

Application of the Incarnation of Christ in the Multicultural Church As A Global Church Ethics

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ABSTRACT: The church is the body of Christ that has been redeemed by Him. The work of redemption begins with the Incarnation of Christ. The incarnation of Christ not only provides assurance of salvation for those who believe in Him. However, the principles of applying the incarnation can be an example for His multicultural church to maintain togetherness so that it becomes a blessing to the world through the witness of the life and preaching of the gospel from church. The research method used is research sourced from the literature by collecting materials such as documents, Bible interpretation books in the original text, theology books, articles, commentary magazines and even Bible texts, magazines or related news. In the incarnation of Christ, there are several principles that need to be applied in a multicultural church, namely the principles of service of love, solidarity, transformation and soteriology. The application of these principles can prevent church disputes and maintain togetherness and cooperation to realize God's mission in the midst of this world.

KEYWORDS: Multicultural, Incarnation of Christ Church, Global Etic.

I. INTRODUCTION

The church is basically one, that is, it includes all believers, but as an organization (a place for believers to worship) it consists of many church denominations. This is possible because there are various church dogmas that are born from different interpretations of biblical doctrine. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, Christianity has more than 45,000 denominations throughout the world. 2 Billion Christians are separated into thousands of denominations namely Pentecostal, Presbyterian,Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, etc. Meanwhile, Church Denominations in Indonesia, according to data from the Directorate General of Christian Community Guidance, Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, recorded that in 1993 there were 275. In 2011 there were 323 and by 2013 it is estimated that there will be 600 denominations.

With so many church sects, it is possible for there to be friction between one another. Recently, a new phenomenon has emerged that has occurred among Christians, including God's servants, namely the existence of "doctrine wars". This happens not only in the real world but also in cyberspace/virtual media. During the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world and specifically Indonesia, the "doctrine war" method increasingly mushroomed on social media, be it YouTube, Zoom media, Google Meet. The result of a "Doctrine War" like this makes the relationship between the Church, God's servants and their followers become disharmonious. In the "Doctrine War" statements often appear that are unpleasant to the ear, namely misleading each other, calling one church or servant of God heretical and the other church heretical. In fact, in a discussion broadcast on YouTube, there was a "Doctrine War" between two servants of God who did not want to give in when speaking. These two servants of God tried to defeat their "opponent" by speaking in increasingly high and loud voices. At that time there were speakers from other religions. It was the speaker from another religion who tried to reconcile the two servants of God. With the conditions described above, it is necessary for churches to have a solution to maintain harmony and harmony between churches. The author offers ideas for overcoming the above inter-Church struggles by forming a Church Global Ethics forum (EGG), which formulates Church Ethics for churches in Indonesia. The church's ethical formulation is the result of applying the principles of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This paper uses qualitative methods. The research used is descriptive analysis. This method will describe all existing problems, identify problems, study theory. By analyzing the literature and every related document so that it can answer existing problems.

III. DISCUSSION CONTENT

The explanation of the theoretical study is divided into 2 large parts, namely the Understanding of the Incarnation of Christ and the Principles of the Ministry of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Understanding the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. : The word incarnation comes from Latin, namely from two words "in" meaning Enter into and "Caro or Carne" meaning flesh.¹ So Incarnation means entering into the flesh. The word incarnation can be seen more clearly in John 1:14a "The Word became flesh" in Greek is "kai ho logos sarx egeneto". According to Mangapul Sagala: "... in this verse it is emphasized that the Logos who was with God and himself was God made flesh."² The word that needs to be paid attention to because it provides an important meaning in the incarnation is "become" in Greek using the word "egeneto". The word egeneto uses the tense singular, aorist, middle, indicative.³Sudarmanto explained that the meaning of this tense is that "this is a factual event that has happened and really happened, so it is not a metaphor or symbolic." This is proven by the results of events that have actually occurred and the results are still being felt afterwards. Robinson explains that John 1:14 The pre-existent and impersonal Logos became personal in Jesus.⁴ Dunn also explains that the word egeneto in verse 14 refers to personification.⁵ impersonal becomes an actual person.⁶ So the Logos who is God (John 1:1) has truly and truly become man.

