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Abbreviations

GKI	*Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (the Christian Church of Indonesia)
GKJ	*Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa* (the Christian Churches of Java)
GKJTU	*Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Utara* (the Christian Church in Northern Central Java)
GKJW	*Grejo Kristen Jawi Wetan* (the Christian Church of East Java
GKPB	*Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali* (the Protestant Christian Churches in Bali)
GMIM	*Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa* (the Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa)
GMIT	*Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor* (The Christian Evangelical Church in Timor)
GPIB	*Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat* (the Protestant Church in Western Indonesia)
GPM	*Gereja Protestan Maluku* (the Protestant Church in Moluccas)
HKBP	Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (the Batak Protestant Christian Church)
KCS	*Kantor Catatan Sipil* (Civil Registry Office)

KHI	*Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (Compilation of Islamic Law)
KUA	*Kantor Urusan Agama* (Religious Affair Office)
KWI	*Konferensi Waligereja di Indonesia* (Conference of Bishops in Indonesia)
Matakin	*Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* (Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia)
MUI	*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Council of Indonesian *Ulama*)
NGZV	*Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendings Vereeniging*
NIV	New International Version
NU	Nahdatul Ulama
PGI	*Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (Communion of Churches in Indonesia)
PHDI	*Parisada Hindu Dharma di Indonesia* (Hindu Dharma Council of Indonesia)
TCTCV	*The Church: Towards a Common Vision*
THKTKH	*Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee* (the Chinese Christian Congregations)
Walubi	*Perwalian Umat Budha Indonesia* (Buddhist Communities Council of Indonesia)
WCC	World Council of Churches
ZGKN	*Zending Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*

Acknowledgements

"*Masih dalam perjalanan, teruslah senantiasa memandang perubahan di jalan -* still on the path, keep looking at the changes along the way", June 4, 2018, said a message written by my colleague and senior in her dissertation that she gave to me as a gift. Changes signify movement, which also signifies life. Resisting change is a sign of stagnation. Even Jesus told His disciples to dare to leave their comfort zones to go to a deeper place, *duc in altum*. The Church is also hearing the call amidst the changing life of the world and of the human family. The Church of God will and must continue to step through every change by holding the identity of the Church of Christ on earth. I have lived my academic journey among every change because changes often appear suddenly amidst neatly arranged designs. Learning does not recognize the word 'finished'. However, the writing of this dissertation must be completed. Expressing this feeling is a thanksgiving for me, that at this stage, the academic journey has ended and should continue to the next stage.

This doctoral thesis would not have been possible without the support of institutions, communities, and individuals who contributed in such a way to the completion of this work. First of all, I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ who led, guided, and blessed me throughout my journey. For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.

This doctoral thesis would not have arrived without such great supervision. I would like to express my great thanks to Prof. Dr. Leo J. Koffeman for his encouraging guidance, in a patient and wholeheartedly way, for his never-ending spirit to help me right from the beginning of my academic journey in PThU, for his high dedication and his expertise in taking the responsibility of a supervisor. I would also like to express my thanks to Prof. Dr. E. Gerrit Singgih as co-supervisor, for his enormous encouragement during my study, for his dedication as a teacher, for his warm love as a father to my family, even his warm love of *Opa* to my daughter. I am deeply grateful to them both.

Immense thanks to Sinode GKJ (*Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa*) who made it possible that I could sustain my academic journey, as well as struggled to provide financial support. I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Human beings are unfinished creatures, which means they must design and manage their own lives. Marriage is an independent decision between two persons based on free will to design their lives. It is also one of the basic human rights as affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 16.1/2:[1]

> 1. *Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution.*
> 2. *Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.*

In principle, the decision to live in marriage is a matter of goodwill with noble intentions for everyone, regardless of religious affiliation. Marriage, as a reality of human life, bears not only social significance, but also religious meanings. When marriage is lived religiously, it basically provides religious happiness. Because of the religious meanings in a marriage, all religious rules underpinning married life cannot be ignored. Each couple will prepare themselves to enter a marriage as a life choice and plan their future life together. However, when marriage willingness is juxtaposed with religious provisions, then things are not as easy as imagined. The couple that wants to marry must fulfill all kinds of religious requirements. The religious rules are believed to hold divine values and norms as the path to marital happiness. Omitting, ruling out, or skipping those parts is believed to reduce the meaning of a marriage or can even lead to future problems. Additionally, cultural factors contribute to the process. In certain cultures, marriage is understood as a private domain, but in other cultures, it is part of the social realm, the public domain. In many Indonesian cultural traditions, marriage is part of the family domain. Beginning with the first stage of deciding who to marry

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[1] Official website of the United Nations: https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/. Accessed on 25th May 2020.

until the wedding day, each step must involve decisions by the parents and from the extended family. In this way, marriage is also expected to meet cultural norms so that the new family formed by marriage meets cultural value standards prevailing in society. These cannot be ruled out; otherwise the marriage will not be acknowledged by custom or by the extended family. Marriage legality also plays an important role to secure all the benefits that rise as a result of their marriage.

Up to this point, it seems there is no problem with marriage. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, marriage is influenced by socio-cultural, religious, and state legal systems. In a secular society, marriage does not take religious aspects in account. In Indonesia, it is very different. Yewangoe says that Asian nations are religious nations. Religious feeling is so deeply embedded in the hearts of people that their attitudes, thoughts, and whole lives are very much inspired and directed by it. In other words, it is difficult to separate the life activities of Asian people from their religious experiences.[2] As a result, it is inevitable that marriage will be closely attached to cultural and religious aspects. Marriage is an entity in human life formed by cultural and religious aspects. Strengthening the legal aspects in the state law regarding marriage was a later development. Before that awareness grew, the particular customs among various indigenous societies were more concerned with the legal marriage complying with custom and religion. It means that every culture and religion had its own criteria for determining legitimate marriages.

In this situation, problems arise when marriage as a social reality is juxtaposed with a plural reality. This plural reality has created a challenge for marriage. In the context of (cultural and religious) plurality in Indonesian society, interaction among individuals of different cultures and faiths is an unavoidable necessity. Rejection of that reality is an unnatural attitude. The interaction among individuals of different cultures and faiths will involve emotional and psychological aspects, including love. Therefore, in the context of a plural society, interfaith marriage is very likely to take place. Just as a same-faith couple, an interfaith couple also faces cultural, religious, and legal factors. Nevertheless, the challenge for an interfaith couple is harder than that for a same-faith couple. An interfaith couple will face opposition from various perspectives including socio-religious, socio-cultural, as well as state law.

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[2] A.A. Yewangoe, *Theologia Crusis di Asia, Pandangan-pandangan Orang Kristen Asia Mengenai Penderitaan Dalam Kemiskinan dan Keberagamaan di Asia* (Theologia Crusis in Asia, Asian Christian Views on Suffering in the face of Overwhelming Poverty and Multifaced Religiosity in Asia), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1993, p. 17.

Speaking about the legal aspect of marriage in the context of Indonesian civil law is currently a broad and hot topic. When speaking about civil marriage law in Indonesia, the main reference is the Marriage Law 1/1974. Can this law regulate the legalization of interfaith marriage as recognized by the state? The facts show that many interfaith couples are hindered by this law. The Marriage Law 1/1974, itself, does not explicitly prohibit or regulate interfaith marriage. There is a legal vacuum. The prohibition of interfaith marriage comes from the interpretation of the Marriage Law 1/1974. The Article 2 (1) that marriage is legitimate 'if it has been performed according to the laws of the religion and belief of the parties concerned' has been taken as a formal prohibition of interfaith marriage. The Marriage Law is problematic, there is no legal certainty. Therefore, the implementation of the Marriage Law 1 / 1974 leaves some difficulties and obstacles for interfaith marriage. Meanwhile, from a historical perspective, the establishment of the Marriage Law 1/1974 cannot be separated from the political issue. It can be imagined that the marriage law makes interfaith marriage more complicated, not as smooth as the intention of living together in the profound, heartfelt, and sincere love of an interfaith couple. Some interfaith couples successfully get married, but others fail. The following testimony helps to describe the struggle of those who desire to marry, but are constrained by religious differences.

> Testimony A
> May 22, 2019
> I Left Indonesia to Pursue a Life Without Fear.
>
> I will still forever be an Indonesian at heart, but I choose to live a life without fear just because I am a Chinese Catholic woman.
> by Tita Alissa Bach [3]
>
> *I was still in high school when the May 1998 riots, which targeted Chinese Indonesians and their properties, broke out just outside of Catholic high school (Bunda Hati Kudus). I was among the lucky ones who could go home right before the riots went out of control.*
>
> *But as a Chinese Catholic, I still remember what I experienced that day and the following weeks as if it was just last week.*
>
> *I remember listening diligently to Sonora radio station for updates, switching off all lights at nights, and stayed as quiet as possible for at*

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[3] https://magdalene.co/story/pursue-a-life-without-fear. Accessed on 14 August 2019.

least a month at home. I remember thinking this must be what it felt like being in a warzone. I remember going back to school with only a half of my classmates. Some had fled the country temporarily, a few had left for good.

My family could not afford that option, so we stayed put together. But on the day when the riots erupted, I made a promise to myself to pursue a life in which I did not need to be in fear ever again just because of my ethnicity or religion. I was aiming to move abroad to Europe, a place that I thought would make me feel safer and more secure.

My wish came true. I started studying behavioural and social sciences for a master's degree in 2005 and a doctorate degree in 2007 in the Netherlands. What I did not expect was that I would fall in love with a Muslim Indonesian during my study. I had been in other relationships before him, but he was the only boyfriend with whom I could picture a future together. He made me want to go to wherever he would go, even to go back to Indonesia, a country I had promised to myself to leave from forever.

I felt safe to go back to Indonesia with him. I pictured our future interracial children and how this fact would significantly diminish the threats of being a double minority like myself. I also saw how our relationship could protect my family and me. A marriage with him would be a clear evidence to the Indonesian society that although my family was Chinese Catholics, we were very closely related to a Muslim Indonesian family. I could see how this scenario could go well for everyone.

But my scenario was missing some important elements. Indonesia outlawed interfaith marriages in 1974. More importantly, his family could not believe that an interfaith marriage would work out in the long term. I did not have the heart or intention to convert to Islam.

We agreed not to get married without his family´s blessing. I wanted to get married to extend my family, not to have less of it. After many painful arguments and fierce discussions, we decided to break up. It was like the heartbreak of the century to me. Never in my entire life had I ever crumbled like that. It was like losing an organ that had given me life. I started to have health issues and low-level panic attack episodes.

I felt that I had found my soulmate, yet he was taken away from me because of who I was, a minority. The old wound came back and multiplied.

Nothing helped me to move on. Not dating another person. Not by being a workaholic. Not extending my social life. I had avoided going to church because it only reminded me of our different religions, the main cause of my bleeding heart.

Over a year after the separation, I stopped pretending that I had moved on. I went to a Catholic monastery in the Netherlands to practice noble silence for six days. I decided to deal with my broken heart head-on. I tried to embrace my identity as a Chinese Catholic again after abandoning the church and hating my skin color for some time.

All the emotions, fears, and wound resurfaced simultaneously for me to deal with during the stay. The stay was fruitful because I came home from the monastery feeling human again. I moved on. I stopped blaming him, his family and to a certain extent my country for the pain.

The pursuit to a life without fear that I promised myself back in May 1998 came back stronger than ever. This pursuit has constantly motivated me to work harder, smarter and to accept that the competition for non-Europeans to find a job in Europe is just fiercer. This acceptance has granted me a job in Norway after my doctorate graduation. The job opened the door for me to apply for a citizenship in Norway, a country that I plan to adopt as my new motherland.
I will still forever be an Indonesian at heart and I have seen major improvements in Indonesia related to treating the minority. But I choose to keep my promise that I will never again live in fear just because I am a Chinese Catholic woman.

Although I will forever be a foreigner in Norway and Europe, I feel much more protected here, even as a minority. Having experienced both worlds, I conclude that this is the feeling that I would like to raise my children and grandchildren in: a life without fear for being who they are at birth and who they choose to be.

A good plan changes into a sorrowful pain. What is wrong with a person who falls in love and longs for living together in faithfulness with a person from a different religion? Bitterness and pain as experienced by Tita Alissa Bach represent the scream of many people's hearts, desiring a more peaceful life in togetherness despite differences. Religious differences should not be a barrier to happiness. It is a human right. Tita Alissa Bach's struggle was indeed finally unsuccessful. Her sincere love must be buried, not because of her mistakes or criminal acts that she had committed. Is it fair that loving a person of a different faith with

a sincere will to marry produces the same consequences as committing a crime? It will be even more bitter when love and the desire to unite in a marriage are dragged into political issues and religious sentiments. Tita Alissa Bach had to deal with the bitterness for what she could not control, the fact that she is a Catholic Chinese woman. Her religion and ethnicity led her to bitterness and pain. There are many other couples who experience a similar thing.[4]

I do not intend to analyze interfaith marriages one by one, because a dominant factor in one case may be different from other cases. The problem is not merely a psychological problem due to pain and bitterness in many people. This issue is closely related to the state law and church polity, as well as human rights, justice, and humanity. The question is; when will this stop? Will this continue to make people pessimistic and displaced from their desire to live peacefully in their country?

Tita Alissa Bach's love story ends in sadness, but hope must be nurtured along with the struggle to open up opportunities and chances. The following story will give a picture of the struggle of an interfaith couple that successfully got married and was blessed in an interfaith marriage service in the church. This couple was involved in pastoral care I conducted. This experience encouraged me to pursue this issue.

> Testimony B
> A Testimony from our Interfaith Marriage [5]
> by Lia Marpaung
>
> *"So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate." (Matthew 19:6)*
>
> *This year, 2017, we celebrate our 12-year wedding anniversary. It's been more than a decade since we tied the knot. This celebration reminds us again of the long road we walked before we could stand in front of the altar. In this twelve-year journey, we have had many mountains and temptations in our way, and truly, there have been some painful hours and days. But we are grateful, for today we are still standing, stronger*

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[4] See: Ahmad Nurcholish, *Menjawab 101 Masalah Nikah Beda Agama* (Answering the 101 Problems of Interfaith Marriage)*,* Harmoni Mitra Media, Tangerang Selatan, 2012. Nurcholish presents the testimonies of interfaith couple in various problems. See also: Tim Penulis (Author Team), *Belajar Dari Pengalaman Nikah Beda Agama* (Learning from Experiences of Family with Interfaith Marriage), Percik, Salatiga, 2011.

[5] Lia presented her testimony in several media, publications, and magazines. This one is the summary of her testimony written by Lia on 2 May 2017.

than before. We lean on each other's strength. We continue to forgive each other's weaknesses. All in the name of love and respect, and by the blessings of our Father God. This is our story, a story of an Indonesian couple and their interfaith marriage.

It was in October 2001 when I met Adi for the first time. He was a new staff in our office, an international non-government organization (NGO) focusing on democracy and social issues. I worked for an economic reform unit and Adi managed a program on democracy and governance. We started as friends who shared working space on the same floor of the building, but we soon continued as partners in various discussions about Indonesia's social issues, work-related, and in sharing good times together over lunch, coffee, and ice-creams. I was easily attracted to Adi as he seemed to know a lot of things that were new to me, I had just started my career in the development sector. He is one of the smartest persons I have ever known; he is a bookworm, but also a funny, humble and most simple person ever. The fact that we both come from a very different family background and from different religions did not stop us from realizing that we were both falling in love with each other, enjoying our togetherness, and had a dream that we could get married and be a happy couple.

As other couples in Indonesia experience, marriage in this country is not just about two people falling in love. But marriage in Indonesia also means getting a marriage between the two big families, and 'religion' becomes the key element to tie the knot. In our case, our differences in religion became the key barrier for the two families to bless our marriage and to accept the difference between us. For four long years, we tried to approach our families to accept us and we failed, even until the day we stood in front of the altar. The Indonesian Marriage Law (Number 1 year of 1974) hinders couples like us from registering our marriage. Religious leaders from both religions seemed to close their doors, even for discussion, when we sought consultation. We were rejected by three churches before we finally met Pastor Ebenheser from GKJ Sidomukti, Salatiga, in Central Java. I was then strongly advised to just convert to Islam and to follow Adi's religion, as he would be the 'imam' for me. Our close Australian friend offered to us to get married in Australia. Adi was 'threatened' by my family should he force me to convert to Islam. Furthermore, there was a serious and violent incident by our families attacking us both, as they strongly refused and forbade us to get married to be together. We both suffered psychologically and also physically, as it seemed very hard to find a way to have a legal marriage in our own country of birth.

When I almost gave-up with all the struggling of finding a way and the emotional distress in dealing with our families, I got a phone call from Pastor Ebenheser. He introduced himself as a leading pastor in one church in Salatiga and he had heard about us from the other pastor. I was unsure when I talked to him for the first time, as I was honestly still disappointed with the other church in Salatiga which had rejected us. But after several telephone calls and discussions, our hope was growing again as we could feel that Pastor Ebenheser was different than the other pastors or any religious leaders we had met and consulted with. He listened to us, without judging. He offered a solution and not a dead-end to us. He talked about hope and a possibility for a couple like us. In his church and with him as the leading pastor, we finally got married in GKJ Sidomukti on January 11, 2005. With so many rejections and unpleasant moments we had had from our families and some friends who were against interfaith marriage, I personally had no expectation and dream to have a beautiful wedding ceremony. Instead, I still can't believe even today, that our wedding was indeed a beautiful moment and ceremony. Despite that we did not have our parents and families coming and blessing us at that time, I witnessed God's kindness with the presence of Pastor Ebenheser, his family and other friends who took time and made an effort to be with us on that day. We felt that we were surrounded by love, and God blessed our wedding.

Today I am grateful that our relationship with my family is now even better than before. It is my joy to see my dad and oldest brother, who were strongly against our marriage, becoming close with Adi. I can also see how my family now has a better understanding, and improved respect and tolerance for different faiths since Adi came into the family. We celebrate Christmas and Eid Mubarak in the presence of my extended family. We are, unfortunately, still struggling to be reunited again with Adi's family, as until today they still close the door to us. But we will never lose faith for the time will come, that at the end, love conquers!

It is my concern, however, that even today interfaith marriage and relationships remain sensitive in Indonesia. There are lots of friends and couples out there that still have difficulties, and some have given up on getting married just because of strong rejection from family and community over interfaith relationship. But here's my own opinion towards my personal experiences and observations for other interfaith couples. Marrying a person who has a different religion does not let me side-line my own religion, but in fact it enriches my understanding about my own religion and my spouse's religion. By doing this, it results greatly in building our tolerance regarding each other's faiths and practices, and in strengthening our relationship. Before I got married, I honestly knew little about

Islam. I even had misperceptions about Islam and its followers. But now I feel I have a better understanding about Islam and their traditions, and to my surprise by knowing Islam and Muslims, at the same time I also learned about and embraced Christianity, my own religion, in a more meaningful and pious way. What I have experienced so far and what I believe is that married interfaith couples contribute to reducing religious distance in our community. We open doors of opportunity for our family and those surrounding us to understand each other's religions in a more non-confrontational manner, and at the same time we are practicing the most basic essence of our own religion, which is LOVE, care for one another, and tolerance. Through our marriage, we play a conciliatory role in introducing tolerance and pluralism to our children, extended families, and our communities. I believe that interfaith marriage is an important indicator of peaceful and harmonious relationships between communities in a religiously diverse society such as Indonesia. With the current conditions in this country where religious violence, fanaticism, and radicalism occur in people's daily lives, having many legal interfaith marriages in the community will bridge a more supportive environment for religious diversity and can actually produce closeness between people with different faiths.

It is my hope and prayer that interfaith marriage should no longer be prohibited in Indonesia, by the government and the law, and by any religion and the relevant institutions. It is LOVE that binds a marriage. Love is a human right. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to religion, race, and nationality have the right to marry and to form a family. They are entitled to equal rights as other married couples from a similar religion. Specifically, to Christianity and churches, isn't LOVE the foundation of Jesus's teachings and the basic principle of Christianity? I wish that more churches and pastors provided fruitful consultations, advice, and support for couples to prepare their interfaith marriage and new lives together, just like what we experienced from GKJ Sidomukti and Pastor Ebenheser. It is the responsibility of churches and religious leaders to lead and guide those seeking marriage and to express God's love through their support.

This couple, Lia and Adi, is one of the few couples who finally succeeded in fulfilling their hopes. It is due to the support from the institutions involved in their marriage process. Social tensions triggered by religious and political conflicts using religious sentiments worsen the situation in Indonesia. The issue of interfaith marriage has become a sensitive and hot issue. This situation adds to the long list of couples who yearn for solutions from the Church, as a religious institution, and from the state. The number of interfaith marriages, which are inevitable in the

plural context, increases. Every religious institution formulates its attitude to interfaith marriage. From a different perspective, interfaith marriage describes interreligious relations and the relation between majority and minority power. While the majority of Indonesians acknowledge themselves to be Muslim, the country is, in fact, religiously diverse and it has a substantial number of religious minorities. The relationship between the majority and minority raises many questions and issues concerning the implementation of religious rights. Currently, interfaith marriage is a prominent and controversial issue between the majority and minority groups in contemporary Indonesia, which often raises concern.

2.   Aims of the Research

Based on the thinking above, it is important to trace and locate the traditional roots and foundation of a church in responding to interfaith marriage from its historical background, its teaching tradition, official church documents, and church order regulations. This investigation is aimed at finding factors that influence each church in determining its view. It is necessary to tune in, track, and analyze the fact that Protestant churches in Indonesia embrace different responses toward interfaith marriage. For this purpose, five Protestant Church Synods were chosen to describe the attitude of Protestant churches in Indonesia towards interfaith marriage. It must be admitted that the five Synods do not necessarily represent all Protestant Churches throughout Indonesia. However, in terms of attitudes towards interfaith marriage, the five Synods are sufficient to show a picture of the general attitudes of Protestant Churches in Indonesia towards interfaith marriages.

