have developed in accordance with social changes, the fundamental values of Mapalus remain relevant and can be applied in various forms of communal life (Parengkuan, 2025). In the context of K3M, Mapalus values are manifested through member involvement, cooperation, and mutual care that emerged throughout the activity.

The implementation of various competitions also became a social space that strengthened Mapalus values. These activities were not only intended as entertainment during the independence celebration but also served as a means to build interaction and cooperation among members. The support given by participants toward other members involved in the competitions demonstrated positive social relationships and a spirit of mutual encouragement within the community. This is consistent with the understanding that Mapalus can function as social capital that strengthens community participation and interpersonal relationships in collective life (Pongantung & Khasanah, 2024).

Furthermore, communal activities within the community demonstrate that local cultural values can continue to be preserved through forms that are relevant to contemporary social contexts. Mapalus is not limited to traditional collective work practices but can also be expressed through social activities, community gatherings, and member involvement in achieving shared goals. Studies on Mapalus culture indicate that the values of cooperation and mutual assistance are closely related to community participation and the development of stronger social relationships (Rumengan & Sampul, 2024).

Therefore, the communal activities conducted in the K3M PkM program became a space for actualizing the Mapalus spirit through participation and interaction among members. The togetherness established throughout the activity demonstrates that Kawanua cultural values remain relevant within diaspora communities and can serve as a means of strengthening social relationships and collective life.



Figure 3. Participation of K3M members in community activities



Figure 4. Implementation of competitions during the 81st Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia

Strengthening the Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou Values in Building Humanistic Relationships

The results of the activity show that the togetherness developed in the K3M PkM program in Kupang City was not only related to participation in communal activities but also reflected the strengthening of social relationships among community members. The interactions that occurred during the activity created opportunities for K3M members to know, appreciate, and build closer relationships with one another as a Kawanua family. This was demonstrated through communication among members, mutual support throughout the activities, and collective involvement without differences based on background or age groups.

The social relationships established during the activity can be understood as an actualization of the Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou values, a Minahasa philosophy of life emphasizing that human beings live to humanize others. This value views humans not as individuals who exist independently, but as persons who have the responsibility to build, respect, and provide benefits for others. In the context of community life, this value serves as a foundation for developing relationships characterized by care, respect, and mutual support (Raintung & Susanto, 2021).

The implementation of the PkM activity demonstrates that the values of Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou can be realized through simple experiences within community life. Fellowship during worship, social activities, and recreational activities provided opportunities for K3M members to strengthen interpersonal relationships. The presence of each member was not merely viewed as participation in an activity, but also as part of a community in which every individual has value and a role in building collective life. This is consistent with the understanding that Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou contains a humanitarian orientation that encourages individuals to care for and build the lives of others (Udang & Kalundang, 2024).

From the perspective of Christian faith formation, the strengthening of these humanistic relationships is closely related to the Christian calling to love and serve others. Faith is not only expressed through a vertical relationship with God but also through horizontal relationships with fellow human beings. Therefore, the value of Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou provides a space for dialogue with Christian values, particularly in building a community life characterized by care, respect, and recognition of human dignity.

The relationship between Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou and community life also demonstrates that local cultural values can become a source of meaning in developing harmonious social relationships. Together with the spirit of Mapalus, the Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou values play an important role in maintaining Kawanua identity while strengthening community life in diaspora contexts. These two values can serve as alternatives to individualistic tendencies because they encourage collective life that recognizes humans as individuals who must be respected and supported (Tulung & Wowor, 2020).

Thus, the K3M PkM activity in Kupang City demonstrates that Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou is not merely understood as a cultural concept but can be embodied through community practices. The relationships developed during the activity indicate that Christian faith formation and local cultural values can work together in building a community that is more humanistic, caring, and mutually supportive.

Integration of Christian Faith, Kawanua Culture, and Community Social Life

The PkM activity conducted with the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) community in Kupang City demonstrates an integration between Christian faith, Kawanua cultural values, and community social life. These three elements were present throughout the series of activities, in which faith formation through worship and God's Word served as the spiritual foundation, while the values of Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou functioned as cultural values that strengthened relationships among community members.

Christian faith formation within the context of K3M was not positioned as an activity separate from the cultural life of participants. Instead, local cultural values became a means of connecting the message of faith with the lived experiences of community members. This contextual approach allows faith to be understood not only as theological knowledge but also as values manifested through attitudes, social concern, and responsibility toward the community and broader society.

In this activity, the spirit of Mapalus was demonstrated through member involvement and mutual cooperation during communal activities, while Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou was reflected in the caring and respectful interactions among members. Both values reinforced the message of faith delivered through worship and biblical reflection, creating a holistic experience that connected the spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions of community life.

Despite the overall positive outcomes observed throughout the program, certain limitations were encountered during implementation. The single-day format of the activity constrained the depth of faith formation that could be achieved, as meaningful value internalization typically requires sustained engagement over multiple sessions. No pre-test or post-test instruments were employed, which means that changes in participants' understanding, attitudes, or behaviors could not be objectively measured. The program evaluation relied exclusively on observational and documentary data, which, while valuable for descriptive purposes, does not permit causal inferences about the program's impact on individual participants. These limitations are important to acknowledge in order to provide an honest account of the program's scope and to inform the design of future initiatives.

Thus, this PkM activity demonstrates that Christian faith formation can be developed through an approach that considers cultural context and community social life. The integration of Christian faith, Kawanua culture, and communal life transforms this activity beyond a religious program, making it a space for developing a community characterized by care, solidarity, and social

responsibility.



Figure 5. Group photo with K3M members after the completion of the activity

CONCLUSION

The community service program conducted for the Keluarga Kerukunan Kawanua Mapalus (K3M) in Kupang City demonstrates that Christian faith formation can be strengthened through an approach that integrates spiritual values, local cultural wisdom, and community life. The program successfully provided a space for members to deepen their faith while strengthening the values of Mapalus and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou as part of their identity and collective life.

The significance of this program lies in its contribution to developing a contextual model of Christian faith formation, where faith is not only understood as a personal relationship with God but also expressed through care, cooperation, respect, and responsibility toward others. Through this approach, K3M members were encouraged to maintain cultural identity while building stronger social relationships within the community and their wider social environment.

Several limitations of this program warrant acknowledgment. First, the program was conducted within a single day, which limits the depth and durability of faith formation outcomes. Second, no pre-test or post-test instruments were employed; therefore, changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors could not be objectively measured. Third, the findings are based on descriptive observation and documentation only, without structured participant self-reporting or follow-up assessments. These limitations suggest that the outcomes reported here reflect the program's immediate contextual contribution rather than its long-term impact.

To sustain and expand the impact of the program, future community service activities should adopt a multi-session format that allows for deeper engagement with faith formation and cultural value internalization over time. Quantitative or mixed-method evaluation instruments, including structured surveys or pre/post-test tools, should be developed to enable a more rigorous assessment of program outcomes. Similar programs should also be designed for replication across other Kawanua diaspora communities in Indonesian cities, contributing to a broader evidence base on the effectiveness of contextual Christian faith formation as a strategy for cultural preservation and community empowerment.

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Author Contributions

Andrea Elfata Ratulangi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing, Original Draft;
Yunardi Kristian Zega: Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing, Review & Editing, Project Administration, Funding Acquisition;
Devrialdo Daniel Paat: Investigation, Data Curation, Writing, Review & Editing;
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Yanti Secilia Giri: Investigation, Formal Analysis, Visualization;
Liston Sihombing: Resources, Investigation, Writing, Review & Editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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