Furthermore, an explanation is needed which is no less important, namely when He (the Logos) became Human, did His God change into Human or did His Godhead remain and only His human nature was added? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look at Philippians 2:6-7, because Paul has explained the concept of incarnation clearly and at the same time provided an answer to the question above. In Philippians 2:6. "who, even though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped...". The Important Word is "in the form of God". In Greek: "en Morphen Theou". The word "form: Morphen comes from the word Morphe which means "form" or the same as God or equal to God (consequent, equal to God) sentence: "as a possession that must be defended" (the Greek word "possession": uparcown means the original essence that nothing in Him can change).⁷ With Thus, Jesus is the second person of the Triune God whose essence is God. This essence will not change, even though human nature is added, His original nature as God did not change, when He was incarnated as Man. So the second person of the Triune God has the essence of being completely God and completely human without sin.⁸ Furthermore, Philippians 2:7 says that "but he emptied himself ... "What is meant by "emptied himself"? What was emptied in Jesus Christ, if his essence as God was not removed when he became human? The word "empty" in Philippians 2:7 uses the word ἐκένωσεν (ekénōsen) in Greek, derived from the word κενόω (kenóō) "to empty". The word Ekenosen in Philippians 2:7 is a verb that refers to the third person singular, with an active aorist indicative tense. Which refers to the basic word κενόω which means empty. The question is the Lord Jesus Christ emptied Himself of what? It is certain that it is not from His divine nature. This is impossible because He remains continuously the son of God.⁹ The answer is that He hid his glory as God so that when He appeared as a human in this world, humans could see and associate with the Lord Jesus but humans did not experience death. In line with this, Bailey explains that: "Jesus Christ emptied Himself. Thus, it can be understood that the Incarnation of Christ means that He, who is the form of God, willingly added His human nature and hid His glory and entered the world to work to save

¹ G.C. Van Nifrik and B.J. Bolang, Contemporary Digmatics (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1995).226

².Mangapul Sagala, The Glory of Christ, Revealing the Christology of the Gospel of John (Jakarta, Literature Perkantas, 2015).p.168

³ Hasan Susanto, Greek-Indonesian Interlinear New Testament (Jakarta, LAI, 2003).476

⁴ John A.T Robinson, The Human Face Of God (London: SCM,1973)10; 113-4.

⁵ James. D.G Dunn, Christoloy in the Making: An inquiry in to the origin of the doctrine of the Incarnation (London: SCM Press, 1980).

⁶ John A.T Robinson, The Human Face Of God (London: SCM,1973)10; 113-4.242-3

⁷ J. J. Muller said that en morphe theou does not mean the abstract essence or existence of God, nor is it simply the form or external appearance of God, but really refers to the meaning of divine nature, which is inseparable from the person himself. (The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955) 78.

⁸ The same thing was also explained by M. R. Vincent in his Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897) 84.

⁹ A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures In The New Testament: Philippians (Nashville: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1985).

humans from sin. In humanity He can relate to mankind and teach about His Will and in His human nature He plays the role of replacing humans who died on the Cross and in His Godly nature, He performs many miracles and saves people from sin all the divine rights, honors and privileges, namely the Glory, that He had with His Father before the world was created were not revealed when He was on earth."¹⁰ In this regard, A W Pink emphasized that: "Christ died because God truly loves humans and He has decided to save believers. Christ's death is the greatest demonstration of love. Redemption is not the cause, but the effect of God's love.¹¹ John Piper goes on to say that: "The purpose of the Incarnation was to display God's mercy for the enjoyment of the nations.¹² So the basis of the ministry of the incarnation of Jesus Christ begins with love and is carried out in the service of love. This was emphasized by William Barclay that: "If you want to know love then look to Jesus Christ. It was in His death for humans on the cross that love was fully demonstrated. In other words, the Christian life is imitating Christ because we are in Christ (Philippians 2:5). He gave us an example that we must follow in His footsteps."¹³ So the principle of the Incarnation and its application is based on the service of love.