I have chosen five churches and their synods for my investigation. The Synods of GKJ (the Christian Churches of Java) and GKI (the Christian Church of Indonesia) were chosen because these two synods were born in Java from the *Gereformeerde Zending*. The two synods inherited the Calvinist tradition as brought by missionaries. The Synod of the GPIB (the Protestant Church in Western Indonesia) was chosen because this synod also inherited the Calvinist tradition, even though GPIB was born from the *Staatskerk* (state church). I assumed that GPIB, formerly the *Staatskerk*, had peculiar characteristics in managing its ecclesiology and viewing interfaith marriage. The Synod of HKBP (the Batak Protestant Christian Church) was chosen because it was born in the western part of Indonesia with unique characteristics. This synod is the biggest Protestant church in Indonesia. The synod was born in the context of the Batak culture with a historical linkage to traditional Lutheran teaching. I assumed that HKBP would also provide a peculiar church attitude towards interfaith marriage. Finally, the

Synod of GKPB (the Protestant Christian Churches in Bali) was chosen because GKPB is a church born in the context of a majority Hindu population in the eastern part of Indonesia. The investigation and analysis of various church views, as embedded in church order regulations and theology toward interfaith marriage, will describe how churches in Indonesia have been constructing their regulations by relying on contextual ecclesiological efforts from an interfaith perspective.

Through this basic description, it is appropriate to ask how churches in Indonesia construct contextual church polity. Church polity as a theological effort and church regulations as a product of doing theology are the church's instruments in its service. It becomes very significant to reaffirm a church's theological position in determining its position toward interfaith marriage. The reaffirmation will have an impact on the church's pastoral ministry for an interfaith couple. The analysis of church polity regarding interfaith marriage becomes an entrance to reconstruct contextual church polity in Indonesia. A critical study of traditional heritage, official church teaching, church documents, and church policies in defining a view of interfaith marriage, in which the influencing factors must be revealed, will become a reference to answer the challenge of changes and contexts. Discussion on interfaith marriage has a wide scope, including liturgy. Liturgy is decisive of church polity structures. How it is understood and practiced can be found in the act of worship. However, in this study I focus on the contextual church order with regard to the stance on interfaith marriage. By paying attention to the principles of liturgy, there is a challenge in compiling an interfaith liturgy. Presumably, this can be the subject of further study.

Discussion on interfaith marriage involves interreligious relations in Indonesia. Churches in Indonesia, living in the plural context, seriously wrestle with the theology of religions along with various interfaith activities. Discussion on interfaith dialogue and theological discourse of interfaith relations has rapidly developed. Interfaith cooperation is also rapidly developing in Indonesia. Institutions for interfaith cooperation and interfaith activities flourish in Indonesia. As an example, many Muslim youths volunteer themselves to protect churches during Christmas and Easter celebrations in various cities. In return, church youth help to secure the Eid al Fitr celebration. So far, this is more significant than involving the police or the army. Many interfaith forums give rise to local and regional interfaith movements. Many forums are established, based on the full awareness of the importance of building peace and brotherly inter-religious relationships. Routine meetings are held to build better communication and friendship. These forums are often more successful as moderators than the government's formal

actions when inter-religious tensions occur. One example is *SOBAT*[6] in Salatiga with networks in Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta established by *Percik*[7], Synod of GKJ, and *Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) Edi Mancoro*. SOBAT promotes interfaith activities at various levels, among others: *Kita Beda, Kita Sama* (We are different, we are the same) – Interfaith Dialogue for Children, *Sobat Muda* – Interfaith Dialogue for Youngsters, *KATA HAWA* – Women's Interfaith Dialogue, etc. At the national level, institutions such as Interfidei, Madia, and ICRP (the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace) nurture cooperation and interfaith dialogue. They not only promote interfaith activities, but are also involved in developing democratization, civil society, the solidarity of humanity, and peace.

All demonstrate the development of theological discourses of interfaith dialogue and theology of religions. If interfaith discourse and cooperation have developed in such a way, we can assume that the quality of interfaith relations is also better. The question is, however, whether the development of theological discourses of interfaith dialogue and theology of religions correlates with the acceptance of interfaith marriage. This research will investigate all kinds of aspects to find a comprehensive picture of the Indonesian Church and interfaith marriage.

3.   The Research Questions

The main question is: how can the stance towards interfaith marriages of Protestant churches in Indonesia become an effort to build contextual church polity in the religious plural context of Indonesia?

To answer the main question, we will go through some steps by answering the following questions:

1. Up to the present, how has interfaith marriage been seen from the point of view of Indonesian civil law?

   This question will be answered in Chapter 2 that will present the regulations on marriage in Indonesia, specifically the legal aspects of interfaith marriage.

2. What is the stance of churches in Indonesia on interfaith marriage?

   This question will be answered in Chapter 3 that will describe the stances of the churches in Indonesia toward interfaith marriage and the arguments that underlie these stances.

3. Which are the Biblical perspectives of interfaith marriage?

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[6] Sobat literally means friend.

[7] *Percik*, abbreviation of *Persemaian Cinta Kemanusiaan* (Nursery for Humanitarian Love), is an institute for social research, democracy, and social justice located in Salatiga.

The stance of churches in Indonesia toward interfaith marriage is also based on the interpretation of the Biblical text. Therefore, this question will be answered in Chapter 4 point 3.

4. What is the theological understanding of interfaith marriage?
   The next important stage is to formulate the theological understanding of the interfaith marriage. How is it constructed? This question will be answered in Chapter 4 point 4.

5. What forms of marriage and family theology are relevant in the Indonesian context?
   The theological understanding of marriage has become a theological struggle in Church history. Chapter 4 point 2 will describe that. How to construct a theology of marriage and a theology of family in the context of Indonesia? This question will be answered in chapter 4 point 5.2 and 5.3.

6. What are some possible contextual church order regulations?
   From the results of the previous investigations, this question will show the importance of the study of contextual church polity. This question will be answered in chapter 4 point 5.4 and 5.5.

Interfaith marriage can be investigated from various perspectives. Therefore, we need to keep in mind that the focus is on the stance of churches on interfaith marriage, with the assumption that churches' attitudes refer to an ecclesiological process undergone by churches in responding to a concrete problem in a specific context. This leads us to a church polity perspective.

4. Methodology and Structure

To achieve the aim of this research, I analyze church documents and review literature relevant to the topic. In order to follow this research easily, the dissertation will be presented in the following structure:

1. Interfaith marriage in civil law in Indonesia will be explained at the beginning of the dissertation, in Chapter 2. This part will describe the legal system governing marriage from the colonial era to the birth of Marriage Law 1/1974 that is full of polemics. In addition to the Marriage Law 1/1974, the debate around interfaith marriage in the legal system in Indonesia, including the issuance of Civil Administration Law 23/2006, will be described. The decision of the Constitutional Court in 2014, which represents the most recent juridical discussion on the reality of interfaith marriage, will be presented along with the attitude of religions in Indonesia to the reality of interfaith marriage.

2. The second part (Chapter 3) will present the stance of Protestant churches in Indonesia on interfaith marriage. As mentioned above, the Protestant churches are represented by GKJ, GKI, HKBP, GPIB, and GKPB. To provide a holistic description of the churches' attitudes towards interfaith marriage, each church's historical background and ecclesiastical basis will be explained. At the end of this part, an analysis of the attitudes of Protestant churches in Indonesia to interfaith marriage will be presented. This part emphasizes the dynamics of the churches in doing their theology and ecclesiology in their own contexts

3. The third part (Chapter 4) focuses on how to develop contextual church polity in the Indonesian context through the case of interfaith marriage. First, the topic of marriage in church traditions will be discussed. The explanation of the attitudes to interfaith marriage by churches in Indonesia will reveal that each attitude has built its own theological arguments, based on biblical interpretation. Therefore, to find a strong foundation in responding to interfaith marriage, a biblical perspective on interfaith marriage will be presented, by investigating Bible verses that are directly related to interfaith marriage. From here, a theological understanding of interfaith marriage will be developed. This theological position will help the Protestant churches in Indonesia in constructing church law based on contextual ecclesiology.

4. In the final chapter – 5, Conclusion and Reflection – the importance of a contextual approach of church polity for the existence of churches in Indonesia in the context of the latest social changes will be explained. Following this, a marriage theology and a family theology that are relevant to Indonesian contexts will be presented. In the end, the structure for church order regulations on interfaith marriage is proposed for churches to develop.

5.   A Contextual Study of Church Polity

Interfaith marriage as a social reality in the plural context of Indonesia manifests a typical complexity. Every religious institution has its own attitude towards it. The legal aspect of marriage in the history of civil law in Indonesia is connected to the current attitude of the government to interfaith marriage. The Church, as a religious institution recognized by the government, is also involved and its presence is crucial in this issue. The history of civil law in Indonesia shows the involvement of the Church in the birth of the Marriage Law 1/1974. However, churches have different attitudes to interfaith marriage. This phenomenon is a challenge in the context of religious pluralism. Interfaith couples are church

members who have the right to get a solution to what they face and their desire to make their dreams come true.

Churches in Indonesia with various historical backgrounds, dogmas, and traditions respond to the reality of interfaith marriage and determine a theological view towards it. A church position can be embodied both in the form of a formal view through the official church teachings and in the church order. Whatever the stance of a church towards interfaith marriage, it is a form of ecclesiology in its own context. Churches in Indonesia have a considerable role in the structure of marriage law in Indonesia. Church order regulations become the main reference for church members to find a solution. However, church order regulations often become a great hindrance to the best solution to the problems faced by the congregations. A church order can be understood as the concrete manifestation of church life. A church order entails the essence, foundation, and church mission that serve as the formula for the church's ecclesiological basis. The underlying question is whether the church order can be changed. Will a church order remain the same despite the different context of the present? The essence of the church will not change, but each social change is a chance for the church to evaluate itself as the Church of Christ that can deal with actual struggles. The structure of the Church will always face changes. Formulating contextual church order regulations is imperative. How to develop a contextual church order that is relevant to change? Therefore, a study of contextual church polity is very relevant in order to encourage the church to manifest its mission in the middle of the changing world. Church polity needs critically to open horizons towards the dynamics of society, and attempt to assist the church response adequately to it. Interdisciplinary approaches to church polity are inevitably needed. Social changes have potentially risk for human dignity. Church polity should try to safeguard human freedom and ennoble human dignity. There is no church order able to guarantee the spiritual level and the quality of church life. However, church polity helps churches to do whatever they can do to make church life meet the highest standards as it can be understood from an ecclesiological perspective, as well as maintain the structures and procedures properly.[8]

Church polity is a theological discipline, i.e. the systematic analysis, evaluation and development of the established regulations within the churches as a legal system, as well as the mutual relations among churches, and their relations to the society, from the perspective of ecclesiology, in order for the church to embody the Church of Jesus Christ in context. Therefore, church polity will be closely

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[8] See: Leo J. Koffeman, *In Order to Serve, An Ecumenical Introduction to Church Polity*, LIT-Verlag, Zürich, 2014, pp. 22-23.

related to systematic theology, but it also considers and needs the discourse of other theological disciplines and will deal with ecumenism, missiology, ecclesiology, and contextual theology. Church polity is a way to be the Church of Christ in context.[9]

Church polity should be fully contextual. It is heavily influenced by history and context. Koffeman gives an example from the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN), founded by Abraham Kuyper. During the first half of the 20th century, the RCN developed into a denomination with a high degree of uniformity. Whatever would deviate from what was supposed to be 'normal' (i.e. Reformed), was looked at with distrust and suspicion. An absolute understanding of truth implied that the same rules would apply in all circumstances and all contexts. Church polity served such uniformity and it reduced room for experiment and innovation. To a large extent, it necessarily neglected the particularities of specific situations. However, Abraham Kuyper may have had another view. In 1896, the general synod of Middelburg of the RCN dealt with the important issue of the mission of the church in Indonesia: "At that time Abraham Kuyper was not convinced that the young churches there should copy both the confessions and the church order of the RCN. In his view at least on the long run the churches here should express themselves in terms of confession and church order in a new way, which would be adequate in a context so different from the Dutch setting".[10] Unfortunately, according to Koffeman, Kuyper's views did not shape the RCN mission policy for the first six or seven decades after 1896.[11]

The historical analysis above shows that we need a more theological and contextual approach to church polity. Church polity should provide more space for conducting open and critical studies of applicable church order regulations, as well as to be more open to the reality of diversity and plurality. Churches in Indonesia today face similar challenges. GKJ and GKI (Central Java Regional Synod) are churches that were born from the same missionary work of the '*Gereformeerde Zending*', but in their development, they have had a different approach to ecclesiastical discipline, for example in the issue of receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Members of the GKJ Church Board conduct preparations for congregations before providing the Sacrament of Holy Communion by

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[9] See: Leo J. Koffeman*, In Order to Serve,* 2014, pp. 3, 23.

[10] Leo J. Koffeman, *The Dark Side of the Good News. A Theological Approach to Church Polity*, in: Allan J. Janssen & Leo J. Koffeman (Eds.), *Protestant Church Polity in Changing Contexts I*, LIT-Verlag, Zürich, 2014, pp. 12f.

[11] *Cf.* Koffeman, *The Dark Side of the Good News,* 2014, p. 13.

visiting congregants in order to ascertain who may and who may not receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Meanwhile, GKI does not impose that manner. A cultural aspect has an important role that causes the difference in the implementation of these provisions. Diversity and plurality are not only seen in relationships between churches, but also within the church itself. GKJ, which is located in the southern part of Java, has a different expression and character of Javanese culture if compared with the GKJ churches around Yogyakarta and Solo. In the current context of globalization, uniformity is no longer something that must be desperately defended. On the contrary, for the sake of the embodiment of the mission of the church, church polity is challenged to be more flexible, creative, and innovative. Flexibility and creativity accompanied by a clear theological basis develop into a continuous contextual study as needed by the churches in Indonesia.

It all depends on the ecclesiological basis. Church orders need to be contextualized. As Koffeman affirms, "[A] church order does not only draw upon a certain confessional tradition, but it is also the result of an interplay between theological considerations and the cultural and religious context in which a particular church lives. Contextuality is not a kind of appendix to church polity (and of theology in general), but it is part and parcel of any theological discussion on the church and its life".[12] In this respect, Küster identifies four dilemmas, namely the universality-particularity dilemma, the identity-relevance dilemma, the exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma, and the unity-plurality dilemma.[13] The dilemma of universality-particularity wants to show that there is a universal promise of salvation; all humans are objects of God's love. This universal promise must be applied to the local context. In the Indonesian context, the concept of salvation is also present in many hopes of salvation in indigenous religions. Doing contextual theology by the churches in Indonesia is continually challenged to establish dialogue and encounter with indigenous religions so that the Christian faith answers their hope of salvation. Then, Christ is present concretely and relevantly on Java, in Papua, among the Batak, and throughout the archipelago. This also leads to the identity-relevance dilemma and the exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma. Christianity will not lose the power of its promise of salvation when there is a harmonious dialogue and encounter with the hope of salvation in the local religions and cultures. The dilemma of exclusivism-inclusivism deals with how Christianity meets the plurality of religions, both the majority and indigenous religions. The religious aspect

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[12] Leo J. Koffeman, *In Order to Serve,* 2014, p. 253.
[13] Volker Kuester, *Contextuality and Interculturality of Theology*, in: Janssen & Koffeman, 2014, pp. 17-27.

cannot be separated from local cultural identity. Indonesian churches, comprised predominantly of various ethnic backgrounds, can no longer look down on the hopes of salvation that exist in the local culture. The encounter with Islam is an important context for churches in Indonesia. The dilemma of exclusivism-inclusivism answers the question of how the Christian faith views the brothers and sisters of other faiths, those who live among them despite being of different religions. Will they always be seen as those who must be converted to Christianity or even considered as enemies? Such a contextual theological understanding will challenge the churches to deal with the dilemma of unity-plurality. Christ, who is present in various faces, is manifested in one Church. The church that is present in various views and characteristics is the one church, the Church of Christ. These all should be interpreted as creative tensions rather than threats to Christian identity. Theology needs a creative approach towards reality without compromising its identity.

I concur with Koffeman that universality and contextuality are reverse sides of the same issue. It is not gainful to claim universality if there is no will to engage in discussions on particular situations, contextual theological and cultural arguments included. From the opposite perspective, useful solutions for dilemmas in church polity can gain a lot from orienting themselves towards broader ecumenical theological dialogue.[14] As we know, church order regulations are the result of a complex process. They will be related to changing theological views and also to the changing of the social-political context. Church polity will deal with political and social life, with society. In the Indonesian context of religious affairs, the issue of religious freedom is a common concern, and it should be a challenge for churches in Indonesia to have interreligious cooperation for striving towards a democratic society. In the spirit of a democratic society, churches have to find their place in civil society. As a consequence, Indonesian churches must play a role in the matters of civil affairs, such as marriage and civil registration. In this respect, Indonesian churches should deal with the reality of interfaith marriage and must take a clear stance on this reality for the sake of justice and human dignity. Koffeman mentions that civil society has two basic aspirations or expected effects: building up public opinion and political participation and accumulating 'social capital', i.e. the ability of social co-operation through networking.[15] This means that although politics as such is not part of civil society, it at the same time is the main horizon of civil society. Wiloso in his article refers to Janoski's view, who wrote that social reality in the context of modern society is formed by

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[14] *Cf.* Koffeman, *In Order to Serve,* 2014, p. 263f.
[15] *Cf.* Koffeman, *In Order to Serve,* 2014, p. 244.

four social reality elements which are dynamically interacting with each other and can dominate one another: the public sphere, private sphere, market sphere, and state sphere. [16] Where is the place for the church in such a reality? The church is located in the public sphere, and of course, the church is influenced by dynamic interactions among the four elements. Wiloso views that in the Indonesian reformation era, since Suharto stepped down in 1998, the public sphere has become a wider area. When the public sphere widened, consequently, it brought social change in various dimensions. From the social-political perspective, social change is colored by the spirits of democratization, liberalization, decentralization, and the aspiration for freedom of expression for each citizen, the community, and civil society. The political noise, political euphoria, is part of it. This also brings potential effects such as democratization minus the rule of law, or democratization minus justice in law because of the absolute authority of the majority. This is also a challenge for Indonesian churches in terms of human rights, justice, and harmony of society.

Thus, Church polity will deal with contextual ecclesiology, contextual missiology, and a contextual theology of ministry. There is no ideal system in all circumstances. It requires the recognition of three principles:

1. Each church polity system is necessarily one-sided. It has developed throughout history, but no church polity system can recognize all important intuitions at the same time.

   Factually, church polity is heavily influenced by history and context. Therefore, it needs a more contextual approach. For dealing with certain issues, churches in the West would have a different approach if compared with churches in the East. Even among churches in Indonesia, the church in Sumatera will have a different approach if compared with the church in Java for dealing with the issue of religious pluralism. They have their own historical background. It means that the contextual approach in one place cannot be forcibly enforced in a different context. Consequently, a system in a certain context is not necessarily applicable to another context, but we are not always sufficiently aware of that fact. This implies that church polity should provide more room for diversity and plurality. Uniformity is not necessarily a legal virtue. Today variety, creativity, and flexibility may be more important to make church polity serve the mission of the church. Furthermore, the mission of the church will affect church polity regulations. Church polity systems, such as 'ordained ministry', the role of confession, inclusive forms of church life,

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[16]Pamerdi Giri Wiloso, *GKJ Di Tengah Perubahan Sosial* (GKJ amidst the Social Change), 2013, unpublished.

and many others – have to be related to church polity practice in order to serve the church. It means that every church polity system is formed in context. In this regard, Koffeman gives an example regarding the inheritance we share in terms of Reformed church polity. He says that what we call Protestant church polity or Reformed church polity in America and Europe might have different perspectives in other contexts.[17] The characteristics of Protestant church polity which are manifested in the presbyterial-synodal system are implemented in most Protestant Churches in Indonesia. To the present day, the system remains a characteristic of Protestant churches in Indonesia, which can be said to be a copy of their mother church in the Netherlands, and stipulated in their church orders. Koffeman argues that this system was born in a different context if compared with that of the churches in Indonesia. This system is basically anti-hierarchical in character. It gives no room for the concentration of authority to a certain ecclesiastical office-bearer or a particular church institution/board. This tradition of the Reformation, which was built as an opposition to Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth and seventeenth century of the Netherlands, has been passed on to churches in Indonesia, and remains. The presbyterial-synodal system is always understood as the best structure, as it is anti-hierarchical, opposing the Roman Catholic Church; this explanation is always firmly instilled into the members of the congregation. However, an interesting phenomenon arises today among the Protestant churches in Indonesia in that there is a tendency to strengthen the authority of the Synod in their church system. Some churches are inclined to develop their system in a rather hierarchical or synod-centralized manner. On the one hand, this can be understood from cultural factors where Indonesian culture in general is characterized by feudalism, which is hierarchical in character. In my observation, other causes are more practical reasons. Each Classis has broad and varied backgrounds. It causes a power gap between them. To tackle this requires an authority that can regulate the whole. While strengthening the spirit of democratization which does not give concentrated power to a particular person or group of people (anti-hierarchical), however, some churches in Indonesia tend to strengthen the Synod institutions. The old system seems to have made the gap between one Classis and another sharper. Therefore, the old system is no longer considered to have a positive value where binding decisions are needed and can regulate everything equally. The gap between Classis assemblies must be bridged with decisions that bind all sections and can control all forces equally. The presbyterial-

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[17] See: Janssen & Koffeman, *Protestant Church Polity in Changing Contexts I*, 2014, pp. 11-15.

synodal system has adopted a decentralized approach, but the tendency that arises among churches in Indonesia today is centralization.

Koffeman also gives an example regarding the so-called 'territorial principle' which regulates in such a way that church membership is determined by the residence address. This system, which was born from a framework in which church and state were arranged within the same societal order, still applies in Indonesia. The Indonesian context is not at all the same as the context in which this system was born. Church members now do not care about the system; many young families no longer care about the church membership system. This territorial membership system regulates that 'you are a member of the closest church' to your residence. However, human mobility can no longer be limited by territory, so this system has become irrelevant. In fact, many young families have activities in churches that are not determined by membership. They choose in which church to do their activities freely. As a result, a person is still registered as a member, but is already domiciled in a different city. For many young people, each church has different characteristics, so now they tend to be free to choose without being tied to membership.

This further emphasizes the need to review the applicable church regulations, which were born from a different context or may even have shifted from their original purpose. Take the example of the Classis Assembly. In the church order of GKJ, the Classis Assembly is held every year. For the churches in the countryside that host the Assembly, the Classis Assembly is much related to the issue of expensive costs. However, the costs of an expensive meeting are often not comparable with the quality of decisions of the Assembly. This can happen because it is understood that the Classis Assembly is an Assembly that discusses the issues that could not be resolved by the local church and makes decisions related to the running of the Classis organization. So, the Classis Assembly only addresses the topic of problems raised by the churches, if any, as well as the ins and outs of the organization. However, the Classis churches will not deliver any materials to the Assembly. As a result, the agenda of the Classis Assembly is only about organizational matters. I am inspired by Van den Broeke's study of the nature of the Classis Assembly in changing Dutch contexts which shows that the sense of being a learning community was lost.[18] The Classis Assembly initially was a presbyter study forum, with the spirit of a learning community. It became a governing body of the

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[18] Leon Van den Broeke, *The nature of the Classical Assembly in changing Dutch contexts, Continuity and Discontinuity in Reformed Church Polity,* in: Leo J. Koffeman & Johannes Smit, *Protestant Church Polity in Changing Contexts II*, LIT-Verlag, Zürich, 2014, pp. 79f.

community of congregations. In my opinion, some GKJ Classis Assemblies have lost the spirit of a learning community and have turned into managerial bodies. The bottom line is that reviewing what is already in effect in the church order is needed, in order to make it relevant and actual for the mission of the church. If not, it will only bring up new problems.

Church polity is built in history. However, church polity is an academic discipline that must be accounted for methodologically, by paying attention to historical perspectives. Theological positions will be formulated at a certain time. Church polity cannot only be based on those theological positions which are believed to be theological truths that can be applied in all contexts. Church polity must continue to explore its basis on the Biblical and ecclesiastical considerations which play an important role in making church polity truly serve the mission of the church. The argument that is built is certainly the result of a long process in history and a particular context, so if the context changes, it requires a new response. Church polity is provisional, but it must constantly explore and find a new expression.

2. Each church polity system needs openness to ecumenical dialogue, ecumenical learning. Church unity is not only something we seek, but also something we receive and believe. The Church is one because Christ is one. The unity of the Church is a gift but also a calling. The confession that the Church is one challenges the churches to find institutional forms of visible church unity. Since the discussion on the relationship between invisible and visible aspects of the church is a pivotal question of ecclesiology, there is a need to answer the question; how can the invisible aspects of the Church become visible? From a theological point of view, the Word of God is the foundation of the Church; and the nature of the Church is the communion of people that venture to live in the Word of God. However, the Holy Scripture has never introduced a specific church structure. As Dombois argues, the Holy Spirit is not the campaigner of the episcopal system, the congregational system, or the presbyterial-synodal system of organizing a church. He rejects such an approach, which substitutes the 'spirit' of a specific ecclesial form, as determined by history and cultural context, for the Spirit.[19] The Holy Spirit should be recognized in the sharing of the different systems and never be suppressed by the self-legitimizing and competing church polity traditions. Such awareness is required for a fruitful ecumenical discourse on church polity. Churches are involved in a movement that is rooted in the mission of the Lord, driven by the Holy Spirit,

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[19] As referred to by Koffeman, see: Koffeman, *In Order to Serve*, 2014, p. 85.

and oriented towards the Kingdom of God. This is a fundamental point in church polity. In every church the Word of God is being proclaimed, faith is being confessed, baptism and the Lord's Supper are being administered, wedding ceremonies and funerals are being conducted, etc. There are important differences in terms of the system, but the fundamental point is the same, it is particularly in liturgy. This fact offers room for sharing between different Christian traditions, including an exchange in terms of church polity. The differences will be less divisive only if self-justification and legitimizing theology can be discarded. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are many. Therefore, Dombois says that church polity is ecumenical in nature.[20]

3. Each church polity system is necessarily provisional. It should be contextual and deliberately changed in order to serve to mission of the church in context.

The admonition of Paul the Apostle to 'do everything properly and in order' (1Cor.14:40) seems to suggest that a Christian community should maintain a certain harmony between its social-cultural context and its theological self-understanding in its legislation. Rules and practices of a Christian community were formed in history because of certain theological considerations, dominated by a certain confessional tradition. However, the interaction between a Christian community and society in specific social, cultural, and even political, contexts may bring out a series of questions that should be dealt with in practice with ecclesiological principles. Therefore, a church order is not simply derived from a certain confessional tradition, but it is also the result of an interplay of theological considerations and the social-cultural and religious context in which a particular church lives. Each context presents its own specific challenges. Therefore, in practice, each church order regulation may be quite different from others, even if church order regulations seem to be very similar. According to Koffeman, church order regulations are the result of a complex process. Not only major events in church history and changing theological views, but also political shifts and cultural developments play a role in the continuous process of reformulating the valid rules of a particular church in a particular context. Therefore, church polity will pertain to actual issues around social-political and cultural aspects, civil law, human rights, religious freedom, civil society, and all kinds of social change affecting Christian community life. No church can fully embody the Church of Jesus Christ if there is no will to engage in discussion and dialogue on particular situations, contextual theology and social changing included. An in-depth study of the

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[20] See: Koffeman, *In Order to Serve,* 2014, pp. 31f.

relationship between church and social change will largely determine the practical attitude of the church. That is a challenge to reconsider existing church order regulations. Thus, contextuality is not a kind of appendix to church polity. Church polity is contextual in nature.

At present, some of the Protestant churches in Indonesia have amended their church orders in response to challenges in their context. Ngelow views that the amendment of church orders "should also consider historical aspects of Reformed traditions in which the collegial and equivalent character of different offices is preserved in the spirit of Christocracy".[21] However, the amendment of church orders "should also consider local traditions of communal fellowship, to both strengthen and transform those traditions. The wisdom of traditional leadership should also be adopted in the church, rather than a rigid application of church regulations. Pastoral ministries need to be emphasized more than organizational management. Most of all, the prospects for contextualizing church orders require the foundation provided by a fully developed contextual ecclesiology and contextual theology of ministry."[22]

The journey is still far from its destination. Church polity is always provisional and incomplete. However, the complexity and wider consideration of the context in changing situations will always be a companion. Hopefully, this research will provide helpful learning for churches in their respective contexts to follow the journey of pilgrimage in fulfilling their vocations as the Church of Jesus Christ.

6. Relevance of this Study

There are voices of the people that call out to the church because of bitterness and injury in the midst of the struggle in fulfilling their humanity. They are looking for solutions to problems that are not caused by criminal acts, but because of differences that cannot be denied. Many people hope the Church will create a solution. Will the Church close itself to this reality? Or will the Church actually add to their wounds? It is the church which must answer the cry of those who scream for help. In this context, silence means letting them find their own way out, silence means leaving them feeling treated unfairly by the church. This study will encourage the Churches in Indonesia to open themselves for many humanitarian problems that are not resolved only by discussing, but by giving a place for those

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[21] Zakaria J. Ngelow, *Some Notes on the Revision of Church Orders in Sulawesi, Indonesia*, in: Leo J. Koffeman & Johannes Smit, *Protestant Church Polity in Changing Contexts*, Vol.2, Case Studies, LIT-Verlag, Zürich, 2014, pp. 21-31.
[22] Ibid.

who are injured and hurt that will listen to every groan of humanity. Inevitably, the church must be self-critical, ecumenically, missiologically, and ecclesiologically. To be auto critical of every church order regulation. Let hear their voices, as Lia's voice:

> *I believe that interfaith marriage is an important indicator of peaceful and harmonious relationships between communities in a religiously diverse society such as Indonesia. With the current conditions in this country, where religious violence, fanaticism, and radicalism occur in people's daily lives, having many legal interfaith marriages in the community will bridge a more supportive environment for religious diversity and can actually produce closeness between people with different faiths.*

> *I wish that more churches and pastors provided fruitful consultations, advice, and support for couples to prepare their interfaith marriage and new lives together. It is the responsibility of churches and religious leaders to lead and guide those seeking marriage, and to express God's love through their support.*

Chapter 2

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE IN THE CIVIL LAW OF INDONESIA

1. Introduction

Marriage in Indonesia is governed by Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, known as the Marriage Law 1974. The Marriage Law 1974 applies to all Indonesian citizens, regardless of religion and ethnicity. Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 states:

> *A marriage is legitimate if it has been performed according to the laws of the religion and belief of the parties concerned.* [23]

This decisive phrase is emphasized in the implementing regulation, which requires that the marriage ceremony shall be performed according to the laws of the religion and belief concerned. The term 'religion' refers to the religions recognized by the state, namely Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Meanwhile, the term 'belief' refers to the people who believe in God, but do not belong to the recognized religions. They belong to the indigenous beliefs such as *Sunda Wiwitan in* West Java, *Kaharingan* in Kalimantan, *Marapu* in Sumba, etc. The Marriage Law 1974 also requires that every marriage must be registered according to the regulations of the legislation in force. The implementing regulation stipulates that non-Muslim marriages must be registered in the Civil Registry Office following the religious ceremony, while Muslim marriages must be registered in the local Office of Religious Affairs.

This provision commonly has been interpreted as prohibiting marriage between people with different religions and beliefs. That is because a marriage must be conducted in accordance with the ceremonial standards of the applicable religion, and in most cases, one party is subject to a religion that does not allow

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[23] (I); "*Perkawinan adalah sah, apabila dilakukan menurut hukum masing-masing agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu*." Downloaded from the official site of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia: https://kemenag.go.id/file/dokumen/UUPerkawinan.pdf. Accessed on Saturday 12th May 2018.

marriage with someone of a different faith. However, Marriage Law 1974 does not explicitly forbid or allow a marriage between people of different religions. There is considerable debate regarding its interpretation and application. The Marriage Law 1974, itself, has a contentious history, with the primary issue being the question as to whether there should be one unified law for all religions or separate laws for different groups.

In this chapter, I will flesh out interfaith marriage in the Civil Law of Indonesia. I will begin with a historical perspective of the marriage regulations in the Dutch colonial era and then a historical perspective of the birth of the Marriage Law 1974, followed by the debates on interfaith marriage regarding the different interpretations and finally, the implementation of the Marriage Law 1974. In the end, I will present the most recent legal position of interfaith marriage in Indonesia, as seen in the judgments of the Constitutional Court 2014.

2. The Regulations of Marriage in the Dutch Colonial Era

The regulation of marriage, as well as the distinctions the law makes between non-Muslims and the Muslim community in contemporary Indonesia, are shaped by the legal system from the era of Dutch colonial rule. Therefore, it is necessary to have a brief description of it in order to understand the current situation.

For centuries, community life of the archipelago, with its diversity of ethnic backgrounds, was guided by customary law (*hukum adat*). From the 13th century, as an influence of Islam penetrated the local cultures, two systems, custom (*adat)* and Islamic law, interacted with each other. Dutch colonial rule also brought and established its own law system. In the Dutch colonial era, there were different laws in place for citizens of European or Chinese origin and for Indonesian Christians, while the Muslim population was under the customary law and *shari'a* (Islamic law). Richmond views that there was an effort of the Dutch colonial government to give great recognition to *shari'a* through the recognition of Islamic marriage, divorce, and inheritance laws. It had already been practiced in some communities.[24] The recognition of Islamic law can be seen from the role of local Muslim religious officials, or *penghulu*, in the administration of marriage affairs beginning in 1820.[25] The *Burgerlijk Wetboek: Burgerlijke Stand voor Europeanen* applied only to Europeans: the ordinance of the marriage registration was

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[24] For example, *Kitab Muharrar* for the area around Semarang (1750), *Kitab van Bone en Goa* (1759) in South Sulawesi, and *Pepakem Cirebon* (1768) in West Java. See: Helen Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage Between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia,* in: Gema Teologi, Jurnal Fakultas Teologi Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana Vol. 33 No. 2, 2009, p. 49.

[25] Richmond noted that in 1820 the Regent or *Bupati* was instructed by Stbld.1820/20 (Article 13) to recognize *Penghulu* in the matters of family and inheritance.

published in *Staatsblad* 1849/25. The marriage law and ordinance for indigenous Christians was first established in Maluku in 1861.[26] In 1882, a royal decree formally established the Religious Court, in fact an Islamic court, for the purpose of addressing marriage, divorce, and inheritance (*Staatsblad* 1882/25).[27]

The legal system of the Dutch colonial rule divided civil administration into three different ethnicities and religious groups as follows: Europeans (including Japanese), Foreign Orientals (Chinese, Indians, and Arabs), and indigenous people.[28] The *Regeling op de Gemengde Huwelijken* in *Staatsblad 1898 No. 158* (*GHR Staatsblad* 1898/158) regulated different marriage codes for each of the three groupings. *GHR Staatsblad* 1898/158 was also used as an instrument to regulate a mixed marriage. This Dutch colonial regulation legalized mixed marriage, which was defined as a marriage between two persons that come under different codes/laws.[29] A key phrase in the *GHR Staatsblad* 1898/158 Article 7 (2) reads as follows: "A difference concerning religion, nationality, or origin can never count as an impediment to marriage".[30] For legal purposes, a woman came under the law of her husband as well as her children. Conversion to the husband's religion was not required.[31] According to Eddyono, the Dutch colonial law *GHR Staatsblad 1898/158* ensured the possibility of performing a marriage for people of different religions. However, it faced some obstacles because of the different views of marriage; therefore, interfaith marriage tended to be avoided. Interfaith marriages between Muslims and non-Muslim people were a complicated problem.[32]

The renewal of marriage regulations continued in the 20th century. The Dutch colonial government tended to strengthen the state law rather than customary law or religious law. The Dutch Indies citizens were administratively organized based on the *Indische Staatsregeling (IS) 162* in 1920. In accordance with this regulation, the Dutch colonial government divided civil administration into five different groups: Europeans, Foreign Orientals, Indonesian Orientals, indigenous-

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[26] In 1933, the new law replaced the 1861 law regulating marriage for Christians, *Huwelijks Ordonnantie Christen Indonesiers* (HOCI, stbld. 1933/74).

[27] See: Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, p. 51.

[28] See: Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, p. 51.

[29] See: Sri Wiyanti Eddyono, *Perkawinan Campuran Antar Agama: Hukum Kolonial dan Kekinian* (Interreligious Marriage: Colonial Law and Nowadays), in: Maria Ulfah Anshor and Martin Lukito Sinaga (Eds.), *Tafsir Ulang Perkawinan Lintas Agama, Perspektif Perempuan dan Pluralisme* (Re-interpretation of Interreligious Marriage, from a Feminism and Pluralism Perspective), Kapal Perempuan, Jakarta, 2004, p. 98.

[30] Dutch: "*Verschil van godsdienst, landaard of afkomst kan nimmer als beletsel tegen het huwelijk gelden*"; Indonesian: " *Perbedaan agama, bangsa atau keturunan sama sekali bukan menjadi penghalang terhadap perkawinan*".

[31] *Cf.* Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, p. 53.

[32] *Cf.* Eddyono, *Perkawinan Campuran Antar Agama,* 2004, p. 101.

Islam, and indigenous-Christian. As a consequence of the civil administration law in 1920, for the following years, marriage regulations were developed and regulated as follows: [33]

1. Indigenous - Muslims were under religious law that was confirmed as part of customary law.
2. Indigenous - Christians were under the HOCI (*Huwelijk Ordonancie Christen Indonesiers) 1933.*
3. Indonesian Orientals were under the *Burgerlijk Wetboek.*
4. Foreign Orientals were under their customary law.
5. Europeans were under the *Burgerlijk Wetboek.*

This new Law of 1920 evoked disappointment and heartache among the Islamic leaders because Islamic law was merely considered part of customary law. This was perceived by Islamic leaders as condescending towards Islamic law. The Religious Court (for Islam) which had already existed since 1882, tended to be ignored by the Dutch colonial government. Later, in 1937, the Religious Court did not receive funding and even some duties of the Religious Court, such as *wakaf* (donations) and *waris* (inheritance), were handed over to the Civil Court. This condition hurt the Islamic leaders. In their view, the colonial government was unfair because it paid too much attention to the interests of the Christian community, rather than that of the Islamic community. For a long period, Dutch marriage laws applied to Muslims and Christians differently. Muslims had their own Religious Court, while Christian marriages were registered in the Civil Registry. This community division, in terms of a legal position based on different religions, will be relevant in the conflict that emerged with Indonesia's draft marriage bill in 1974.[34]

3.   The Marriage Law 1974 and Interfaith Marriage

3.1. Tensions before the Establishment of the Marriage Law 1974

As we know from the previous description, the Dutch Colonial era was perceived by Islamic leaders as the era of defeat for the Muslim community, especially in terms of implementing Islamic law. Therefore, they had high expectations for the independence of Indonesia that was presumed to give them a greater opportunity to reach their goal. However, in practice, they still had to struggle for reaching the goal because they were opposed by the nationalist group. After the declaration of independence (17 August 1945), the tension between Muslims and nationalists

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[33] *Cf.* Eddyono, *Perkawinan Campuran Antar Agama*, 2004, p. 101.
[34] See also: Edyyono, *Perkawinan Campuran Antar Agama*, 2004, p. 103.

grew increasingly stronger. The first session of the Investigating Body, held from May 29 to June 1, 1945, was primarily meant to discuss the philosophical foundation of the independence of Indonesia and the Constitution. Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, the leader of *Muhammadiyah* (one of the largest Muslim organizations), suggested that Islam should be the sole foundation for the state of Indonesia because Islam was superior over other ideologies and Indonesia held the world's largest Muslim population. On the other hand, the nationalists insisted on their religiously neutral version of the statehood on behalf of non-Muslim citizens in Indonesia. On the last day of the session, 1 June 1945, Sukarno delivered the famous speech that has subsequently been considered as the birth of the *Pancasila*. In his speech, Sukarno outlined his doctrine of *Pancasila* (Five Principles) to mitigate the tension between the two groups.[35]

Although the *Pancasila* was apparently agreeable enough to be accepted by the Investigating Body, Muslim leaders were still unsatisfied, since Islamic law was not explicitly stipulated. For this reason, a small committee out of the Investigating Body was appointed in Jakarta to find a solution to the conflicts between the two groups, and further to review and modify the *Pancasila* to determine whether it was appropriate to be the sole basis of the state. This Committee then formulated the so-called *Piagam Jakarta* (Jakarta Charter) on 22 June 1945, which was intended to be included in the Preamble of the Constitution. The Jakarta Charter has been regarded as an iconic symbol of the Islamic state in Indonesia.[36]. The Charter stated,[37]

(1) *the belief in God, with the obligation for adherents of Islam to practice Islamic law,*

(2) *in accordance with the principle of a righteous and moral humanitarianism,*

(3) *the unity of Indonesia,*

(4) *a democracy led by the wise policy of the mutual deliberation of a representative body, and*

(5) *to ensure social justice for all Indonesian people.*

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[35] *Cf.* Myengkyo Seo, *Conversion to Minority: Conversion, Secularism, and the State Management of Religion in Muslim Java, Indonesia since 1965,* Dissertation Ph.D, University of Cambridge, 2011, pp. 83-84. Seo notes that the five principles, which eventually became the official state ideology of Indonesia, were originally arranged in the following order: nationalism in the unity of Indonesia; humanitarianism; consultative democracy based on deliberation and consent; social justice; and belief in God.

[36] *Cf.* Seo, *Conversion to Minority*, 2011, p. 84.

[37] Seo, *Conversion to Minority*, 2011, p. 84.

Although the Jakarta Charter adopted the *Pancasila* framework as the national ideology, crucial changes were made in the order of the principles. *First*, the fifth principle, 'belief in God', was placed as the first in the Jakarta Charter, and by implication, became the guiding principle for the other four principles. *Secondly*, this first principle was modified by adding a phrase, commonly known as 'the seven words' which read '*Dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya* (with the obligation for adherents of Islam to practice Islamic law).' Muslim leaders wished to include these changes in the drafted Constitution and claimed that the Constitution should stipulate that the President and Vice-President of Indonesia must be Muslim.[38]

On 17 August 1945, Sukarno declared independence and the Republic of Indonesia was born. A day after the declaration of independence, the Preparatory Committee decided to abrogate the Jakarta Charter because the Committee was informed by a Japanese officer that Indonesian Christians, mostly in the eastern parts of Indonesia, considered 'the seven words' as discrimination to all minority groups.[39] Although Muslims who favored 'the seven words' continued to claim that it applied only to Muslims, the insertion of 'the seven words' to the preamble of the Constitution faced strong objections from the Christian communities and even raised the possibility that the Christian stronghold regions would not join the newborn state of Indonesia. In order to prevent the break-up of the new nation, Sukarno and Hatta dropped 'the seven words' from the preamble and also removed the requirement that the President and Vice-President of Indonesia must be a Muslim. The first principle has been changed from 'the belief in God with the obligation for adherents of Islam to practice Islamic law' into 'the belief in one supreme God.'[40] Eventually, the Constitution of the State of 1945 was promulgated without explicitly stipulating Islamic law.

Although *Pancasila* was accepted as the national ideology, removing 'the seven words' evoked a new disappointment for some Muslims and Islamic leaders. This was again considered a defeat for the Muslim community as the majority population in Indonesia.[41] Four months after the declaration of independence, in January 1946, the Indonesian government established the Ministry of Religious Affairs that was assigned to address all official (recognized) religions. However, according to Suhadi, in fact, this Ministry was more focused on Muslim affairs

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[38] *Cf.* Seo, *Conversion to Minority*, 2011, p. 85.

[39] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened; Muslim – Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order,* ISIM Dissertation, Amsterdam University Press, 2006, p. 132-133.

[40] See page 31-32. *Cf.* Seo, *Conversion to Minority,* 2011, p. 86.

[41] *Cf.* Edyyono, *Perkawinan Campuran Antar Agama*, 2004, pp. 104-105.

with the excuse that Muslims are the majority.[42] In my view, establishing the Ministry of Religious Affairs cannot be separated from the nuance of the disappointment of Muslim society after removing the 'seven words' from *Pancasila*. However, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as a representation of the interreligious relationship, should be a bridge and fair dynamist between the interests of the State and religions in the democratic politics of Indonesia.

3.2. The Establishment of the Marriage Law 1974 and the Problem of Interfaith Marriage

The relationship between Muslims and Christians after the declaration of independence had been reasonably peaceful, but there was considerable concern expressed in Muslim circles about the missionary efforts of Christians following reports of large numbers of people converting to Christianity (especially in Java) following the 1965 coup.[43] This created fear and suspicion of so-called *Christianization*. Thus, the early 1970s was a setting in which there was an intensification of rivalry between the two religions. The dispute over the marriage bill took place in a context in which Muslim society was experiencing considerable disappointment. The greater recognition of Islam and *shari'a* had not come into being. This psychological factor played a role when the marriage bill, which was proposed by the government in July 1973, was being debated, particularly the draft bill dealing with provisions for mixed marriages in term of different religions. Article 11 (2) of the draft bill stated: "Differences based on nationality, ethnicity, country of origin, place of birth, religion/beliefs, and background are not an impediment to marriage". It referred to the *GHR Staatsblad* 1898/158. The definition of the legitimacy of marriage in Article 2 (1) of the bill was also strongly opposed. Article 2 (1) of the bill stated:

> *A marriage is legitimate if it is carried out and registered by the officer of the Registry Office, listed in the marriage registration, and carried out according to the regulations of this Law and/or the marriage laws of the parties concerned, as long as not in contradiction with this Law.[44]*

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[42] *Cf.* Suhadi Cholil, *Freedom of Religion or Belief in Indonesia: The Challenges of Muslim Exceptionalism,* in: Siti Syamsiyatun and Ferry Muhhamadsyah Siregar (Eds.), *Etika Islam dan Problematika Sosial di Indonesia* (Islamic Ethics and Social Problems in Indonesia), *Globethics.net Focus 6,* 2013, p. 132.