B.1. Principles of Solidarity Service : The work of Christ's incarnation shows that He is a God who has great solidarity with His creation, especially for humans. Where, when Adam fell into sin, it was not Adam who sought God, but God who sought Adam (Genesis 3:8-9). Furthermore, God Himself took the initiative to sacrifice a lamb to provide clothing for Adam and Eve who had realized their nakedness before God because of their sin (Genesis 3:21). Even Genesis 3:15 states that it was God who gave the promise of Proto Evangelium to humans by separating the female offspring from the offspring of the serpent (the devil). This promise was realized in the presence of Jesus Christ into the world to crush Satan's head (I Corinthians 15:55-56). So, it can be understood that in the act of saving humans, solidarity never starts with humans but starts with God himself. This foundation of solidarity was initiated by God in Jesus Christ because God knows that humans cannot save themselves after falling into sin. He needed a Savior who could free humans from sin.¹⁴ Only God can help humans, so God took the initiative to come from Heaven through His incarnation as a sinless human and died for humans so that everyone who believes can have eternal life. Sudarmanto explained that the principles of solidarity and self-identification are the Christological basis for multicultural relations, both multiethnic and multireligious. This is expressed in various principles of His teaching and actions. Jesus emphasized the parallel between loving God and others as the main law for His disciples.¹⁵ Sudarmanto continued his explanation that: "The principle of solidarity and self-identification forms an ethical attitude that is ready to feel the feelings of others, because that is the GOLDEN LAW in Matthew 7:12.¹⁶ In this way, the attitude of solidarity, which is an act of truth in the incarnation of Christ, becomes a strong foundation in the church's multicultural relations.

B.2. Principles of Transformational Services : The purpose of the Incarnation is to carry out an act of transformation,¹⁷ this can be seen from the presentation of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Aspects transformed by Jesus:

- a. Cultural aspects. At that time the culture really devalued a person's value women, but the presence of Christ elevates the value of a woman through birth using Mary, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection and the preaching of the resurrection accompanied and initiated by women. All the explanations above show that every cultural value that has been damaged is restored in the Incarnation of Christ so that believers can continue the task of cultural restoration so that the values that exist in each culture are in line with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- b. Aspects of Worship. Religion at that time was closely bound by interpretations

1984), 25.

¹⁰Mangapul Sagala, The Glory of Christ, Revealing the Christology of the Gospel of John (Jakarta, Literature Perkantas, 2015).p.168

¹¹ A W Pink, Interpretation of the Gospel of John (Surabaya, Yakin Publishers, 1990) 56.

¹² John Piper, Seeing and Enjoying Jesus Christ, (Jakarta: Momentum Publishers, 2013). p.77.

¹³ William Barclay, Everyday Bible Study: The Epistles of John and Jude, 1995).140

¹⁴John Stott, Global Issues Challenging Christian Leadership (Jakarta: Bina Kasih Communication Foundation,

 ¹⁵ G. Sudarmanto, Multicultural Theology (Batu: Literature Division, YPPII Multimedia Department, 2014), 104.
¹⁶ Ibid..., 104-105.

 ¹⁷ Louis Bekhof, Systematic Theology: The Doctrine of Christ (Indonesian Evangelical Reformed Institute, 1996),
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Torah law from the Jewish rabbis, so that religion is not carried out with love for God but is only bound by human demands which ultimately fall into the demands of obligation alone, in the end judged only in fluency in reciting the demands of tradition and the number of religious activities carried out. However, when Jesus appeared in human history, He was present in the condition of the Jewish religion, so He provided a transformation starting from the main thing in religion, namely the demand for rebirth (John 3:1-8), the principle of love for God and neighbor (Matthew 22: 37-40).

c. **Social Aspects. The definition of neighbor for Jews is the Jewish group :** themselves while others are said to be infidels. This is very emphasized because they strictly maintain the purity of their genealogy. For Jews, other groups who do not belong to their group are considered infidels and are firewood for the fire of hell because they are seen as sinners, such as tax collectors, prostitutes, foreigners and hired shepherds. Jews did not open social relations with these groups. When Jesus was incarnated into the world, He brought about social transformation by associating with groups that were looked down upon by the Jews. These groups were tax collectors, prostitutes or prostitutes, foreigners (Syro Phoenician women). Through this approach the tax collector, the prostitute and the foreigner accepted Jesus Christ so that salvation might come to them. Therefore, the principle of Transformation service must be adhered to by the church to carry out transformation in all fields but with a good and effective approach like the approach of the Lord Jesus so that the church can win many people for the expansion of the kingdom of God.

B.3. Principles of Soteriological Service : The incarnation of Christ announced to the world that humans cannot save themselves.¹⁸ In line with this, Antony Hoekema emphasized that: "Man according to his nature does not have the ability to respond to the call of the Gospel with repentance and faith, because he has been born into the existence of a sinner in either Pervasive Depravity or Spiritual Inability.¹⁹ Thus, humans need a Savior from outside this world. The Savior is God who became man in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8). This news of the Incarnation is also an embodiment of the work of salvation provided for the world so that whoever believes will experience salvation (John 3:16; I John 4:9; Acts 4:22). It only exists in and through Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ there is no guarantee of salvation (John 14:6). This incarnational role must be followed by the church which belongs to God so that this news can spread throughout the world. Because salvation is not only news for the church but news that must be brought by the church to be proclaimed to the world.

Multicultural Church. : The discussion regarding multicultural churches in this section will be divided into 2 parts, namely multicultural churches as a reality and multicultural churches as a calling and challenge.

Multicultural Church as a Reality. : Since the New Testament, the multicultural Church has become a clear reality. Sudarmanto emphasized that: "Christ's redemptive work continued by the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit has given birth to a New Testament Church that is 'multicultural'.²⁰ Where in the reality of the Bible we can see that through the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4) there was a conversion of three thousand people (Acts 2:41) and worship was held in homes (Acts 2:41-47). Furthermore, through the ministry of the Apostles, the gospel spread so quickly, various congregations were born such as the Antiochian Church (Acts 11:19-30), the Corinthian Church, the Ephesian Church, the Galatian Congregation and the book of Revelation 2-3 mentions the existence of the multicultural reality of the Church, namely God. greets 7 Churches namely Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. It cannot be denied that with the existence of various interpretations of biblical doctrine which give rise to different church dogmas, it is certain that various church denominations have been and will continue to be born today, especially in Indonesia.²¹ Agus Gunawan Satyaputra emphasized that: "Many churches are now entering a situation where the church has congregations that come from diverse cultures and therefore churches are encouraged to become multicultural.²²

¹⁸ Stephen Tong, Jesus Christ Savior of the World (Jakarta: Momentum Publishers, 2004), 28

¹⁹ Anthony Hoekema, Saved by Grace (Jakarta: Momentum Publishers, 2001), 116.

²⁰ G.Sudarmanto, Multicultural Theology,....,123 •

²¹ Mark Shaw, Ten Great Thinkers from Church History (Jakarta: Momentum Publishers, 2009), 73.

²² Agus Gunawan Satyaputra, Church, culture and mission. JurnalTeologi: Stulos (Bandung: Bandung Theological College, 2002), 100.

Based on statistical data released by the Protestant Christian religious section in 1992, published by the Director General of Protestant Christian Guidance-Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, in 1993, there were 275 Protestant Christian church organizations recorded, in addition there were 400 Protestant Christian Foundations (Para Churches). So in 1993 there were 700 Church and Ecclesiastical Protestant Christian organizations recorded.²³ Furthermore, in 1998, the Catholic Church numbered 12,473 and the Protestant Church numbered 43,909.²⁴ With all the facts that there are so many church buildings, it proves that multicultural churches are a reality that cannot be denied in the world or specifically in Indonesia.