[43] *Cf.* Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage,* 2009, p. 53. See also: Seo, *Conversion to Minority*, 2011, p. 94.

[44] (I); "*Perkawinan adalah sah apabila dilakukan di hadapan pegawai pencatat perkawinan, dicatatkan dalam daftar pencatat perkawinan oleh pegawai tersebut, dan dilangsungkan menurut ketentuan Undang-Undang ini dan/atau ketentuan hukum perkawinan pihak-pihak yang melakukan perkawinan, sepanjang tidak bertentangan dengan UU ini.*"

The bill assumed that the legitimacy of marriage did not depend on religious laws. The Muslim community reacted with many opinions regarding this draft bill. These articles were perceived by some Muslims as providing an example of the majority faith perspective being ignored in favor of minority faith perspectives. Others went further and claimed that the bill aimed to undermine Islamic doctrines and could be used by those intending to Christianize Indonesia. There were voices that the article relating to interfaith marriages must be removed. Muslim groups were also infuriated that the draft bill stated that marriage was only legally valid if it was registered by the appropriate government agencies with no mention of the Islamic court. Many saw this as evidence that the government wanted to adopt a secular approach to marriage law. Sessions of Parliament became heated with strong reservations being expressed, particularly by the Muslim Party PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan,* the United Development Party) and outside the Parliament Muslim opposition to the draft bill was growing.[45]

On the other hand, on 12 December 1973, the Indonesian Council of Churches, DGI,[46] and the Board of the Catholic Bishops in Indonesia, MAWI,[47] wrote important points of criticism entitled '*Pokok-Pokok Pikiran DGI dan MAWI*' (The Basic Thoughts of DGI and MAWI). This was sent to the President, the speaker of the Parliament, the Commander of Social Security and Order, and other authorities, as well as published in newspapers.[48] The *'Pokok-Pokok Pikiran'* began with a reference to Article 29 of the Constitution of 1945 indicating that the essence of religion is based on '*kerelaan*' (consent and willingness of the person). Then it stated: "In recent discussions on the marriage bill, we are afraid that there is a tendency that the state does not only protect religious freedom, but it also gives a feeling that the state obliges the implementation of certain religious laws, at least in marriage." DGI and MAWI emphasized that the bill contradicts the principle of consent and willingness with regard to religion. Moreover, if marriage is only valid when performed according to the respective religion and belief, then it will come to the fundamental questions:[49]

1. Should a person who does not have a religion be obliged to get married according to a certain religion?

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[45] *Cf.* Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, pp. 53-54.

[46] *Dewan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia*, the Indonesian Council of Churches, which after 1984 became PGI *(Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia,* Communion of Churches in Indonesia).

[47] *Majelis Agung Waligereja Indonesia*, which after 1987 became KWI (*Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia*, Conference of Bishops in Indonesia).

[48] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened,* 2006, p. 173.

[49] Weinata Sairin, *Perkawinan Beda Agama dalam Pandangan Kristen Protestan* (Interreligious Marriages from a Protestant Perspective), in: Maria Ulfah Anshor and Martin Lukito Sinaga (Eds.), *Tafsir Ulang Perkawinan Lintas Agama,* 2004, pp. 80-81.

2. Is the marriage valid if he or she, for whatever reason, does not get married according to his or her religion?
3. If a couple has different religions – something that frequently occurs – according to which religion should they marry?
4. If a person already got married according to a certain religion and then converts to another religion, is the marriage still valid and will he or she follow the marriage rules of the new religion?

In order to accommodate mixed couples, based on Article 27 of the 1945 Constitution in which it was stated that all citizens are equal before the law, DGI and MAWI suggested that the state must provide the opportunity for the mixed couple to have a legitimate marriage according to state law. Another problem for the Christians, particularly the Protestants, was that the Protestant churches do not have a set of complete marriage laws. If a valid marriage should be based on religious law, then there would be a legal vacuum. Thus, the Christians argued, to fill the legal vacuum, every church would be obliged to set up its own marriage law and then the Civic Court must know it, or every church would have its own Court. All this certainly would lead to great difficulties.

The basic thoughts of the DGI and MAWI did not explicitly mention the ideological issue of the Jakarta Charter addressing the controversy on the bill. However, Mujiburahman reports that this sensitive issue (the Jakarta Charter) was also involved regarding the bill of marriage law.[50] He describes the debate that was published in the Catholic-owned newspaper, *Kompas*. The editorial of *Kompas* (17 December 1973) referred to this issue, even though the Jakarta Charter was not explicitly mentioned. According to *Kompas*, Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution means that "the Government will not transform the norms of religious laws to be the norms of state law," otherwise, there will be abuses of the principle of consent and willingness to follow religion. *Kompas* wrote:[51]

> *The application of laws of different religions in the field of marriage will also open the possibility for efforts to apply the laws of religion to other fields of life. In fact, the state's existence is endangered if different laws are applied in that state…The application of laws of different religions is essentially the same as the application of laws of different states within a single state!*

It was based on these considerations, argued *Kompas*, that on 18 August 1945 the agreement was made 'to use only the words '*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*'

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[50] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, pp. 174-175.
[51] Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened,* 2006, pp. 174.

(Believe in one Supreme God) in the Preamble of the Constitution of 1945'. That is an implicit statement to remind the readers that the seven words of the Jakarta Charter were eradicated. *Kompas* eventually concluded that the best solution to the controversy was to create a single and unified law that guarantees the order of statehood, but at the same time opens the possibility to apply religious rules for religious followers.

Muslim leaders also reacted to the issue. One of them was the former *Masyumi* (Islamic Party) politician, Kasman Singodimedjo, who wrote an article in January 1974 in response to the *Kompas* editorial. Kasman argued that the definition of the validity of a marriage on a religious basis was actually based on Article 29 of the Constitution, Section 1, indicating that the state is based on *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*. For him, this meant that both the Indonesian state and society must be religious. He rejected the view that religious freedom includes the freedom not to believe in any religion and that applying religious laws would destroy the state. He insisted that the law of God is greater than the law made by human beings. Based on this proposition, Kasman then answered a few questions. If the partners adhere to different religions, which religion should they follow for their marriage? For Kasman, if one of the partners' religions forbids interfaith marriage, they should follow the regulation of that religion. If a religion does not have a complete marriage law, how can its follower get married? The answer then is that they should follow the religion that has a complete marriage law (implying Islam).

The Government also reacted to the basic thoughts of DGI and MAWI. On 21 December 1973, one day before the ratification of the bill, the delegation of DGI and MAWI was finally able to have a meeting with State Secretary Soedharmono. In that meeting, Soedharmono said that the government would reply to the questions mentioned in DGI and MAWI's basic thoughts by letter.[52] In early March 1974, the DGI and MAWI eventually received that letter which was dated 31 January 1974.[53] Referring to Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution that guarantees religious freedom for all citizens, the letter answered the questions of DGI and MAWI one by one:

First, if a person does not yet have a religion, (i.e., does not belong to one of the recognized religions), he or she is not obliged to follow a certain religion and this person can get married according to one of the ways based on the applied laws that is in line with this law.

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[52] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 176.
[53] See: Sairin, *Perkawinan Beda Agama,* 2004, p. 84.

Secondly, if a person already belongs to one of the recognized religions, but he or she decides not to marry according to the ways regulated by his or her religion, then as long as the way is in line with the applied law, that marriage is valid; it means that in carrying out the marriage process, that person follows a religion according to the ways that he or she chooses.

Thirdly, interreligious marriage: based on religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution, the Marriage Law is not intended to force one religion upon another or to encourage a person to convert to, or to marry a follower of another religion. In this context, if an interreligious marriage is carried out according to one of the ways in line with the Marriage Law – and this is to be chosen and agreed upon by both partners – then that marriage is legitimate.

Fourthly, if a person is married according to a certain religion, and then afterwards he or she converts to another religion, then that marriage is still valid. If this person, after conversion, takes actions related to marriage, then the regulations of the religion that he or she is following apply.

The Government's answers to DGI and MAWI are positive but still ambiguous. They are positive in the sense that a person who does not follow one of the recognized religions; or a person who does not want to follow the marriage rules of his or her religion; and a person who wants to have an interfaith marriage; all of them can have a legally valid marriage. However, on the other hand, there is still ambiguity that is indicated by the repeated clause in the letter stating that those marriages are legitimate as long as they are in line with the applied laws in general and the Marriage Law in particular. There is still a problem for interfaith couples. According to the Law, in order to be legitimate, marriage must be performed in accordance with religious law, but when someone's religion prohibits interfaith marriage, interfaith couples will face uncertainty before the law. Meanwhile, religion becomes part of an identity that is written on an ID card. The draft bill of marriage 1973 was more accommodating for interfaith marriage.

A revised bill that accommodated Muslim's concerns was ratified by the Parliament on 22 December 1973. According to Mujiburrahman, controversy surrounding the bill was eventually solved through a compromise between ABRI (Military in Parliament) and PPP. There were five important points in the compromise: (1) Islamic marriage law would not be reduced or changed; (2) the role of Islamic institutions of the Department of Religion dealing with marriage affairs would not be reduced and changed; (3) all articles of the bill contradicting Islamic law would be eliminated; (4) divorce and polygamy should be regulated in order to avoid abuses; (5) Article 2 would become: a. Marriage is legitimate if it has been performed according to the laws of the respective religion and belief; b. Every marriage must be registered for the order of state administration. It is

obvious that the compromise was very much in favor of the Muslim interests, and therefore, the Islamic groups were happy with it.[54]

At the end, after being ratified by the Parliament on 22 December 1973, the bill was promulgated on 2 January 1974 as the *Undang Undang Perkawinan No. 1 Tahun 1974* (Marriage Law No. 1 1974). In the Indonesian legal system, a law that is ratified by the Parliament will not be applied effectively unless the Government introduces the regulation of implementation.[55] This system provides another opportunity for the Government and social forces to negotiate and make certain modifications of the application of the ratified law. In this regard, Sairin notes that DGI and MAWI sent a joint letter, dated 1 July 1974 to the State Secretary.[56] In the letter, both MAWI and DGI suggested that: *first*, for implementing the regulations of the law, the procedure of marriage for Protestants and Catholics can be taken from sections 19 to 33 of the HOCI - *Huwelijk Ordonancie Christen Indonesiers* (Marriage Ordinance for Indigenous Christians)[57] with appropriate changes. *Second*, for legal certainty, it would be better to be clear regarding which marriage law is applicable for Javanese mystical groups (*Aliran Kepercayaan*) and this is, in one way or another, related to the regulations on mixed marriage (*Regeling op de Gemengde Huwelijken, Staatsblad* 1898 No.158) that are related to Protestants, Catholics, and other religious groups.

Article 2, Section 3 of the Implementing Regulations of the Marriage Law, Government Regulations No. 9/1975, which was introduced on 1 April 1975 to assist in the implementation of the Marriage Law 1974, states that the existing specific regulations for the registration of marriage are not to be removed by the Regulations. This opens the way for the previously applied law, the HOCI, to be used. The accommodation of Christian suggestions was more explicit in the decree by the Minister of Home Affairs concerning the registration of marriage and divorce in the Civil Registry Office, dated 1 October 1975. The decree affirms that registration of marriage and divorce at the Civil Registry Office should be carried out according to the previous laws, namely the Codes of Civil Registration for European, Chinese, and Indonesian Christians, as well as the regulations on

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[54] Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 172-173.

[55] The procedure for the establishment of a new law in the Indonesian legal system includes four steps: (1) proposal and draft (can be from Parliament or Government), (2) debate and assessment together between Parliament and Government, (3) Ratification, and (4) Promulgation, by putting the new law into the state gazette. Every step will be followed by publication. The new law will be applied effectively after the Government provides the regulation for implementation.

[56] See: Sairin, *Perkawinan Beda Agama,* 2004, p. 84.

[57] Marriage regulation for Christian 1933 in the Dutch colonial era.

mixed marriage. These laws are applicable as long as they were not overruled in the Implementing Regulations of the Marriage Law, 1975.[58]

From 1975 up to the early 1980s when the Marriage Law began to be applied in Indonesia, interfaith marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly Christians, could be registered in the Civil Registry Office. The Implementing Regulations of Marriage Law stipulate that a marriage of a non-Muslim is registered at the *Kantor Catatan Sipil* – KCS (Civil Registry Office), while a Muslim marriage is performed and registered by *Kantor Urusan Agama* – KUA (Local Religious Affairs Office). As implementation of the Islamic law, KUA will not approve an application of a Muslim who applies to marry a non-Muslim unless the non-Muslim converts to Islam. Likewise, the Civil Registry Office will refuse to conduct interfaith marriages. However, after this refusal, the interfaith couple may apply for permission of an interfaith marriage from the Civil Court, as it is stipulated in Article 21 of the Marriage Law 1974. If the application is approved, the Civil Court will order the Civil Registry to register the marriage. This kind of registration can be conducted without religious legitimacy. Although the Civil Court agrees and gives permission for the interfaith marriage, if a Muslim takes this way, it will be considered an illegal marriage and *zina* (adultery). Interfaith marriage was relatively easy in the 1970s, but since the mid-1980s, it has gradually become more and more difficult. Later, in the 1990s, it became almost impossible.

In December 1983, a Presidential Letter of Instruction (No. 12/1983) was issued that affirmed that the role and responsibility of the Civil Registry Offices in the registration of marriages applied only for those who are not Muslim.[59] In 1989, the Indonesian government published the Law of Religious Courts (*Undang-Undang Peradilan Agama*) No. 7/1989. Although the law used the generic term 'religious', the court is only for Muslims and was implemented following long debates on Islamization. The legal scope of the religious court encompasses marriage, inheritance, and religious donations. The legal code that is used by the religious court is the Compilation of Islamic Law, approved by Presidential Instruction No. 1/1991. Muslims go to the Office of Religious Affairs and the religious court, while non-Muslims go to the civil registry and the state court.[60] Consequently, the Muslim community was being separated from other communities regarding the law such that it was impossible to gain a legal interfaith marriage from a religious court. Since the Indonesian Muslim Family Law was codified

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[58] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 180.
[59] *Cf.* Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage,* 2009, p. 56.
[60] *Cf.* Cholil, *Freedom of Religion or Belief in Indonesia*, 2013, p. 132.

through the religious court in the Compilation of Islamic Law, it became impossible to conduct a marriage between a Muslim and non-Muslim. Articles 40 and 44 of the Compilation of Islamic Law prohibit Muslims from marrying non-Muslims, regardless of the Islamic teaching regarding gender and the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*), as richly detailed in classical Islamic traditions.[61]

In 1992, the Minister of Religion saw that clarification was needed on the matter of interfaith marriage. He suggested that an additional article should be included in the Indonesian Marriage Law to clear up the confusion in dealing with interfaith marriage. During 2003 and 2004, there were further efforts to revise Marriage Law 1974 and consideration was given to accommodating a number of proposed amendments. These also proved unsuccessful.[62]

Interfaith marriage is unregulated in the Marriage Law 1974. The solution to this is then to apply the previous law on mixed marriage (*GHR Staatsblad* 1898/158). This solution, however, is still problematic because the marriage law states that marriage is valid if it is performed according to the respective religion and belief. If the religion of both or one of the spouses prohibits interfaith marriage, can marriage be legalized? In fact, there has been a strong tendency among Muslims (and not less among non-Muslims) to prohibit interfaith marriage. As the Marriage Law 1974 was silent on the matter, this led to conflicting interpretations about whether such marriages were prohibited. Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 stipulates that legitimate marriage may be carried out by the respective religion and belief. Nevertheless, Article 8 does not mention interfaith marriage in the list of prohibited marriages, clause 8 (f) states that a marriage is prohibited between two people if they have a relationship that according to their religion is not permitted, such as incest and under-age.

During the 1980-1990s, these articles (including their interpretations) were used as legal considerations by the Religious Affairs Office and the Civil Registry Office to refuse applications of interfaith couples to register their interfaith marriages.[63] In my opinion, different interpretations of the Marriage Law 1974, in particular, Article 2 (1) play a role in its implementation. *First*, if it is not regulated, that does not mean that it is prohibited, so interfaith marriage is legitimate. However, one can say on the contrary if it is not regulated, this means that it is prohibited. In this regard, there is a legal vacuum. *Secondly*, a marriage is legitimate if it is carried out by the respective religion and belief; therefore, if the religion of a spouse does not permit interfaith marriage, this means that it is

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[61] Suhadi Cholil, *Kawin Lintas Agama; Perspektif Kritik Nalar Islam* (Interfaith Marriage: A Critical Islamic Perspective)*,* LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2006, pp. 34-52.
[62] *Cf*. Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, pp. 59-60.
[63] *Cf*. Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage,* 2009, p. 55.

prohibited. The opposite of this interpretation is that if the religion of a spouse permits interfaith marriage, such marriage is legitimate. Accordingly, the Civil Registry Office may not refuse to register such applications. This is obviously multi-interpretable; the Marriage Law 1974 neither clearly prohibits nor regulates interfaith marriage. It can also be implicitly understood to mean that Indonesians who want to marry someone of another faith could no longer lawfully do so unless one of them converted. Thus, there is legal uncertainty for an interfaith couple since there is no regulation for them. Efforts to uphold the right of interfaith couples to have their marriages legalized lack political support. The legal vacuum clearly creates considerable confusion. There are voices calling for a solution so that interfaith marriages can be recognized by the state and by the religious law of each faith.

However, interfaith marriages are still being conducted in the local office of the Civil Registry Office of Salatiga. This is due to a different interpretation of the Marriage Law 1974. The Civil Registry Office in Salatiga is exceptional because until 2017, in my observation, it was the only Civil Registry Office in Indonesia registering interfaith marriages. The Civil Registry Office of Salatiga interprets Article 2 (1) "a marriage is legitimate if it is performed according to the laws of the religion and belief" in such a way that when an interfaith mar-riage is accepted by the Church, and performed in accordance with Church regulations so that the interfaith marriage is blessed, the interfaith marriage is considered a legitimate marriage for Christians. Therefore, the letter of Holy Matrimony that is issued by the Church is a pivotal requirement. Subsequently, the Civil Registry Office of Salatiga will register such marriages. In this regard, the Civil Registry Office of Salatiga considers the non-Christian spouse as willing to follow the law of marriage according to the Church's teaching. The Civil Registry Office of Salatiga will not investigate whether non-Christians converted or not in order to be blessed in the Church. That is considered beyond the domain of Civil Registry affairs. Therefore, the letter of the Holy Matrimony is a pivotal requirement for interfaith marriage to be registered in the Civil Registry Office of Salatiga. The stance of the Civil Registry Office of Salatiga is a result of dialogues since 1999 and a joint understanding among the Classis Salatiga of the Christian Church of Java, the Civil Registry Office of Salatiga, and the Civil Court of Salatiga. In my opinion, this is a challenge for the churches. Should interfaith marriages be forbidden or accepted? I will investigate this topic in the next chapter.

From a legal perspective, Lukito observes that interfaith marriage is a long-standing tradition in Indonesia, yet it can be said that it was made more complex

by the New Order's efforts at unifying the law of marriage in the country.[64] Ac-
cording to Lukito, the Marriage Law 1974 is an effort of legal uniformity of na-
tional law that appeared to ignore a number of issues related to interpersonal re-
lations concerning people of different religious backgrounds. Although based on
the Constitution, religions and their values were recognized as valuable sources
for family law, in practice, the Marriage Law 1974 failed to do just this. For
Lukito, the state could only conceive of the multi-religious nature of its citizens
in theory, but not in practice.[65] The literal interpretation of the sentence of Article
2 (1) that marriage is legitimate 'if it has been performed according to the laws
of the religion and belief of the parties concerned' can be taken as a formal pro-
hibition of an interfaith marriage. Lukito affirms that since a marital relationship
in Indonesia is understood as a contract between two persons from the same reli-
gion only, interfaith marriage is thus formally excluded. In my opinion, it is easy
to understand that the Marriage Law 1974 accommodates a certain religious doc-
trine, in this regard, Islam. However, Lukito's view in understanding Article 2
(1) as a prohibition for interfaith marriage can be rejected because the law itself
does not explicitly forbid marriage between parties with different religious affil-
iations.[66] Articles 8 through 28 deal with inhibitions to marriage, but they do not
at all mention that different religious affiliations can be a hindrance to such mar-
riage. The Marriage Law 1974 itself has nothing to say about the problem of in-
terfaith marriage; this has led to a situation where a legal vacuum has emerged.
Lukito divides legal scholars into four groups based on their opinions on this is-
sue: (1) some scholars are of the opinion that interfaith marriage is utterly out-
lawed in the country; such marriage is illegal, as well as the children resulting
therefrom; (2) some pragmatic scholars view that basically interfaith marriage is
forbidden on the basis of the Marriage Law 1974; those who wish to marry some-
one of a different religion have to convert so that the requirement of the Marriage
Law can be fulfilled; in case one of the parties refuses to convert, the mixed mar-
riage regulation of *GHR Staatsblad* 1898/158 can be applied; it means that a
woman has to subject herself to the law of her husband; (3) some scholars view
that interfaith marriage should be accepted in Indonesia as long as the interfaith
couple has a clear agreement between them concerning the religion of their off-
spring; (4) some scholars view this issue from the perspective of human rights;

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[64] Ratno Lukito, *Sacred and Secular Laws, A Study of Conflict and Resolution in Indonesia,* Dis-
sertation, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal, 2006, p. 370.
[65] See: Lukito, *Sacred and Secular Laws,* 2006, p. 369.
[66] See: Lukito, *Sacred and Secular Laws,* 2006, p. 370.

interfaith marriage is basically a human right. The government cannot make any law or regulation to prohibit interfaith marriage.[67]

Considering these scholarly positions, it can be understood that the puzzlement over interfaith marriage in Indonesia can be traced to different understandings of the Marriage Law 1974, specifically whether the Law clearly regulates interfaith marriage or not. Those who think that the Law is silent on the issue will tend to believe that such marriage is possible since there is a legal vacuum on the issue. In contraposition, however, the Marriage Law 1974 is supposed to be clear in forbidding interfaith marriage by virtue of the fact that it speaks only of marriage between parties of the same religious affiliation. There is thus no legal vacuum, and the previous colonial regulation of marriage cannot be applied, especially since those laws were based on different principles and values than those of the national marriage law.[68]

From another perspective, Mujiburrahman investigated and found that since the early 1990s, President Suharto had become closer to Islamic groups.[69] Perhaps this was also the reason why interfaith marriage had become almost impossible in this period. If a couple wanted to maintain their respective religions, sometimes they just went abroad to get married, because Article 56 of the Marriage Law 1974 states that marriage outside the country is legitimate if it is held according to the law where the marriage takes place[70]. In addition, people developed certain other tricks. *First,* in certain cases, before registering their marriage at the Civil Registry Office, the partners perform their religious marriage twice: once according to the husband's religion and the other to the wife's religion. There are examples of this way of marriage, even though religious doctrines would have difficulties justifying this practice. *Second*, the spouse converts (administratively[71]) to the religion of his/her partner just for marriage in the sense that he/she does not subsequently commit to the new religion at all or even he/she privately or publicly returns to the earlier religion. *Third*, the spouse decides to follow the religious marriage of the partner without conversion. This method can work if the religion in question allows interfaith marriage. In my opinion, the implementation of Marriage Law 1974 has also caused anxiety within society and even produced a bad attitude, for instance in practicing ID manipulation, because there is no way out.

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[67] See.: Lukito, *Sacred and Secular Laws,* 2006, p. 373.

[68] Lukito, *Sacred and Secular Laws,* 2006, p. 374.

[69] See: Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 188.

[70] This has become the most popular solution regarding this issue, mostly among artists and rich people.

[71] It means that she/he changes their religion, but just on the ID.

From a historical perspective, as we saw before, the establishment of the Marriage Law 1974 cannot be separated from the political issue. The Marriage Law 1974 was considered as a recognition of *shari'a* in the legal law system. Azyumardi Azra, a Muslim intellectual, recognizes that the law represents a trend towards the institutionalization of *shari'a*.[72] According to him, in a religiously plural society, it is unreasonable to avoid interaction with people of other faiths. The Marriage Law 1974 should be amended in order to be more relevant for Indonesian society. However, that is not easy. That is a very sensitive issue because amending the law will not be seen as a legal problem, but as a religious problem.

4. The Muslim Response to Interfaith Marriage

Speaking about the stance of Islam towards interfaith marriage, there is no single view. There are verses in Qur'an that are commonly used as a reference in dealing with this issue, namely:[73]

1. Al-Baqarah (2): 221
   According to this text, it is forbidden (*haram*) for a *Muslim* (man) or *Muslimah* (woman) to marry with a person considered *mushrik*. *Mushrik* (idolatry) means people who worship idols and who associate partners with God. On this matter most *Ulama* (Muslim scholars) agree.

2. Al-Mumtahanah (60): 10
   This verse clearly prohibits Muslims from marrying *kaffir* (non-believer) women. However, who is considered an infidel remains in disagreement. Those who prohibit interfaith marriage view that all non-Muslims are *kaffir*.

3. Al-Maidah (5): 5.
   This text explicitly justifies Muslim men marrying women of *Ahl-Kitab*. The *Ulamas* do not agree whether this is absolutely permissible. This permissibility is considered not absolute because it is accompanied by various conditions, including: not causing harm and bad consequences (*Mudarat*). *Ahl-Kitab* is the name for a group of peoples who adhere to the religion conveyed by the prophets before the Prophet Muhammad and possess divine books. Generally, *Ahl-Kitab* refers to both Jewish and Christian people. However, regarding this general view, there is disagreement whether Jews and Christians are included in the *Ahl-Kitab*. Some groups consider Judaism and Christianity parts of the

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[72] Azyumardi Azra, *The Indonesian Marriage Law of 1974; An Institutionalization of the Shari'ah for Social Change,* in Arskal Salim and Azyumardi Azra (Eds.), *Shari'a and Politics in Modern Indonesia*, ISAS, Singapore, 2003, p. 94.

[73] Hasanudin, *Perkawinan Campur Antar Pemeluk Agama dalam Perspektif Islam* (Interreligious Marriage in a Islam Perspective), in: Maria Ulfah Anshor and Martin Lukito Sinaga (Eds.), *Tafsir Ulang Perkawinan Lintas Agama,* 2004, pp. 49-51.

Ahl-Kitab. Still, others think that Jews and Christians are not part of *Ahl-Kitab* because Christians who live today belong to the generation after the Prophet Muhammad's time. Since Jews and Christians in Indonesia are viewed as the people after the revelation of Qur'an, they are not included in the *Ahl-Kitab*. This is the strongest view held by Islam in Indonesia that adheres to *Syafi'i* math-hab.

Apart from being based on the 3 texts above, there is an understanding from the Muslim scholars that marriage between Muslim women and men of *Ahl-Kitab* is prohibited (*haram*).

In 1980, the *Majelis Ulama Indonesia - MUI* (Council of Indonesian Muslim Religious Leaders, *Ulama*) issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) against interfaith marriage for all Muslims. This was a great contradiction because according to the Qur'an Sura *Al'Maidah* verse 5, Muslim males are allowed to marry women from the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*). Christians or Jews are considered as part of this group, but MUI declared this forbidden, *haram*.[74] Suhadi rather perceives this as Christianphobia. For *Ulamas,* interfaith marriage was perceived as part of Christianization, because it tended to convert Muslims. Therefore, interfaith marriages were suspected as efforts of an apostate. Christianphobia among Islamic leaders met its momentum when the *Kompilasi Hukum Islam,* KHI (Compilation of Islamic Law) was approved by Presidential Instruction No. 1/1991.[75] KHI was used as the legal guideline for religious courts throughout Indonesia. Edyyono considers the prohibition of interfaith marriage to prevent conversion, but then rivalry between two religions was emerging. Interfaith marriage initially had its place in civil discourse, but then it shifted to political discourse, let us say the rivalry between Islamic politics and Christian politics.[76] I think that to some extent, the use of prohibiting interfaith marriage to avoid or prevent conversion has become irrelevant in terms of religious freedom, because the willingness to convert is also a part of religious freedom.

The effort to revise the KHI and to criticize the stance prohibiting interfaith marriage has been made by some progressive Muslim scholars in the Reformation era (after Suharto stepped down in 1998). The spirit of democratization, openness, and humanity during the Reformation era gave rise to an opportunity for developing an inclusive society. In 2004, a team led by Siti Musdah Mulia compiled the Counter Legal Draft of KHI (CLD-KHI). The CLD-KHI's concern was that some points of KHI contradict the principles of equality (*al-musawah*),

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[74] *Cf*. Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, p. 57.
[75] See: Suhadi, *Kawin Lintas Agama*, 2006, p. 144.
[76] See: Edyyono, *Perkawinan Campuran Antar Agama*, 2004, p. 105.

justice (*al-'adalah*), benefit/usefulness (*al-maslahat*), pluralism (*at-ta 'ad-dudiyah*), and democracy (*ad-dimuqrathiyyah*). The CLD-KHI unanimously proposed a decision to allow, and even guarantee, the possibility to conduct interfaith marriages. CLD-KHI Article 54 says[77]:

(1) Marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim is allowed.

(2) Interfaith marriage of a Muslim and a non-Muslim should be done in the spirit and principle of mutual respect, and uphold the freedom of religion and belief respectively.

Widyawati says that KHI contradicts the basic human rights. She refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Articles 1 and 2. The attempt to revise the KHI into a more democratic and pluralistic mode is pivotal. Such an effort by CLD-KHI to revise KHI, for Widyawati, is a good way to embody the idea. However, she adds, such an attempt needs the power of the state, otherwise nothing will change.[78]

CLD-KHI received very strong criticism and condemnation from the side of MUI, MMI - *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (Mujahidin Council of Indonesia), and DDII - *Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia* (Council of Islamic Propagation of Indonesia). In July 2005, MUI reissued *fatwas* against interfaith marriage. By referring to the seven Qur'anic texts on marriage and interfaith marriage, and referring to the *hadith* text from *Abi Hurairah*, *Fatwa* of MUI No. 4/2005 states:

(1) Interfaith marriages are *haram* and illegal.

(2) The marriage of a Muslim man and a woman of *Ahl al-kitab* is *haram* and prohibited.

Cholil states that the *Fatwa* from MUI in 2005 had apparently also been triggered by the concern regarding the liberal trend within the Muslim community concerning the role of Islam and the process of Islamization. *Fatwa* No. 4/2005 coincided with the issuance of a number of *fatwas* that were directed to Muslims who held liberal and progressive views. *Fatwa* No. 3/2005 placed limitations on the way Muslims might join in prayer with people of other faiths. *Fatwa* No. 5/2005 stipulates that is not acceptable for Muslims to leave their inheritance to someone who is non-Muslim, in accordance with Islamic Law. *Fatwa* No. 7/2005 saw MUI speaking against three trends in Indonesian society: pluralism, liberalism, and

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[77] Tim Pengarusutamaan Gender, *Pembaharuan Hukum Islam; Counter Legal Draft Kompilasi Hukum Islam,* Departemen Agama, Jakarta, 2004, p. 53. See also: Cholil, *Kawin Lintas Agama*, 2006, pp. 146-150. He states that CDL is an important effort towards the desacralization of KHI.

[78] Widyawati, *Interreligious Marriage in the Kompilasi Hukum Islam: A Human Right Perspective*, Open Access Journal of America-Eurasian Network for Scientific Information, AENSI Publisher. Accessed on 15 May 2018; http://www.aensiweb.com/old/anas/2012/858-865.pdf.

secularism. All these were *haram*. The *Fatwa* MUI 2005 on interfaith marriage and the responses to it highlight deep divisions within the Indonesian Muslim community. Progressive Muslims subsequently have continued to offer an alternative voice on issues such as interfaith marriage and interreligious relationships.[79]

5.   The Response of Indonesian Christian Churches to Interfaith Marriage

Marriage Law 1974 more visibly brings the need of churches to define their positions into the agenda. Issues of interfaith marriage that come to the surface pose a new challenge for Indonesian churches to reopen discussions on their own theological understanding of marriage. Ecumenically, a common awareness has emerged among Indonesian churches to discover the similarities and differences in their views, and subsequently to look for a common stance that can be used for dealing with the issue of interfaith marriage.

A dialogue on interfaith marriage was held in Malang from 12-14 March 1987 between PGI, *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (Communion of Churches in Indonesia), and KWI, *Konferensi Wali Gereja di Indonesia* (Conference of Bishops in Indonesia).[80] Both organizations considered that there is an essential difference between the Catholic Church and mainstream Indonesian Protestant Churches in their views of marriage. The Catholic Church gives marriage an inherent religious value: it is a sacrament. Therefore, similar to the Muslim belief in Islamic law, for the Catholic Church, a marriage is not legitimate unless it is carried out according to the Canon Law. On the contrary, the Protestant Churches, which have inherited the Reformed tradition in advocating a separation between the state and the Church, view that the legitimacy of marriage is the domain of the state: a church has no authority to legitimize marriage. Therefore, it is commonly understood that the role of the Protestant Church is in the part of blessing the marriage that has been legitimized by the state. It is commonly understood that the procedure of marriage in the Protestant Church first begins with the process of administration in the Civil Registry Office and then the couple will receive the blessing during the Holy Matrimony. However, this step is opposite to the procedure in the Civil Registry Office. The Civil Registry Offices will only register marriages that have been already blessed by the Church. By the end of 1988, the Head of the Civil Registry Office in Jakarta instructed officials not to register any marriage before being legitimated according to a religion, i.e., after the

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[79] *Cf.* Richmond, *Interreligious Marriage*, 2009, pp. 57-58.
[80] See: Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 189.

marriage was performed in the Church (for Christians), Vihara (for Buddhists), and Pura (for Hindus).

Partly in response to this issue, in July and October 1988, PGI organized regional consultations in Medan, Ujung Pandang, and Ambarawa among its members on the legal aspect of marriage, whereas a national consultation was held in Bogor in April 1989. This forum discussed two important issues of marriage, namely the legitimacy of marriage and interfaith marriage. By the end of April 1989, PGI made a decision on these two issues.[81] Regarding the legitimacy of marriage, PGI stated, "a marriage is legitimate if it is firstly carried out in front of the official of the Civil Registry Office and after that, it is confirmed and blessed by the Church." PGI considered that marriage has both social and sacred aspects. As a social institution, marriage should be legalized by the state. On the other hand, the church plays a role as 'the tool at the hands of God to confirm and bless that marriage as something already existent and legitimized by the government.' This point was apparently made to achieve two purposes: (1) reaffirming the appropriate procedure of marriage, (2) confirming the procedure required by Marriage Law 1974 that a marriage is legitimate if it is performed according to religion and belief. Regarding interfaith marriage, PGI considered that interfaith marriage is not regulated by the Marriage Law 1974; therefore, the regulation of mixed marriage (*Staatsblad 1898/158*) is applicable. Moreover, interfaith marriages must be facilitated and legalized by the Civil Registry Office. Due to various stances of the churches towards interfaith marriage, PGI suggested that the procedure on how to conduct the blessing of interfaith marriage prior to being registered by the Civil Registry Office can be done according to the specific rules of the church involved.

Fridolin Ukur notes four various ways of how churches deal with interfaith marriages, namely:[82] (1) without Holy Matrimony, the couple is advised to marry in the Civil Registry Office so that it is unnecessary to change his or her religion, (2) some churches will not administer Holy Matrimony, but they provide a certain service as a token that the marriage is accepted by the congregation, (3) some churches will administer Holy Matrimony if the non-Christian spouse submits a letter of agreement that he/she will become a Christian, and (4) at least one church excludes the member of the congregation who marries a non-Christian, as it refuses to bless interfaith marriages.

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[81] *Cf.* Sairin, *Perkawinan Beda Agama,* 2004, pp. 86-87.
[82] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 190.

The stance of the Catholic Church in Indonesia on interfaith marriage is based on Canon Law.[83] A bishop can give a dispensation for those who want to marry a non-Catholic under certain conditions: (1) the Catholic spouse promises that he or she will continue to hold to Catholicism, (2) the Catholic spouse promises that the children will be nurtured in accordance with Catholicism, and (3) the non-Catholic spouse should well understand and accept those two promises. In this regard, the non-Catholic should also accept two basic Catholic doctrines of marriage namely that it is monogamous and indivisible (i.e., it is forbidden to divorce). Based on these conditions, the priest administers a blessing of marriage. Code of Canon Law 1125 reads:[84]

> *The local ordinary can grant permission of this kind if there is a just and reasonable cause. He is not to grant it unless the following conditions have been fulfilled:*
>
> *1/ the Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church;*
>
> *2/ the other party is to be informed at an appropriate time about the promises which the Catholic party is to make, in such a way that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party;*
>
> *3/ both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage which neither of the contracting parties is to exclude.*

6.   The Civil Administration Law No. 23/2006

As we saw before, according to the Marriage Law 1974, interfaith marriage can be conducted with the permission of the Civil Court. The newest development in this regard is the Civil Administration Law No. 23/2006, which was promulgated on 29 December 2006. It is stipulated that interfaith marriage can be legitimized through the Civic Court. Article 35 of the Civil Administration Law 23/2006 stipulates:[85]

The Registration of Marriage as meant in Article 34 is also applied to:

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[83] See: Johanes H. Harijanto, SJ, *Pekawinan Beda Agama dalam Pandangan Gereja Katolik* (Interreligious Marriage from a Catholic Perspective) in: Maria Ulfah Anshor and Martin Lukito Sinaga (Eds.), *Tafsir Ulang Perkawinan Lintas Agama,* 2004, pp. 52-76.

[84] Official website of the Vatican: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/P41.HTM. Accessed on 28 May 2018.

[85] Official website of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, downloaded on 29 May 2018; http://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdih/document/uu/UU_2006_23.pdf.

a. Marriage that is legalized by the Civil Court;
    (Pencatatan Perkawinan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam Pasal 34 berlaku pula bagi:
a. *Perkawinan yang ditetapkan oleh Pengadilan;)*

The Explanation of the Civic Administration Law 23/2006 Article 35 is as follows:

Article 35 Letter a

As to the reference "Marriage that is legalized by the Civic Court", it means the marriage of the people with different religions.

(Pasal 35 Huruf a

Yang dimaksud dengan"Perkawinan yang ditetapkan oleh Pengadilan" adalah perkawinan yang dilakukan antar-umat yang berbeda agama.)

This new law can be perceived as a new hope because the presence of interfaith marriage is explicitly regulated in this legal regulation. It means that interfaith marriages are not prohibited in Indonesia. Nevertheless, Cholil argues that the new law is not a way out for Muslims regarding interfaith marriages. The government issued Civil Administration Law No. 23, which reopened the possibility of interfaith marriage, except for Muslims. Article 35 of the law mentions that marriage registration is also valid for "a marriage that is determined by the court" and explains, "a marriage that is determined by the court is a marriage among followers of different religions." However, the law specifically exempts Muslims from conducting an interfaith marriage.[86] Consequently, according to the law, it permits conducting interfaith marriages between Hindus and Christians, Buddhists and Hindus, Confucians and Christians, etc., but not Muslims and followers of other religions. Cholil observes that even though the constitution and other laws guarantee religious freedom for Indonesian citizens, Muslims are the exception when it comes to interfaith marriage. In my view, the Civil Administration Law 2006 gives a way out for interfaith marriage from a legal perspective, indeed. Therefore, if interfaith marriage can be legitimized in the Civil Court, it means that the legitimacy of marriage according to the religion is no longer important. The interfaith couple will not perform their marriage in the respective religious ceremony. However, will such marriage fulfill the sense of religious happiness for both parties? In my opinion, in this regard, a marriage has not only a social dimension, but also a spiritual dimension. Therefore, the challenge comes into

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[86] *Cf.* Cholil, *Freedom of Religion or Belief in Indonesia,* 2013, p. 134.

the hand of the Church whether the Church will accept and give the blessing of an interfaith marriage or not. We will come to this issue in the next chapter.

7. Ongoing Debate on Interfaith Marriage in the Constitutional Court 2014

The Marriage Law 1974 has already been in place for 46 years. However, it has still left problems concerning interfaith marriage in Indonesia. The issue of interfaith marriage in the Indonesian Civil Law recently came back to the surface with the emergence of a petition for a judicial review of Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974, "a marriage is legitimate, if it has been performed according to the laws of the respective religions and beliefs of the parties concerned." The petition was proposed by Damian Agata Yuvens (Lawyer), Rangga Sujud Widigda (Lawyer), Anbar Jayadi (student of Law), and Luthfi Sahputra (Lawyer).

The plaintiffs argued that:

a. Although the legitimacy of marriage must be conducted by national law, in the further level, in accordance with Article 2 (1), the religious law determines the legitimacy of marriage.

b. The religions in Indonesia have different stances and arguments toward interfaith marriage. Even within the same religion, people might have diverse opinions concerning the question to accept or reject interfaith marriage, based on the interpretation of each. Each person also has their own opinion based on his/her interpretation because each person has the freedom to interpret the respective religion and belief. Which interpretation will thus be used by the state when different interpretations exists? Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 implies that a marriage will be legitimate if it is conducted according to the interpretation of the state regarding each religion. In other words, the state coerces citizens to accept the interpretation of the state regarding each religion.

c. In the implementation of administrative requirements, namely the marriage registry, the assessment of the legitimacy of marriage is done 3 times, namely:

1. By the religious institution that directly influences the interpretation of each adherent.

2. By each party that will be grounded on his/her interpretation of his/her religious law.

3. By the civil registry officer who assesses the administrative requirements for marriage.

The view of the plaintiffs is that the condition above creates uncertainty. Consequently, it can raise pessimism for those who want to enter into an interfaith marriage so that they decide to conduct their marriage otherwise: marriage overseas, subject to the religious law of other parties, or conversion.

Therefore, the plaintiffs propose to amend Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 to be as follows: "A marriage is legitimate if it has been performed according to the laws of the respective religions and beliefs, as long as the interpretation of the religious law is given to each party."

The amendment of Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 is accounted for by the following arguments:

a. Article 2 (1) may not be seen as offensive towards a certain religion and belief, but it must be seen as help and protection for those who have married, are marrying, or will marry someone of a different faith. Interfaith marriage is a social reality that cannot be denied.

b. The petition to amend Article 2 (1) does not ignore the religious aspect in the constellation of marriage law in Indonesia because the legitimacy of marriage is grounded on the religious law of each couple. However, the privilege to interpret the legitimacy of marriage according to the laws of religion and belief must be given to every citizen him/herself who will marry.

c. Each citizen who wants to marry someone of a different faith can do so without fear for the legitimacy of the marriage. Conversely, the interest of citizens who do not accept interfaith marriage is also accommodated. By this, the constitutional rights of every citizen are assured and fulfilled.

7.1. The Opinions of the National Religious Organizations on Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974.

During the session of the Constitutional Court 2014, official representatives of the national religious organizations in Indonesia were invited to give their opinion on the petition regarding the amendment. They did not explicitly give their opinion on interfaith marriage, but to some extent, they gave their stances on this issue. Although they were officially invited as the representation of the national religious organizations, it does not mean that they represented the opinions of all members of the religious organization concerned. For instance, PGI gave an opinion on the petition, implicitly on interfaith marriage. However, the opinion and stance of PGI on interfaith marriage, which was presented in this constitutional court, cannot be seen as representative of all churches in Indonesia. In fact, there are different opinions and stances on interfaith marriage among the member churches of PGI. Nevertheless, I present here the summary of their stances on

interfaith marriage[87] in order to get a picture of how religions in Indonesia deal with this sensitive issue, which is a real phenomenon in the context of a religiously plural society that cannot be ignored.

MUI - *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Council of Indonesian *Ulama*)

MUI states that Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 has had legal power and legitimacy within the legal system of Indonesia. It has also fulfilled the expectation and need of Muslim society in Indonesia, therefore, there is no need for it to be amended. For MUI, it has given room for the religious aspect of marriage that, from the Muslim society point of view, means that it has given room for religious law, namely Islamic law. The petition regarding the amendment of Article 2 (1) neglects the religious aspect in the constellation of marriage law in Indonesia. Therefore, MUI rejects the amendment of Article 2(1) of the Marriage Law 1974. In this respect, MUI did not give any reason for the rejection of interfaith marriage. MUI refers to the historical perspective, that the process of birth of the Marriage Law 1974 created great religious tension at that time. Therefore, MUI confirms that what has been stipulated in the law, and is still valid until now, is a struggle for the sake of unity and the integrity of the national state. The effort to amend that crucial article of the Marriage Law 1974 will reopen the conflict of 1974.