Multicultural Churches Are a Call and a Challenge : It has been explained above that the multicultural Church is a reality that must be accepted, because according to Sudarmanto's assertion that: "the multicultural condition of the church will continue until eternity.²⁵ Thus it can be understood that the multicultural Church is a gift from God for Christians, because of everything that happens in the Church certainly within its permission and sovereignty.In a multicultural church there are calls and challenges. The call because the church is called to be salt and light, shows that the Church has one head, namely Christ and the Church must live in the application of love in its multicultural midst. Next is a challenge because the church must struggle to maintain unity in diversity in order to show the love of the Lord Jesus in this world.

Application of the Principles of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ for Multi-Cultural Churches as Global Church Ethics: The explanation of the Principles of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ for the Multicultural Church as Global Church Ethics is explained in five major points, namely: Principles of Togetherness based on the love of Christ, Solidarity, World Transformation, Church Mandate.

1. The Principle of Mutuality is based on Christ being the Head of the Church.

The Bible explains that the Church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22). This shows that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. and the source of the life of the church, without Him, the Church does not exist. Jesus Christ is the founder of the Church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus is called the head of the Church. The title Jesus Christ as Head is not just a title of glory or honor, but Christ is truly the head of His church, even Christ is the head of all things, because all things have been placed under His feet (Ephesians 1:22-23). The church gets its identity from and in Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the source and foundation and shapes the faith and teachings of the church. Jesus Christ and the words of God in the Bible determine the identity of the church. According to Eph.5:23-27, the Apostle Paul uses the relationship between Christ and God's people/His Church to illustrate an example of the relationship that needs to exist between a husband and wife. An important emphasis of this depiction is that the Church has absolute submission to the head of the Church, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. The submission of the Church to Jesus Christ who is the Head, helps His Church to remember who we must put our allegiance to, none other than Jesus Christ, and no other person. The church needs to be managed regularly through an organization, but that organization must submit to the authority of the Lord Jesus, as the supreme leader of His Church. The Church was built on Jesus Christ, so God's people as the Church must submit and obey Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Church. The existence of the Church comes from Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ (Romans 11:36). As His people/Church, we continue to live in Jesus Christ, obey Him and glorify Him.

In line with the above, the Westminster Confession defines the Church from the perspective of election saying banwa: "The general or universal Church, which does not appear to consist of all the elect who have been and will be gathered into one, under Christ as Head; and the Church is the bride, the body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.²⁶From this section it can be understood that the church exists not to do what the leaders in the church want organizationally but it is God's will that must be upheld, because He is the head of the Church. If every servant of God or member of the congregation understands this, the ethical attitude that will come out is that he must ensure that in every ethics of his life he does not offend God's heart. In this case, it relates to the

²³ Yan S. Aritonang, Various Sects in and around the Church (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2000), 1.

²⁴ Warta Ekonomi.co.id: These are the facts about the growth of places of worship in Indonesia (statistical data from the Ministry of Religion). Accessed, June 16 2021

²⁵ G. Sudarmato, Multicultural Theology,....,123.

²⁶ Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology: Church Doctrine (Surabaya: Indonesian Evangelical Reformed Institute, 1997), 23.

attitude of providing input to other churches with the aim of glorifying our Father in Heaven. The right attitude in providing input is an ethical attitude. This kind of attitude will give rise to mutual respect, so harmony will be created for the glory of the head of the church.