NU – *Nahdatul Ulama*

NU rejects the amendment to Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974. For NU, the content of Article 2 (1) is already appropriate, correct, and there is no need for it to be amended because it is already fitting, in accordance with Islamic law. Therefore, NU affirms that interfaith marriage cannot be accepted and registered. NU affirms that:

1. A Muslim woman must marry a Muslim man. It is *haram* for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim man.
2. Likewise, it is *haram* for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman, even if she is from *Ahlul Kitab*. The reasons are: (1) there is a very small possibility that a woman of *Ahlul Kitab* will convert to Islam, (2) the availability of Muslim women in Indonesia, (3) interfaith marriage of a Muslim man with a non-

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[87] Proceedings of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, case no. 68/PUU-XII/2014. The session of the Court on Wednesday 5 November 2014 invited representatives of MUI, NU, WALUBI, and PGI. The session of the Court on Monday 24 November 2014 invited the representatives of KWI, PHDI, and MATAKIN. Downloaded from the official website of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia on 1 October 2015:
http://www.mahkamahkonstitusi.go.id/index.php?page=web.Risa-
lahSidang&id=1&kat=1&cari=68%2FPUU-XII%2F2014.

Muslim woman will create many problems, for instance: religious education for children, practical problems of *halal* and *haram*, etc.

3. It is *haram* for a Muslim man to marry a non-*Ahlul Kitab* woman.

WALUBI – *Perwalian Umat Budha Indonesia* (Buddhist Communities Council of Indonesia)

In accordance with a Buddhist understanding, Walubi presents two aspects; (1) marriage is the destiny of a mating relationship that is very strong and deep, (2) for Walubi, religious freedom must be greatly honored. Although Walubi did not explicitly give an affirmation of interfaith marriage, from the two aspects above, Walubi apparently has no objection to interfaith marriage. However, Walubi affirms that as a part of the State Law enforcement, they will obey the applicable rule and law. It means that Walubi has no opinion regarding Article 2 (1) except to accept the interpretation of the government.

PGI – *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (Communion of Churches in Indonesia - CCI)

PGI does not explicitly give an opinion on interfaith marriage. However, PGI has criticized Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law 1974 and the implementation of this article within society. PGI views:

1. Article 2 (1) has ignored the realities of the Indonesian citizens that are unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggul Ika*) and very appreciative towards multiculturalism. Moreover, the formula of Article 2 (1) has ignored the reality that love among human beings is universal, regardless of differences of skin color, race, descent, group, or even religion. Although interfaith marriage is not ideal, marriage between people of different ethnicities, races, or religions is not impossible and often occurs within society, moreover in modern and multicultural societies.

2. From the perspective of human rights, the formula of Article 2 (1) infringed upon human rights because it omits the right of the citizen to marry another Indonesian citizen of a different religion. For PGI, the omission of citizen rights causes many couples to be trapped in choosing an option, such as cohabitation, without a moral and spiritual basis.

3. PGI affirms that a church is an entity that lives under the protection of the state. Nevertheless, to some extent, a church must express its strong correction towards the state when it is necessary. For PGI, Article 2 (1) has discriminated against citizens who want to marry someone of a different faith.

4. The implementation of Article 2 (1) has deviated from a sense of justice for those who will enter into interfaith marriage because theologically it may not be forbidden or precluded to do so. The Article is also unfair for an interfaith couple that is economically weak. An interfaith couple that is economically secure will able to conduct their interfaith marriage in another country, whereas there is no chance for the interfaith couple that is economically weak.

5. PGI views that the Civil Registry functions only as an administrative factor in the process of the legitimacy of marriages, as it simply registers the marriage that has already been legitimized through the religious ceremony. However, in its implementation, PGI sees that this institution has functioned beyond its authority. For PGI, the Civil Registry has intervened in the legitimacy of marriage that has already been legitimized by religion, in Christianity the marriage that has already been blessed in a Holy Matrimony. In many cases, the Civil Registry Office refuses an application of interfaith marriage on behalf of Article 2 (1) by using their interpretation of Article 2 (1) that a marriage is legitimate if it is legitimized by religion. This is commonly understood as that a couple has to have the same religion.

6. PGI views that, in the future, it is needed to regulate provisions that are more realistic toward the reality of a pluralistic society in order to manage and to facilitate the marriage of an interfaith couple.

7. For PGI, the Marriage Law 1974 is also discriminatory towards woman. It needs to be revised and replaced by a new democratic law.

KWI – *Konferensi Waligereja di Indonesia* (Conference of Bishops in Indonesia) Regarding the implementation of Article 2 (1), KWI views:

1. Article 2 (1) is commonly understood as restricting the number of religions and beliefs that are recognized by the state. For KWI, that restriction creates difficulties for some parts of the citizenry who have their right of service unfulfilled, because they are not included in the number of religions and beliefs recognized by the state.

2. In such a situation, state officials as implementers of Article 2 (1) coerce the citizens to choose one of the recognized religions. KWI views that the state has overstepped its own authority because the state has interfered into the salvation sphere, which is fully a fundamental right for every person.

3. KWI views that Article 2 (1) creates obstacles and difficulties for those who want to marry someone of a different faith. The interfaith couple usually faces difficulty when they want to register their marriage, even though they have received religious legitimacy through the blessing of their marriage. Moreover, a problem that often emerges is that a party of the interfaith couple is

coerced to convert in order to be registered. For KWI, Article 2 (1) must be interpreted in such a way that two pivotal rights must be put in high esteem and fully respected in the frame of marriage, namely: the right of religious freedom and the right to marry. KWI affirms that in a marriage those two pivotal rights must be honored and even be defended.

PHDI - *Parisada Hindu Dharma di Indonesia* (Hindu Dharma Council of Indonesia)

PHDI views that Article 2 (1) is already correct according to the Hindu understanding of marriage. For PHDI, the same belief of the couple is a fundamental point for Hindu understanding of marriage. In Hinduism, interfaith marriage is unknown. The same faith of the couple is necessary. Although there are several different traditions of Hinduism in Indonesia, such as the traditions from Bali, Java, Tamil, or Karo, they all refer to the same provisions in Veda. If an interfaith couple applies to have their marriage legitimized, the non-Hindu spouse must convert to Hindu first by holding a *Sudi Vadhani* ceremony. The *Sudi Vadhani* ceremony is a kind of the oath ceremony to be a Hindu adherent. The *Pandita* (Hindu religious leader) will not give holy water when one party is a non-Hindu. It is based on the Book of *Smerti Adhaya V sloka 89*: "The holy water cannot be given to those who ignore the ceremony which has been enacted so that his/her birth is considered in vain. It cannot be given to those who were born from mixed marriage. It can also not be given to those who become a monk from the apostates and those who commit suicide." Therefore, in Hinduism interfaith marriage is an illegitimate marriage and considered as *samghrana* (adultery).

MATAKIN – *Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* (Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia)

Matakin affirms, according to Confucianism, that different backgrounds of religion, ethic, race, culture, and socio-politics, are not an impediment to marriage. Therefore, Matakin has no objection to interfaith marriage. However, there are two different treatments of marriage in Confucianism. Blessing of marriage is given to a couple who both are Confucianists, while a couple of different beliefs only receive an approval as a recognition and announcement that they have married.

7.2. The Decisions of the Constitutional Court 2015.

On Thursday 18 June 2015, the Constitutional Court decided to refuse the petition as a whole. The Constitutional Court gave the following considerations:[88]

a. Article 2 (1) embodies the principles as contained in the *Pancasila* and the Constitution of 1945. According to the applicant, Article 2 (1) has restricted citizens from forming families through marriage. The Court views that Article 2 (1) in no way restricts the rights of every citizen to marry. The Court views that for implementing freedom and rights, every citizen must obey the regulation established by the Law as a framework in order to guarantee recognition and esteem the rights and freedom of others.

b. The applicants view that Article 2 (1) coerces every citizen to obey his/her own religious law in the interpretation of marriage. The Court views that marriage is one of the affairs of life that is regulated by the law in Indonesia. A marriage is legitimate if it has been performed according to the laws of the respective religions which, as regulated in Article 2 (1), aims to form a family based on the principle that they 'believe in one God'.

c. The applicants view that with Article 2 (1), the state has mixed its administration affairs with the implementation of religious belief. The Court views that a marriage does not have a formal aspect, as such, but spiritual and social aspects. Religion legitimates a marriage, while the law legalizes its legitimacy through the administration established by the state.

8.   Conclusions and Remarks

1. The implementation of Marriage Law 1974 leaves some difficulties and obstacles for interfaith marriage. This law has not yet answered the sense of justice for those who want to marry someone of a different religion in Indonesia. The prohibition of interfaith marriage comes from the interpretation of the Marriage Law 1974. The ban on interfaith marriage derives from the decisive phrase in Article 2 (1) of this law. The literal interpretation of the sentence in Article 2 (1) that marriage is legitimate 'if it has been performed according to the laws of the religion and belief of the parties concerned' has been taken as a formal prohibition of interfaith marriage. Therefore, it is regarded as a common understanding of most Civil Registry Offices in Indonesia that interfaith marriage is not allowed. However, the Marriage Law 1974, itself, does not explicitly prohibit or regulate interfaith marriage.

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[88] Downloaded from the official website of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia; http://www.mahkamahkonstitusi.go.id/index.php?page=web.Putusan&id=1&kat=1&cari=68%2FPUU-XII%2F2014.

2. The Marriage Law 1974, Article 2 (1) in particular, needs to be amended in order to meet the needs of a plural society. However, it is not easy. The Marriage Law 1974 has a contentious history because the establishment of this Law cannot be separated from its political context. For Islamic groups, the Marriage Law 1974 was considered as recognition of *shari'a* in the legal system. When this law was established, it was a political compromise that tried to find a way to deal with the reality of marriage in the Indonesian plural context. In fact, this law has not been able to solve the reality of marriage in a plural context. The case of interfaith marriage in the Indonesian Civil Law, which came to the Constitutional Court in 2014, is a hint that there are persistent efforts to find the best solution to deal with the issue of interfaith marriage in society. In this regard, there are persistent efforts by scholars, law practitioners, NGOs (such as ICRP - Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace), and Human Rights activists to criticize the Marriage Law 1974 which has always been used as the sole reference for all issues relating to marriage. It can be asserted that the awareness of society regarding the importance of a legal breakthrough in order to give interfaith marriage a place in law is much stronger. This indicates that some parts of society feel unjustly treated before the Law. Churches in Indonesia, represented by PGI, were asked by the Court to give their view on this issue. This was a chance for churches in Indonesia to influence the decision-making process for the sake of equality before the law for all people.

3. From the judicial process in the Constitutional Court, we conclude that the stance on interfaith marriage among religions in Indonesia is characterized by pros and cons. However, a diverse view is naturally right in a democratic society. MUI, NU, and PHDI clearly oppose the whole petition while PGI, KWI, and Matakin are open to interfaith marriage. The stance of WALUBI on interfaith marriage is not clear. Nevertheless, WALUBI clearly states that they will obey the provision of government. It means that WALUBI will finally accept any interpretation of the government regarding the Marriage Law 1974.

   The position of MUI and NU is to refuse the whole petition by giving some arguments from their own perspective about interfaith marriage. MUI and NU have presented a common understanding of Islam about interfaith marriage in accordance with Islamic Law. Although according to the Qur'an Sura *Al'Maidah* verse 5, Muslim males are allowed to marry women of the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*), MUI and NU state that interfaith marriage is *haram*, forbidden. MUI and NU use the *Kompilasi Hukum Islam* – KHI (Compilation of Islamic Law) for their basic understanding of interfaith marriage. The KHI

states that interfaith marriage is *haram*, both Muslim males and females are forbidden to marry a non-Muslim. It can be easily understood that MUI and NU have used the KHI as their basic understanding of interfaith marriage, because the KHI is used as the legal guideline for Religious Courts throughout Indonesia.

Meanwhile, PGI, KWI, and Matakin are more open to the reality of interfaith marriage. PGI and KWI have different points of view in the way they deal with interfaith marriage. For KWI, there are two pivotal rights that must be put in high esteem and fully respected in the framework of marriage, namely the right of religious freedom and the right to marry. Such stance is an implementation of Canon 1125 in the Code of Canon Law, although KWI does not explicitly mention Canon Law. Thus, KWI theologically affirms that interfaith marriage is fully accepted in the Catholic Church. PGI has not explicitly presented a theological basis for interfaith marriage. PGI highlights the issue of interfaith marriage from a Human Rights perspective. This can be understood because PGI must be well aware that there are different views and stances, pros and cons, regarding interfaith marriage among its member churches. Therefore, PGI did not intentionally formulate a theological basis about interfaith marriage, although PGI is open and favorable to this reality. However, it is far from redundant when PGI takes the Human Rights perspective as its prominent argument. This is also part of the prophetical vocation of PGI to speak up about the importance of how the state should uphold Human Rights in the life of the nation and state. It is a challenge for PGI, as a representative of the churches in Indonesia, to fight against all discrimination for the sake of equal rights for all citizens before the law.

4. Under the rule of law, the law must protect the rights of every citizen. Similarly, the state must provide legal guarantees above all the differences of belief. Law cannot only be based on the view of a certain majority belief, let alone only favor the majority religion. The plural views should be maintained in a positive way by evoking the spirit of respect to each other and giving room for diversity. In a religiously pluralistic society, a different view or stance on interfaith marriage is not bad. The religions in Indonesia should be able to overcome the issue of 'majority – minority' before the law in order to avoid a law of the jungle. Otherwise, the minor religions will always feel threatened. For instance, the Constitutional Court views that a marriage does not only have a legal aspect, but also spiritual and social aspects. Religion legitimates a marriage, but the decision of the Constitutional Court signifies that the deliberation of the Court, to some extent, is based on a certain interpretation and view, in this regard based on the religion of the majority. How about the

adherents of other religions who have a different interpretation or belief? Unfortunately, the final decision of the Court has been used as the legal basis for all people. Coercion occurs.

5. The Civil Administration Law 23/2006 is an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity because it provides the legal system for interfaith marriage in Indonesia. It is a challenge because, in practice, it can be applied only for non-Muslims. Muslim society will not be able to legalize an interfaith marriage because the Religious Affairs Office will not approve the application of a Muslim who applies to marry a non-Muslim unless the non-Muslim converts to Islam. However, the Civil Administration Law 23/2006 is a new hope for those who will register their interfaith marriage in the Civil Registry Office. In principle, it provides a way out for interfaith couples to fulfill their wish, albeit without a religious procedure. This is a challenge for churches in Indonesia because, in Indonesian society, a marriage has not only a social dimension, but also a religious one. A marriage is perceived as a social institution that is also related to religious happiness. Therefore, although there is a chance for interfaith marriage in Indonesia, this chance is still determined by the stance of the Church toward interfaith marriage, whether it is accepted or prohibited. The Civil Administration Law 23/2006 is an opportunity and a challenge, indeed. This is a challenge for contextual ecclesiology in Indonesia. In order to build a contextual ecclesiology, the churches in Indonesia need to find a way to deal with this phenomenon in the context of a religiously plural society. For that reason, churches in Indonesia are necessarily open and ready to enter into a deep discourse on this issue. How to deal with this issue from a theological perspective? This is the challenge for the church polity of the churches in Indonesia to review, to formulate it theologically, and to stipulate it in the church order so that it can meet the reality of interfaith marriage in this plural society in a relevant way. This requires an in-depth discussion, and we will explore more in the next chapters.

6. PGI and KWI have not yet had a common theological ground for interfaith marriage. PGI has stood up for interfaith marriage. However, PGI does not yet have a theological basis for it. It is a challenge for Indonesian churches to find a common theological ground that can be applied towards the acceptance of interfaith marriage. It is undeniable that PGI (Protestant Churches) and KWI (Catholic Churches) have a different understanding of marriage regarding its character as a sacrament. The Protestant Churches in Indonesia have commonly regarded marriage issues as civil issues. However, PGI and KWI face the same struggle for recognition of interfaith marriage in the Civil Law of

Indonesia. Therefore, to have a common theological foundation between them will provide a strong argument. In order to find such common ground, each needs to reconsider its own theology of marriage, in order to see how the gap can be traversed towards the acceptance of interfaith marriage.

7. Churches in Indonesia should be a partner of dialogue and cooperation for a better situation of the people of Indonesia in the future, for democracy, and human dignity. Not all Islamic groups reject interfaith marriage, but not all Churches accept interfaith marriage, either. The phenomenon of interfaith marriage becomes a very sensitive issue in religious relationships in Indonesia, particularly between Islam and Christianity. Pros and cons exist on both sides. Therefore, dialogue is very important for both of them. Even more, interfaith marriage can subsequently be seen as a means of dialogue for life.

Chapter 3

THE OFFICIAL VIEW ON INTERFAITH MARRIAGE IN INDONESIAN CHURCHES

1. Introduction

From the previous chapter, we have obtained a description of the complexity of accepting interfaith marriages in the context of Civil Law in Indonesia. We found that the struggle is not only in the realm of civil law, but the issue also collides with religious values. Marriage is not only a matter of civil law but also of religious law. However, the latest developments provide positive opportunities for the acceptance of interfaith marriage in the civil legal system in Indonesia. This positive development will certainly be an opportunity as well as a challenge for the churches in Indonesia. Although the Civil Administration Law 23/2006 has provided a door for citizens who want to engage into interfaith marriage, that does not necessarily become encouraging news for Church members who intend to have marriages with their chosen partners of different faiths. They are also dependent on the views and practices of the churches themselves.

What is the stance of the churches in Indonesia towards interfaith marriage? What are the arguments churches uses? The different stances towards the reality of interfaith marriages are certainly influenced by the historical background and the context of the birth and growth of the churches, as well as by the way theological discourse has developed as an effort in context to respond to the challenges. All that will be discussed in this chapter. One by one a description of HKBP, GPIB, GKPB, GKI and GKJ will be presented, covering: historical background, ecclesiastical basis, church order regulations, and official views on interfaith marriages. This chapter does not intend to give a complete description of each church's profile. It is not my intention to present complete historical documents, let alone their theological history. If a brief historical background description is presented, it is intended to provide an overview so that the characteristics of each church can be understood and the dynamics of change that occur within it can be grasped. At the end of this chapter I will present analytical notes on each church, examining and observing the dynamics that arise from each church,

especially in addressing the reality of interfaith marriages. In this case I will be helped by the results of a research of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) in 2015, which also touched on this subject.

2. HKBP - Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (The Batak Protestant Christian Church) and Interfaith Marriage

HKBP is the largest church among the member churches of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. It is the largest Church in Indonesia on the basis of an ethnic group. Therefore, HKBP is closely attached to Batak culture. Compared with other Indonesian churches that are mostly fruits of Dutch mission work with a Calvinist tradition, HKBP is the fruit of German mission work with a Lutheran tradition. Historically, mission work in Batak territory has succeeded in making Batak culture conform to Christianity. One can say that Batak *is* Christian. In this context, HKBP develops its stance towards interfaith marriage. In this chapter, I will present the stance of HKBP towards interfaith marriage, beginning with the historical and sociological background. At the end, I will present the ecclesiological basis of HKBP and official view of HKBP towards interfaith marriage.

2.1. The Historical Background of HKBP

On 30 April 1824, Richard Burton and Charles Evans, missionaries from the Baptist Missionary Society (England), arrived in Batak territory. Before them, Charles Miller and Giles Holloway had already come. The mission work of these English missionaries ended because England left Sumatera while the Dutch took their place. The Dutch colonial government did not give missionary work permits to them.[89]

On 17 June 1834, Samuel Munson and Henry Lyman from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) arrived in Batak territory. Unfortunately, they were murdered before they worked much in their mission.

Speaking about missionary work in Batak territory, I have to mention Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn and H.N. van der Tuuk who also played a role. Junghuhn was not a missionary, but he was a botanist, geographer, volcanologist, and an officer with the Dutch Health Service in Batavia. In mid-1840, Junghuhn traveled to Batak territory for 17 months. He published a report of his journey in his book titled *Die Battaländer auf Sumatra.* This book contains an adequate reference about the Batak lands concerning culture, language, and geography. Later on, this book was

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[89] *Cf.* Th. Van Den End and Th. Weitjens, SJ, *Ragi Carita – Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia* (The Yeast of Story – Church History in Indonesia), Vol. 2, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2008, p. 182.

very much used as a reference for preparing mission work in Batak territory.[90] Van der Tuuk was a linguist sent by *Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap* to learn the Batak language, compose a Dutch – Batak dictionary, and translate the Bible into the Batak language. Van der Tuuk worked in Barus for 6 years, from 1851 until 1857. Van der Tuuk played a great role in preparing missionaries before they began their work in this area. One of his disciples was I.L. Nommensen. We will come back to Nommensen later.[91]

Another missionary who worked in Batak territory was Gerrit van Asselt sent by the church of Ermelo in the Netherlands. The church of Ermelo also sent Gottlieb Betz, J.G Dammerboer, and A.A. van Dalen. Van Asselt arrived in Padang, Sumatera on 2 December 1856. In the beginning of his mission work, Van Asselt did not have a missionary work permit from the colonial government. Therefore, for his safety, beginning in January 1857, Van Asselt worked as an officer at the coffee plantation in Parausorat, Sipirok. Van Asselt proclaimed the Gospel while he worked in the coffee plantation. He gathered some slave children who he set free. According to Hutahaean, slavery was practiced in the Batak territory at that time. On 31 March 1861 Van Asselt succeeded to baptize Simon Siregar (a prince) and Jakobus Pohan Tampubolon. These two persons were the first Batak Christians.[92]

In 1860, *Rheinische Missions Gesellschaft – RMG –* (now: *Vereinte Evangelische* Mission) started its work in Batak territory. Initially, RMG worked in Kalimantan. RMG moved the mission field to Sumatera because the mission work of RMG in Kalimantan was opposed by the Sultan of Banjar. The decision to relocate the mission field of RMG to Batak territory was due to Friedrich Fabri, an RMG Inspector in Germany, who read the book by Van der Tuuk. Subsequently, RMG sent Johann Carl Klammer and Wilhelm Carl Heine to Batak territory. In order to coordinate all mission work in Batak territory under the leadership of RMG, a missionary conference was held in Parausorat on October 7, 1861, in which two RMG missionaries and two Dutch missionaries took part. They were Heine, Klammer, Betz, and Van Asselt. The date of this missionary

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[90] *Cf.* Ramlan Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia – Kilas Balik Pelayanan HKBP Menyambut Tahun Jubelium 2011* (Rooted, Developed, Growing in Him - Flashback of the Ministry of HKBP for Celebrating the Jubilee 2011), HKBP, Tarutung, 2011, pp. 24-26.

[91] *Cf.* Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia,* 2011, pp. 26-27. See also: Patar M. Pasaribu, *DR. Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen, Apostel di Tanah Batak* (DR. Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen, An Apostle from Batak Land), Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Medan, 2005, p. 60-61.

[92] *Cf.* Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia,* 2011, pp. 33-34.

conference is taken as the date of the establishment of HKBP. The date of establishment of HKBP was ratified in the Missionary Conference of 1905.[93]

The great RMG missionary who had the most influence on the early development of HKBP was Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen. Nommensen is also known as the Apostle of the Batak people. In November 1863, Nommensen first came to Batak territory at Silindung and he got his own house in Huta Dame (Peace Village). He baptized Batak people for the first time on August 27, 1865, including *raja* (literally means 'king', this is the title of the village head/leader who is also the head of the clan) Pontas Obaja Lumbantobing. The baptism of *raja* Lumbantobing became the start of a massive Christianization of the whole clan. This form of Christianization through the conversion of the head of clan/village was taken by Nommensen as his missionary method. Huta Dame gradually became a Christian village. The first Christian congregation established in the Batak territory was the congregation in Huta Dame.[94] In 1873, Nommensen moved his center of mission work to Pearaja. From there grew other congregations in Simorangkir, Sipoholon, Hutabarat, and other places.[95] In 1881, Dutch and German missionaries held a conference led by Nommensen to deal with organizational matters. From 1881, the Batak church was under the leadership of Nommensen as the first *Ephorus* (Bishop) that was appointed by the RMG.[96] In 1890, Nommensen moved to Sigumpar and developed Christianity there until he died on 23 May 1918.[97] During his 56 years of missionary work, the Batak Church grew very fast with approximately 180,000 Baptismal members of the congregation, 510 schools, 34 ordained ministers, 788 evangelists, and 2,200 *sintua* (literally means elder, Presbyters).[98] In further progress, diaspora Batak people activated the establishment of the Batak Church outside Batak territory in places such as Medan (1912), Pangkalan Berandan (1918), Jakarta (1919), and Padang (1922).[99] In 1929, the name of the Batak Church was officially *Huria Kristen Batak Protestan* (HKBP). From that time onwards, the Church grew and congregations outside Batak territory were established.[100]

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[93] *Cf.* Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia,* 2011, p. 42. See also: Van den End, *Ragi Carita,* 2008, pp. 170-174.

[94] *Cf.* Pasaribu, *DR. Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen,* 2005, pp. 134-139.

[95] *Cf.* Pasaribu, *DR. Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen,* 2005, p. 180. *Cf.* LH. Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders under Scrutiny,* Kampen, 1997, pp. 69-71.

[96] *Cf.* Th. Muller Kruger, *Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia* (Church History in Indonesia), BPK, Jakarta, 1966, p. 218.

[97] *Cf.* Pasaribu, *DR. Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen,* 2005, p. 256.

[98] Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia,* 2011, p. 39.

[99] *Cf.* Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia*, 2011, p. 45.

[100] *Cf.* L.H. Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders,* 1997, p. 71. *Cf.* Binsar Jonathan Pakpahan, *God Remembers, Towards a Theology of Remembrance as a Basis of Reconciliation in Communal*

On 10 May 1940, HKBP faced serious difficulty when the Dutch colonial government arrested German missionaries, including *Ephorus* E. Verwiebe. This tragedy was triggered by the occupation of the Netherlands by Germany in the Second World War. The Dutch colonial government prohibited Germany from involvement in mission work. Therefore, the Dutch colonial government brought the mission work in Sumatera to *Konsulat Zending*. Although the leadership of HKBP operated in a vacuum, HKBP rejected the replacement of RMG with *Konsulat Zending*. On 10 – 11 July 1940, HKBP held '*Sinode Kemerdekaan*' (Synod of Independence). In that Synod, HKBP elected K. Sirait as the first Batak *Ephorus*. Further, in *Sidang Sinode Godang* (the Great Synod Assembly) of 1942, J. Sihombing was appointed as *Ephorus* HKBP.[101]

In the 1960s HKBP faced some internal problems. The history of HKBP notes that divisions occurred in HKBP, especially in 1963, and as a result, *Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun* (GKPS) – The Protestant Christian Church of Simalungun, was established in 1964 and also *Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia* (GKPI) – The Protestant Christian Church of Indonesia.[102] Long before this, a division within HKBP had also occurred in 1920 when a nationalism movement flared up in Indonesia. With the anti-foreign spirit within HKBP, *Hatopan Kristen Batak* (HKB) was established. Initially, HKB was the nationalist movement, but then broke away from HKBP to become *Huria Kristen Batak* – the Christian Batak Church, and later on become the *Huria Kristen Indonesia* – The Christian Church of Indonesia that exists to this day.[103]

2.2. Sociocultural Background of HKBP

Although HKBP claims herself to be a fellowship of believers from all over the world, the Batak reference in the Church's name indicates that HKBP is a church that is connected to the Batak people. HKBP uses the Batak language in most of their services as the main worship language. This shows that HKBP is closely related to Batak culture.

The Batak lands cover the area encircling Lake Toba in the northern part of Sumatera. There live the Batak people as one tribe that consists of several ethnic

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Conflict, VU Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2011, p. 22. *Cf.* Hutahaean, *Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia,* 2011, p. 39.

[101] *Cf.* Kruger, 1966, p. 222. Van den End, Ragi Carita, 2008, p. 193.

[102] *Cf.* Hutahaean*, Berakar, Dibangun, Tumbuh di dalam Dia*, 2011, pp. 48-49. Van den End, *Ragi Carita,* 2008, p. 194.

[103] *Cf.* Kruger, *Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia*, 1966, p. 221. Th. van Den End, *Harta Dalam Bejana, Sejarah Gereja Ringkas*, (Treasures in a Vessel, Church History Brief), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1993, p. 270. *Cf.* Van den End, *Ragi Carita,* 2008, p. 192.

groups.[104] Schreiner gives a list of the five ethnic groups; Batak Toba and Batak Angkola on the south side of Lake Toba, Batak Dairi, or Pakpak, and Batak Karo to the north of Lake Toba, and Batak Simalungun to the east of Lake Toba. They each have their own language and dialect. HKBP mainly consists of Batak Toba people and uses the Batak Toba language as its main language. According to Schreiner, there are three common issues of identification of Batak culture:[105]

a. The genealogical lineage is divided by *marga* (clan or family name) based on a patrilineal distinction and exogamous practice.
b. Traditional religion revolves around the belief in ancestral spirits.
c. There are traces of Indian religion and cultures, which came along with Hindu influence (more than 10 centuries ago).

The *marga* (familial surname or clan) and *adat* (often seen as customary law) are pivotal for Batak people. *Adat* can be seen as a kind of harmony and balance that includes the relationship with the creator, nature, the past, the present, and future. Batak culture has a patrilineal genealogy and has strong roots in their family trees. Their extended family can be traced back to the first person who had that *marga*. *Adat* Batak also emphasizes that one should pay respect to his/her elder family member. Pakpahan writes, "Batak people have an exclusive designation for every member of the family. This 'title' explains their position in the family and supersedes their given name. For instance: *tulang* (male family member from mother's side – consequently their spouses will be called *nantulang*); *namboru* (female family member from the father's side – consequently their spouses will be called *amangboru*); *bapauda* (father's younger brother, or anyone lower (in terms of generation) than his level with the same family name); *bapatua* (father's older brother or anyone higher than his level with the same family name), among others. Thus, even without mentioning names, a Batak person will know what their position in the family is by referring to the title of the position in the family."[106] According to Pakpahan, a Batak man is not fully recognized in his manhood if he is not yet married. He cannot have a voice, let alone a vote, in formal family meetings. A married man will be called by his surname in public display and not by his first name.[107]

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[104] *Cf.* Pakpahan, *God Remembers,* 2011, pp. 22-23.
[105] Lothar Schreiner, *Adat Dan Injil, Perjumpaan Adat Dengan Iman Kristen di Tanah Batak (* 'Adat' and The Gospel, The Encounter of 'Adat' and Christian Faith in Batak Land), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2000*,* pp. 7-8.
[106] Pakpahan, *God Remembers,* 2011, p. 23.
[107] See: Pakpahan, *God Remembers,* 2011, p. 23.

There are three main groups in the explanation of the relationship of Batak people: *dongan sabutuha, hulahula*, and *boru*. The term *dongan sabutuha* (womb companion, i.e. those who originate from one womb) points to agnatic (patrilineal) relationship. The *dongan sabutuha* are also called *dongan samarga*, in principle they are all male members of one *marga*. The term *hulahula* principally points to one's father-in-law and his closest *dongan sabutuha* belonging to his *na marsaompu* (connected as far as their great-grandfather). *Boru* (girl) indicates one's son-in-law and his closest *dongan sabutuha*.[108]

2.3. The Structure and Ecclesiological Basis of HKBP

The Church Order of 2002 is the latest Church Order after a long journey since the first Church Order of 1881. Historically it went through amendments several times in a row; Church Order 1881, CO 1930, CO 1940, CO 1950, CO 1962, CO 1972, CO 1982, CO 2002.[109]

The Church Order of 2002, *Aturan dan Peraturan Huria Kristen Batak Protestan 2002*, is divided into two parts, *Aturan* (Order) and *Peraturan* (Regulations of Implementation). According to the Regulations of Implementation (2002), the organizational structure of HKBP can be described as follows:

a. Congregation

   The congregation is a fellowship of a number of HKBP members in a certain place led by local leaders of the congregation (ordained ministers). According to Article 4 of the Regulations, the ordained ministers consist of a pastor, preacher teacher, *bijbelvrouw*, deacons, evangelists, and elders.[110]

b. Resort

   A Resort is an assembly of a number of congregations led by a Resort minister who is assisted by the Resort Council.[111]

c. District

   A District is an assembly of representatives of a number of Resorts led by *praeses* who are assisted by the District Council. The *praeses* is proposed by the *Ephorus* and is elected by the *Sinode Godang* (General Synod).[112]

d. HKBP as a whole

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[108] *Cf.* Andar M. Lumbantobing, *Makna Wibawa Jabatan Dalam Gereja Batak, (The Significance of the Authority of Office Bearers in the Batak Church),* BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1996, p. 73.

[109] Purwanto elaborates the historical background of the Church Order of HKBP, see: Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders, 1997,* pp. 73-78.

[110] *Aturan Dohot Paraturan HKBP*, (Orders and Regulations), Kantor Pusat HKBP, Tarutung, 2002, p. 125 & 128.

[111] *Aturan Dohot Paraturan HKBP,* 2002, p. 147.

[112] *Aturan Dohot Paraturan HKBP,* 2002, p. 149.

HKBP is an assembly of all congregations, Resorts, and Districts led by the *Ephorus*. The *Sinode Godang* (General Synod) appoints the *Ephorus* for one four-year period/term. An *Ephorus* can be elected two times in a row.[113]

Organizationally, HKBP has a hierarchical structure with the *Ephorus* on the top level. HKBP considers herself a church that is formed from the local level, to the Resort, the District, and at the end, HKBP as a whole. The highest decision-making body in HKBP is the General Synod. Through 2015, HKBP had 3,231 local churches, 700 Resorts (including 3 Resorts in the USA), 30 districts, and 2,820 ministers (among them 1,686 ordained pastors). HKBP, a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) since 1952, has a total of 4.5 million members.[114]

The Confession of Faith of HKBP was adopted by the *Sinode Godang* in November 1951. By presenting this particular confession of faith and adopting the Augsburg Confession, HKBP was admitted as a member of the LWF in 1952. After 44 years, the *Sinode Godang* of November 1996 adopted a new Confession of Faith in continuity with the Confession of Faith of 1951. This confession of faith is now taken as the ecclesiological basis of HKBP.

To understand the theological foundation of the Church, I present the ecclesiological foundation of the Church in Article 7 of the Confession of Faith 1996.[115] Its form and structure are the same as that of the Barmen Declaration of 1934. The Confession of Faith 1996 Article 7 reads:

We believe and confess:

A. *The Church is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ in this world, who are called, gathered, sanctified and preserved by God through the Holy Spirit. Because the Church is still living in this world, the Church has to struggle. (1Cor.1:2; 1Peter2:9; 1Cor.3; John 17; Matt.13:24-30)*

By means of this doctrine, we emphasize that people cannot found a Church merely for their own purposes. We also reject the spirit and view that divides and separates the Church. We reject the ideas 'State Church', 'Tribe Church', 'Adat Church', and the idea that the Church is merely an ordinary or secular organization.

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[113] *Aturan Dohot Paraturan HKBP,* 2002, p. 155.
[114] Almanak HKBP 2016, Kantor Pusat HKBP, 2016.
[115] *Panindangion Haporseaon, The Confession of Faith of the HKBP, Pengakuan Iman HKBP Konfessi 1951 & 1996,* Kantor Pusat HKBP Pearaja Tarutung, pp. 162-164.

B. *The Church is holy. The Church is called holy not because of the members, the servants, or the organization, but because Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, is holy. The Church becomes holy because Christ sanctified it and God, for His sake, reckons the Christians as saints. The Church is called a holy community, a temple of the Holy Spirit, and a habitation of God just because Christ himself is holy.*

As people who are sanctified, God sends the Church to proclaim the Good News and to spread the Kingdom of God, as a blessing and good news for all nations around the globe. God calls the Church to urge all people to live a holy life, to obey Jesus Christ more than any authority in the world (Rev.1:6; Eph. 3:21; 1Cor 3:16; 1Peter 2:9; Eph. 2:22).

C. *The Church is one. The Church is the gathering of those sanctified, those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, who come from any place or of any nationality, those who speak any language, any group of people, rich, poor, men or women (Rev.7:9; Gal 3:28; 1Cor 11:7-12), and those who received His gifts, namely the Good News, the Holy Spirit, faith, love, and hope.*

By means of this doctrine, we emphasize that the churches are same even though the social status and nationality of its members are different.
We reject the views that the Church is a religion that separates nations and that there is no connection between one church and another church.

D. *There is only one Church, namely the body of Christ. The unity of the Church is only based upon Jesus Christ, because the unity of the Church as it is expressed here is a spiritual unity and is different from the secular unity. In spiritual unity, the Church is led in the unity of faith, baptism, hope, mutual understanding, mutual help, mutual trust, mutual love, and unity in all ecumenical activities (Eph.4:4-4; 1Cor 12:20; John 17:20-21).*

By means of this doctrine, we oppose and reject the doctrine that unity is not based upon Jesus Christ.

The signs of the true Church are:

1. *The gospel is purely preached and taught.*
2. *The two sacraments are truly administered (Matt. 28:19; Mc. 16:15-16).*
3. *Church discipline is exercised.*

> *By means of this doctrine, we emphasize that God reveals Himself and He*
> *makes reconciliation in Jesus Christ through the gospel and the two sacra-*
> *ments.*

The Confession of Faith 1951 was amended to the Confession of Faith 1996. The influence of the Barmen Declaration of 1934 on the Confession of Faith of HKBP 1951 is clear from the statement, "The Church rejects and opposes the opinion that says that the Church should become a state church and the understanding that regards the church as a nation's religion."[116] That statement still exists in the Confession of Faith 1996 with the more general "We reject the ideas 'State Church', 'Tribe Church', '*Adat* Church', and the idea that the Church is merely an ordinary or secular organization" (point A). The strong emphasis to the spirit of sanctification in relation with authority can be seen in the statement "God calls the Church to urge all people to live a holy life, to obey Jesus Christ more than any authority in the world" (point B). The critical position of HKBP toward the state and authority should be fruitful when HKBP deals with injustice and degradation of humanity in society. In the issue of interfaith marriage, that view should help HKBP to have a proper stance. We will see.

2.4. HKBP's Official View on Interfaith Marriage

The official view of HKBP towards interfaith marriage can be found in *Ruhut Parmahanion Dohot Paminsangon* 1987 (literally means the Rules of Pastorate and Admonition) – RPP 1987, points l and q chapter IV.[117] RPP HKBP 1987 is a Church discipline regulation.

> *l. Those who marry without HKBP's agreement are no longer regarded as*
> *congregational members. In any case, the official decision will be an-*
> *nounced in a congregational announcement. The announcement will ex-*
> *plain that the person is put under church discipline because his/her mar-*
> *riage is only approved by the Civil registrar, or he/she has married a non-*
> *Christian (see 1 Corinthians 7:12-13+39). However, the person can be*
> *accepted again as a member of the congregation after the church board*
> *approves him/her and after the person takes part in the confession of sin*
> *catechesis.*

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[116] *Panindangion Haporseaon, The Confession of Faith of the HKBP, Pengakuan Iman HKBP Konfessi 1951 & 1996,* Kantor Pusat HKBP Pearaja Tarutung, p. 61.
[117] *Ruhut Parmahanion Dohot Paminsangon*, RPP HKBP, Kantor Pusat HKBP – Pearaja Tarutung, 2009, p. 41.

> *q. A man or a woman who loves a woman or a man who is a non-Christian can have a marriage blessing only if the woman/man is willing to be baptized (pandidion na Badia). However, the person must sign an agreement that he/she is willing to continue catechesis after they receive the marriage blessing.*

Thus, the HKBP refuses interfaith marriage. The HKBP uses the Biblical text of 1 Corinthians 7 as a theological argument to reject interfaith marriage. For me, the light of 1 Corinthians 7 as the spirit of sanctification in the Confession of Faith is perceived as a separation of HKBP from another faith and belief. It seems that HKBP emphasizes verse 19, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts" than verses 12 – 13. The former *Ephorus* of HKBP, Willem T.P. Simarmata said, "Interfaith marriage in HKBP faces strong rejection. It is even difficult to bring this issue up in the *Rapat Pendeta* (Ministers' Meeting). There is no pastor who is encouraged to propose this issue because there will be strong rejection. However, it does not mean that HKBP will never discuss this problem. It remains a possibility, but the cultural factor cannot be underestimated".[118]

The theological basis of marriage in HKBP based on Genesis 2:18 and Matthew 5:32. In the tradition of pre-marriage pastorate, HKBP will only serve a marriage with the approval of other related parties. The marriage pastorate in HKBP is carried on in accordance with the cultural steps. After the couple agrees to marry, they need to go through three steps[119]:

a. First, they state their willingness to get married to their parents. Approval from the parents is a crucial requirement. Approval is not only needed from the parents, but also from *tulang* (a male family member on the mother's side). Here, the role of culture is very strong. In Batak culture, there is an exclusive view that a Bataknese must marry another Bataknese. In the Batak marriage system, every person has his/her own soul mate from their family, known as *pariban*. Every Bataknese man is expected (culturally) to marry his *pariban*, the daughter of the *tulang* (*boru tulang*). A Bataknese woman calls the son of her *namboru* (aunt, father's sister) her *pariban*. If a Bataknese wants to marry someone who is not Bataknese, he/she must bring him/her into the Batak culture. This process is done by giving the person a name of a Batak clan according to the clan of the *nantulang* or another Batak clan from the family of the

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[118] Interview with Ephorus Willem TP. Simarmata, MA on 10th February 2015 in Pematang Siantar.
[119] See: Ramlan Hatuhaean, *Tradisi Teologis HKBP, Sebuah Refektif (*The Theological Tradition of HKBP, A Reflection*),* Pustaka Efata, Bekasi, 2013, pp. 130-135.

nantulang. The approval of the *tulang* determines whether the marriage will happen or not because the woman whom the man will marry, though she is not the daughter of the *tulang*, is regarded as a member of the *tulang*'s family. *Tulang* is also responsible for making sure that the marriage ceremony is culturally legitimate.

b. Second, the *marhorihori dingding* procession. *Marhorihori dingding* is also known as *marbona ni siala* or *marbalik balik dinding* and is lately understood as getting to know the in-laws. *Marhorihori* is not only getting to know the in-laws, but also to propose and plan the marriage. The family of the groom (*paranak*) will send representatives to propose on his behalf to the bride's family (*Parboru*). If the *parboru* accepts the proposal of the *paranak*, the amount of the dowry will be decided. The discussion will also decide when and in which church the *Martumpol* (see below) will be held, as well as when and in which church the marriage will be held. The biggest advantage of *marhorihori dinding* is that there will be no serious obstacle or grudge because everything has been agreed upon.

c. Third, the *Martumpol*. In HKBP tradition, the church board will take part if the family of the bride and the groom have shared the marriage plan with them. If both families have not reached an agreement, they will not conduct the marriage blessing.

Martumpol includes the cultural procession where the church takes part. *Martumpol* (*tumpol*; face to face) is a ceremony to make sure both the bride and the groom are serious about their marriage plan and to check the approval of the family. There will be a direct question and answer session in *martumpol* by inviting the village leader as a witness. In this stage, both families are required to pay *tingting* (announcement) money to the church. The agreement in *martumpol* is taken as a promise, signed by all parties: both the bride and groom, one of the parents of the bride and groom, witnesses from each party, elders, and pastor. The result of the *martumpol* will be put in the church announcements for two consecutive weeks. A marriage blessing can only be done at least four days after the second announcement. Because all has been agreed upon and emphasized in the *martumpol*, it is also known as the marriage agreement.

Martumpol is not part of formal worship in HKBP; therefore, it is not stipulated in the Church order of HKBP. However, HKBP takes part in the *martumpol* because in this step HKBP will carry out the pre-marriage pastoral care. The tradition has been the custom of Bataknese Christians for ages; it is strongly rooted

in the effort to preserve Christian marriage and to avoid polygamy, marriage with a non-Christian, a not informed marriage, as well as a forced marriage.

With such an integrated process of culture and church, many state that interfaith marriage is difficult to accept in HKBP. Even though the couple asks the parents and *tulang* for permission, being of the same faith is a non-negotiable requirement. HKBP is closely related to custom. Interfaith marriage has long been avoided and this is rooted in the custom's rules. When Christianity became a strong force in Batak territory, marriage among Bataknese was regarded as same faith marriage; it can never be an interfaith marriage. Interfaith marriage is not regarded as a Batak marriage and is not acceptable in Batak traditions. A marriage that is not accepted by Batak customs makes it culturally illegitimate. Compared with other ethnic groups, for instance the Javanese, culture for Bataks is very important and determinate for Bataknese. When a marriage is not legitimate, the couple is withdrawn from the custom. Consequently, they lose the bond with society regarding customary traditions.