2. The Principle of Togetherness based on the Love and Solidarity of the Incarnation of Christ

All differences lie within the church as an institution. This is due to different interpretations of the Bible.²⁷ This should not create divisions between the churches. Because basically all these differences do not diminish the essence of God's people as the true church, which was born from the work of Christ.²⁸ In fact, according to Jeremiah Burroughs, quoted by Mark Shaw, "God can use these differences to express Biblical truth, just like the 'sparks produced by the friction between two pieces of flint".²⁹Thus, it is necessary to have an attitude of mutual love and respect in these differences, if there is a deviation from the primary or basic doctrine. So there is an ethical attitude to be able to advise each other as brothers. With prayer and hope that our brother can return to the true teachings. This attitude was also taken so as not to become a stumbling block for other parties outside of Christianity, but instead to become an example that every difference that exists is addressed wisely, respectfully and in love and prayer. If there are differences in secondary matters, it is necessary to ask for an explanation so that there is an understanding of the differences and in humility each can accept the differences.

3. The Principle of Togetherness in the World Transformation Mandate

It needs to be understood that Jesus said to the disciples and believers that they were the light and salt of the world. In this regard, Mark Shaw quotes the book The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment which emphasizes that: "Every Christian is obliged to practice what he believes in, and with all his might to pursue the implications of the beliefs he has sincerely held.³⁰ Light and salt are the means to effect change in the environment in which they are placed. Light dispels darkness and salt dispels corruption. This is the transformational role that God has mandated to the Church of God universally or universally. This means that wherever the church is located, it must impact environmental change in accordance with God's will. However, the change that occurs from light is that its presence immediately eliminates darkness, but the salt must enter the object, merge and in the process of time a change occurs. The church as a tool of light and salt can make changes directly but it also requires a process, but both of these methods still require an ethical attitude so that the church does not become a stumbling block when carrying out environmental transformation in bringing the environment to God.

4. The Principle of Togetherness in carrying out the Church's Mandate.

The church does not exist in the world without a purpose, but God Himself appointed the church with two great mandates, namely the cultural mandate (Genesis 1:28) and the second is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). These two mandates must be the focus for the church to carry out. All the potential that exists in the church should lead to these two mandates so that both souls and natural resources are managed to be returned to God. If the church is only busy with debates which ultimately result in church divisions, the result is that people outside of Christ will no longer see any love in the church. Isn't that a loss? All Church resources should not be directed towards things that cause the church to experience division but instead unite in diversity to carry out the mandate of God which has been given to the church to be carried out together in order to complete these two mandates, so that the kingdom of God can be expanded in this world .

IV. CONCLUSION

The Bible is the basis for the life of the Church. Because the Bible is God's Word which was revealed by God to humans, so that humans can know God's will and make life decisions based on everything that is stated in the Bible. The Bible provides a basis for us that the Church can be understood in two ways, namely the church as an organism and as an organization. Organismally it has unity and oneness. This understanding refers to all believers in the past, present and future. However, organizationally it has multicultural potential, because differences in Bible interpretation produce different dogmas and church ordinances. This difference should not be a mistake but rather a necessity, because through this difference the churches complement each other, although it cannot be denied that there will be crucial points which will definitely become a matter for debate. In order to overcome the breakdown in relations between multicultural churches, the author offers the principles of the Incarnation of Christ which presents Biblical Ethics. From which the church can reflect to have an ethical

²⁷ Mark Shaw, Ten Great Thoughts from Church History (Jakarta: Momentum, 2009), 84.

²⁸ Winthrop Hudson, America Protestanism (Chicago:University Chicago Press, 1961), 143.

²⁹ Mark Shaw, Ten Great Thoughts from Church History...85.

³⁰ Mark Shaw, Ten Great Thoughts from Church History (Jakarta: Momentum, 2009), 84.

attitude. This Biblical Ethics will be the benchmark for inter-Church relations regulated by bodies or institutions which the author calls Global Church Ethics.

The Church's Global Ethics consists of: Principles of Togetherness based on Christ as Head of the Church, Love and Solidarity, World Transformation, Church Mandate. Having these five points can become a strong bond to unite the multicultural and multiethnic church so that it can witness and be an example in this world.

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