How can the bond between custom and religion among Christian Bataknese be very strong? There is a pervasive view that Bataknese are Christian, even though there are some non-Christian Bataknese. The relation between church and custom has a long history in HKBP. Schreiner provides a description of the issue.[120] In the interaction of Gospel and *Adat*, there is a view among missionaries that in the customary religion, the native inhabitants were prepared to accept the Gospel (*preparatio evangelica*). This view is a common basic characteristic that determines the 'zending' (mission) efforts among Bataknese. This is what allowed Nommenssen to consider the genealogical reality of the ethnic group as a factor to convert them into Christians. 'Zendelingen' held that view even until the end of Nomenssen's era. Based on this view, people tried to analyze which were religious elements and which were not, and to separate 'religion' from 'custom'. The custom was usually justified, whereas 'infidel religion' was rejected. With this simple understanding, people gradually tried to overcome the infidel elements by diminishing them through absorbing custom with 'the power of the Gospel'. J. Warneck, Nommenssen's successor, believed that custom and Gospel influence each other. Influencing each other was seen as something that is possible. In order to deal with the problems, customary law, which is somehow similar to civil law for Christians, was included by Nommenssen in 1867. It was a Christian civil law. The Church's discipline order was the pastors' responsibility, whereas the implementation of Christian laws was the responsibility of Christian Kings. In such a way, a society where Christians were still under fellowship with

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[120] See: Schreiner, *Adat dan Injil,* 2000, pp. 52-62.

the custom was formed. By adding Christian laws, the customary law, to the Church's discipline order, the life of the Christian fellowship is governed by double and complex laws. Law-like rules are imposed in the two environments. Faith is indeed the purpose and it plays a role in Christian laws. In Bataknese's view, the implementation of law and religion in Batak society during early Christianity was not separated.

In the Bataknese's worldview, order implemented since conversion can only be understood from their understanding of the law, which has legalistic characteristics. Therefore, according to their worldview, fellowship order is also based on legalism with a religious basis. [121]

In 1868, a year after the introduction of the first Christian customary laws, a missionaries conference was busy with marriage issues and took the following decisions: [122]

1. Marriage to a catechumen will be legitimate, but after he/she is baptized, the marriage must be blessed in church.
2. According to the custom, a marriage with someone who is of the same clan is not allowed, even though, according to European definition, there is no tie of kinship.
3. A catechumen who marries his stepmother will only be allowed to receive baptism after he divorces his stepmother. In a certain Batak tradition, a son must marry his stepmother if/when she becomes a widow.
4. A woman catechumen who is a widow, who according to the custom is married to her husband's older/younger brother who is a non-Christian, must be ransomed if there is no other way.

As with many other churches in Indonesia, HKBP punishes Christians who divorce their spouses by excommunicating them from the congregation. Customary laws require those who are divorced to pay a very high fine, which must be paid to the king.

What and how the first Christian customary laws were compiled by Nommenssen in 1867 can no longer be traced. However, Schreiner provided an interesting explanation that when the colonial government handed power over to the Republic of Indonesia, the Christian principles that regulated Batak society got a new stimulus. The laws included many rules about marriage affirmation and blessing and also listed difficult problems about marriage between Christians and non-Christians. An interesting fact about the explanation of Schreiner is the

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[121] *Cf.* Schreiner, *Adat dan Injil,* 2000, p. 66.
[122] Schreiner, *Adat dan Injil,* 2000, p. 68.

presence of 'double appreciation' as commonly implemented in that era. A couple who were both Christians was blessed by a Pastor, whereas the marriage of a different-faith couple was served by a teacher or elder. This practice was set to avoid the interfaith marriage.[123]

It seems that HKBP has dealt with interfaith marriage since Christianity grew in Batak territory. The 'double appreciation' could be seen as an emergency solution. The enforcement of customary order with Christian morals that later brought Batak customs as Christian order, shaped a homogenous society that places non-Christians in a lower position from them. Continuing to the present day, HKBP continues to deal with this homogeneity problem. The chair of the RPP commission 2015 (Church Discipline Commission), Tendens Simanjuntak, admits that even though HKBP officially rejects conducting interfaith marriages, pastors have different views about the issue. HKBP churches in North Sumatera and pastors who grew up and serve outside North Sumatera will have different views about interfaith marriage. According to him, this is caused by homogeneity in North Sumatera. In other words, Christianity in North Sumatera, where HKBP has a strong influence, tends to reject interfaith marriage. On the other hand, HKBP churches outside North Sumatera (especially the ones in Java) and pastors who have experiences with plural and heterogenic society are more open towards interfaith marriage.[124] Einar Sitompul, a senior pastor of HKBP in Jakarta, views that interfaith marriage is a real problem in the context of a pluralistic society. According to Sitompul, mixed marriage should be highlighted realistically and also critically. Realistic, because mixed marriage is a logical consequence of the development of life, while critical because from every development, pros and cons will emerge in response and there is an exploitative tendency towards self-interest.[125] Sitompul says, "In a pluralistic society and in the consciousness of that society, with all its aspects, support to form a married life requiring that someone must marry the same faith will simplify the meaning of marriage itself. How can we ensure that the 'suitable helper ' will be the same faith? Didn't God create the helper for Adam when he was sleeping? To deal with mixed marriage in the context of a plural society, we have to build a new vision; that family, on one side, is a miniature of the church (the same faith), and on another side, a family is a miniature of the society. The Church must more open for being the place where the

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[123] See: Schreiner, *Adat dan Injil*, 2000, p. 72.
[124] Interview with Rev. Tendens Simanjuntak, S.Th on 12 February 2015 in Tebing Tinggi.
[125] Einar Sitompul, *Gereja Menyikapi Perubahan* (Church Addressing Change), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2012, p. 28.

mixed couple is enabled to be responsible in their ethical responsibility in the dimension of personal responsibility in marriage."[126]

HKBP seems to face the challenge that because of difficulties in fulfilling some requirements, congregations seek a marriage alternative in *pasu pasu raja*. This Batak custom is a custom that allows couples to ask the village elders for marriage blessings instead of pastors. They trust their elders more even though the risk is that they will be excommunicated by the local church board of HKBP.

2.5. Conclusions

1. HKBP rejects interfaith marriage. The formal stance of HKBP toward interfaith marriage can be found in the official church document, stipulated in the *Ruhut Parmahanion Dohot Paminsangon* (literally: Rules of Pastorate and Admonition) Church Discipline Order, points l and q Chapter IV. This position is based on the interpretation of the Biblical text 1 Corinthians 7:12-13+19.

2. In their history, HKBP has taken an emergency solution through 'double appreciation'. Behind this policy, at least, the awareness of the plural context is present. HKBP has considered the context of the plural society. Unfortunately, this position was developed no further.

3. HKBP faces a challenge of homogeneity. The majority of the population in Batak territory – North Sumatera – are Christians and most of them are HKBP members. Eighteen out of thirty districts of HKBP are located in this area. Homogeneity can be a factor to raise a majority-minority issue, but then there is not enough room for interfaith discourse.

4. There is no significant theological issue as a basis to reject interfaith marriage. The cultural argument is stronger. HKBP's view of other religions is very positive. The rejection of interfaith marriage is based on the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7: 12-13, 19. However, this verse is used to reinforce a cultural attitude that has emerged within the HKBP. HKBP is closely related to custom. Interfaith marriage has long been avoided and this is rooted in customary rules. When Christianity became a strong force in Batak territory, marriage among Bataknese was regarded as same faith marriage; it could never be an interfaith marriage. Interfaith marriage is not regarded as a Batak marriage and is not acceptable in Batak traditions. A marriage that is not accepted by Batak customs makes it culturally illegitimate. This is a challenge for HKBP in the future to have critical evaluations of the exclusivity of culture

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[126] Sitompul, *Gereja Menyikapi Perubahan,* 2012, p. 33.

within its own culture. This is a significant effort to develop a contextual and inclusive theology.

3.   GPIB – Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat (Protestant Church of Western Indonesia) and Interfaith Marriage

GPIB is the second largest church among the member churches of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. From a historical perspective, GPIB is closely connected with the beginning of Protestant Christianity in Indonesia, particularly Calvinism, which was brought by Dutch Protestant missionaries. GPIB was regarded as a *staatkerk/Indische Kerk* (State Church/Indies Church). Therefore, GPIB is characterized by its close relationship with the Government. In this chapter, I will present the stance of GPIB towards interfaith marriage, beginning with the historical background of GPIB.

3.1. The Historical Background of GPIB

Protestant Christianity was brought to Indonesia by Dutch Protestant missionaries under the auspices of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC – *Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie*). Missionary work began in eastern Indonesia, at Ambon - Moluccas (1605) where the first Protestant church in Indonesia was established. It then gradually spread to North Sulawesi (1644), Makasar, South Sulawesi (1670), and East Nusa Tenggara (1670). Missionary work also spread to western Indonesia: Batavia (1619), Semarang - Central Java and Surabaya - East Java (1619), and other places.[127] In fact, the spread of Christianity was slow and uncertain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, due mostly to the fact that the VOC put much more attention towards its trade interest. In 1799, the VOC was bankrupt, and the territories formerly controlled by the VOC were taken over by the Dutch colonial government.[128]

From 1811 to 1816, Indonesia fell under the rule of the British. After that, Indonesia was again under Dutch colonial rule and the situation of Protestantism in Indonesia changed remarkably. By the authority of King Willem I in his decree of 1815, all existing Protestant congregations were united into one single church and it was implemented in Indonesia by establishing a single Protestant church called *De Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indië* (the Protestant Church in

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[127] *Cf.* Th. van den End, *Ragi Carita I, Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia,* Jakarta, BPK Gunung Mulia, 1989, p. 96.

[128] *Cf.* Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* Brill, Leiden, 2008, p. 138. See also: Aritonang and Steenbrink, 2008, pp. 99-137. They explore the arrival of the Protestantism and the VOC's missionary work in the period 1605–1800.

the Dutch East Indies), in 1835.[129] Van den End mentions three characteristics of the church:[130]

1. Although the church is formally separated from the state[131], the church turned out to be a state church (Dutch: *Staatskerk*). The state regulation of 1844 describes that situation:[132]

    a. The members of the church were Protestant people.

    b. The Church was led by an executive board that was located in Batavia and appointed by the Governor General.

    c. The tasks of the Church were "to preserve Christianity in general and the Protestant Church in particular, to increase religious knowledge and to develop Christian moral values, to enforce orderliness and harmony, and to promote a loving attitude towards the government and the country".

2. Because of the state's interference in the life of the church, the church had lost its essential characteristics in terms of confession of faith and Church Order.[133]

3. In the leadership of the church, Indonesian Christians were not seriously taken into account and the organization was set up in a hierarchical structure. The Dutch ministers were in the top rank, while Dutch assistant ministers were in the second. Native ministers and native teachers were positioned only in the lowest ranks.[134]

In the Great Meeting (D: *de Groote Vergadering*) of the Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies held in 1933, the church was reorganized and made into an independent church. In the *General Regulation* of 1933 (Dutch: *Algemeen Reglement voor de Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indië*) Article 1 states:[135]

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[129] G.P.H. Locher, *De Kerkorde Der Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië, Bijdrage tot Kennis van haar Historie en Beginselen,* Amsterdam, 1948, pp. 41-45.

[130] See: Van den End, *Ragi Carita I,* 1989, pp. 146-149.

[131] See: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 137-138. The political situation underwent significant changes. One important change was the separation of church and state, which in the Netherlands was brought into force in 1796. However, the state was not supposed to give preferential treatment to any church or religion. Essentially the colonial government did not consider the church, let alone mission, to be its affair.

[132] See: also Locher, *De Kerkorde Der Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië*, 1948, p. 43-45.

[133] See: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, p. 138. Characteristically the church order, called *'Reglement 1844'* (Regulation 1844), did not contain a creedal formula.

[134] See: also Th. van den End, *Ragi Carita*, *Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia*, 2 vol, Jakarta, 1988-1989, pp. 44-45.

[135] *Notulen van de Groote Vergadering der Protestantsche Kerk in Nederland Indië, gehouden te Batavia in de Willemskerk op 10 – 12 Mei 1933,* p. 38, 47.

1. *The Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies is an independent Christian church. It consists of its congregations in these territories and it is open for all Protestants in the Netherlands-Indies.*[136]
2. *Its foundation is Jesus Christ.*[137]

Meanwhile, in his mission activities, Hendrik Kraemer had persuaded the missions and the Protestant Church to speed up the process of church formation. Between 1928 and 1933, he visited a number of mission fields and in his report; he charted the course towards the founding of autonomous churches. The Church Board of the Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies requested Kraemer's opinion on the future of the church districts in eastern Indonesia, particularly in Minahasa and the Central Moluccas with their large Christian population. In conformity with Kraemer's recommendation, these districts were upgraded to autonomous churches within the Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies, namely GMIM - *Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa* (The Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa) in 1934 and GPM - *Gereja Prostestan Maluku* (The Protestant Church in Moluccas) in 1935.[138]

Apparently, although the church was declared to be an independent church, in reality the church was still under the control of the Dutch colonial government and regarded as the state church (D: *Staatskerk*).[139] Until 1935, the Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies, as the state church, had become a uniting church for all European – predominantly Dutch – Christians and part of the Indonesian Christians.

Organizational efforts were carried on at the 1st General Synod Assembly held in 1936.[140] The 3rd General Synod Assembly was held from May 30 until June 10, 1948 in Bogor following a difficult time during the struggle for independence of the Republic of Indonesia, This Assembly decided to change the name of the church to *De Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië* (the Protestant Church in

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[136] The original text in Dutch: *De Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlandsch – Indië is een zelfstandige Christelijke Kerk, zij bestaat uit al haar Gemeenten in deze Gewesten en staat open voor alle Protestanten in Nederlandsch-Indië.*

[137] The original text in Dutch: *Haar fundament is Jezus Christus.*

[138] See: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 172-175.

[139] See: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, p. 138. Until the very end of the colonial era, all church activities were financed by the government. At least during the nineteenth century, the Protestant Church was just a government agency for the fulfillment of the religious needs of its Protestant subjects.

[140] See: *Notulen van de Eerste Algemeene Synode der Protestansche Kerk in Nederlandsch-Indië, Batavia 9 – 12 Juni 1936.* Some organizational regulations were established in this Synod.

Indonesia).[141] This Synod adopted the Work Order of the Protestant Church in Indonesia (D.: *Werkorde van de Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië 1948).* Article II of the Work Order of the Protestant Church in Indonesia mentions the composition of the independent church as follows:[142]

The Protestant Church in Indonesia at present consists of four independent churches:

a. The Christian Evangelical Church Minahasa, as established in 1934. (GMIM – *Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa*).

b. The Protestant Church in Moluccas, as established in 1935 (GPM – *Gereja Prostestan Maluku*).

c. The Christian Evangelical Church in Timor, as established in 1947 (GMIT – *Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor*).

d. The Protestant Church in the territories beyond those three independent churches.

Four months later, from October 25 – 31, 1948 the *Proto Synode* of the Protestant Church in Western Indonesia was held in the Willemskerk in Batavia. It was decided to institutionalize the fourth church of the Protestant Church in Indonesia under the name *De Protestantse Kerk in Westelijk Indonesië* (the Protestant Church in Western Indonesia, Ind.: *Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat - GPIB*). The institutionalization of GPIB officially took place on October 31, 1948. It is taken as the birth of GPIB.

Historically, the church that became known as the GPIB experienced a difficult situation during the Japanese occupation and the struggle for the independence of Indonesia. During the Japanese occupation, many Dutch ministers were arrested and expelled. GPIB conducted its services in Dutch and *Bahasa Indonesia*. GPIB served Dutch people and Indonesians, therefore Dutch ministers were present in the Church Board. This struggle continued until the 2nd Synod (1950) when political changes influenced the relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands.[143] Ongirwalu writes that due to the close relation with the Dutch

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[141] Article 1, *Werkorde van de Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië, Peratoeran Kerdja Geredja Protestan di Indonesia,* Algemene Synode, 8 Juni 1948, p. 2. See also concerning the decision on the Work Order: *Notulen van de Derde Algemene Synoode van de Protestanse Kerk in Indonesië, Toetoeran Synode Am Jang Ketiga Geredja Protestan di Indonesia, Bogor 30 Mei – 10 Juni 1948,* pp. 119-124.

[142] See: *Werkorde van Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië,*1948, p. 2.

[143] See: *Notulen van de Tweede Synode der Protestantse Kerk in Westelijk Indonesië, Djakarta 26 November – 2 December 1950,* p. 33. Concerning the political change, the Synod declared the following statement; *After the Synod spoke about the position and the status of the Dutch people and GPIB in the constitutional changing of Indonesia, the Synod states: (1) that the constitutional changing of Indonesia will never effect to change the position of GPIB, (2) to protect, maintain and*

community, GPIB was suspected as pro colonialism and even counted as an enemy of Islam.[144]

GPIB defined long-term planning as periods of twenty years each. The period from 1986 to 2006 was conceived as the third stage. The programs and policies of the third stage were based on the GBKUPG – *Garis-garis Besar Kebijakan Umum Pelayanan Gereja* (The Mainline of General Policy of the Church Ministry). The next stage is the period from 2006 until 2026 called the fourth stage. This stage was regulated in the PKUPPG – *Pokok-pokok Kebijakan Umum Panggilan dan Pengutusan Gereja* (The Points of the General Policy of the Vocation and Mission of the Church). This document summarizes the history of GPIB. The history of GPIB is divided into four periods, namely:[145]

1. Period 1948 – 1966, the consolidation stages of the GPIB. In this period, GPIB implemented its mandate to conduct services and care for the souls of the Dutch people and Indonesians.

2. Period 1966 – 1986, the initial phase towards the missionary Church. D.R. Maitimoe introduced the term 'missionary Church' for the first time in the 1960s. The concept of a missionary church was understood that the church is the agent of the *missio Dei* that is done by Jesus Christ.

3. Period 1986 – 2006, the growth stage of becoming a missionary church. Through the consciousness of the meaning of the missionary church being able to respond to the problems of the society and the nation, this period was regarded as a growth step towards the missionary church as defined in the PKUPPG (The Points of the General Policy of the Vocation and Mission of the Church) stage 1, and then in PKUPPG stage 2.

4. Period 2006 – 2026, as the stages of building and developing the missionary church. GPIB becomes the church that is diligently experiencing the '*shalom*' of Jesus Christ, as well as the church that is bringing the '*shalom*' of Jesus Christ to society and to the world.

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strengthen the unity of GPIB, based on the belief that the church is the manifestation of the one body of Christ, (3) that all members of the congregations, no matter their nation, have the same rights because they are called to proclaim the Gospel by the same Lord. Based on this regard, each of them must carry out their task in obedience to God in unity.

[144] See: H. Ongirwalu, *Sejarah Gereja Protestan di Indonesia bagian Barat (1948 1990)*, (A History of the Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (1948 -1990), p. 1. Downloaded on 27 September 2017, https://www.scribd.com/doc/45289139/Sejarah-Gereja-Protestan-Di-Indonesia.

[145] PKUPPG – *Pokok-pokok Kebijakan Umum Panggilan dan Pengutusan Gereja - Buku II* (The Points of the General Policy of the Vocation and Mission of the Church – Book II), Majelis Sinode GPIB, 2010, p. 9.

From its socio-cultural historical background, GPIB was not established by the missionary work of a certain ethnic group's context. Therefore, GPIB has been a multicultural church since it was established. From a socio-cultural historical background, GPIB was a diaspora church coming from the Christian ethnic groups of eastern Indonesia (Minahasa, Moluccas, and Timor); later on other ethnic groups joined. Therefore, the GPIB is not a church with a single ethnic group. More precisely, GPIB is a multi-ethnic diaspora church. At present, the members of GPIB come from diverse cultural backgrounds such as Minahasan, Moluccan, Timorese, Batak, Toraja, and others who live in the western part of Indonesia.

In 2015, GPIB had 318 congregations, 25 districts spread throughout 26 of the 35 provinces in Indonesia, and 1,300,000 members.[146]

3.2. The Ecclesiological Basis of GPIB

The *Proto Synode* (1948) adopted the first Church Order (CO) of GPIB, namely the *Kerkorde voor de Protestantse Kerk in Westelijk Indonesië*. The first Church Order was based on the Church Order of GPI – *Gereja Protestan di Indonesia* (D.: *De Protestantse Kerk in Indonesië*, the Protestant Church in Indonesia). CO 1948 describes GPIB as follows:[147]

The Church

GPIB, in accordance with its confession of faith, is an independent part of GPI (Protestant Church in Indonesia) as the manifestation of the one, holy, and catholic Christian Church, and comprises the congregations outside the territories of the existing independent churches in eastern Indonesia.

The 7th Synod Assembly 1962 adopted the new Church Order 1962. The important point in the Church Order 1962 is the description of the form and composition of GPIB.[148]

Article 1
Form of the Church
GPIB, in accordance with its confession of faith, is a manifestation of the one, holy, and catholic Christian Church, therefore it is the body of Christ.

Article 2
Composition of the Church

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[146] https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gereja_Protestan_di_Indonesia_bagian_Barat.
[147] See: Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders*, 1997, p. 23.
[148] The wording is directly related to that in the Church Order 1951 of the Netherlands Reformed Church.

GPIB is an independent church in the framework of the Protestant Church in Indonesia, consisting of all congregations of the Protestant Church in Indonesia outside of GMIM (the Christian Evangelical Church Minahasa), GPM (Protestant Church in Moluccas), and GMIT (the Christian Evangelical Church in Timor).

The CO 1962 was amended again several times resulting in the CO 1972, the CO 1982, the CO 1986, the CO 2010, and the latest, the CO 2015. The 13th Synod Assembly in 1982 adopted the Church Order 1982. It also recommended establishing a working group on the 'Manifestation of Faith' in GPIB. At the midst of the drafting process, the term 'Manifestation of Faith' was changed into the 'Understanding of Faith' of GPIB. Next, the 14th Synod in October 1986 adopted this pivotal document that is now called the Understanding of Faith of GPIB, the first one since 1948.

The Understanding of Faith of GPIB 1986 was improved several times, during Synod 2000, Synod 2005, Synod 2010 and finally the 20th Synod in 2015. The document consists of seven topics:[149]
1. Salvation
2. The Church
3. Humankind
4. Nature and Resources
5. The State and Nation
6. Future
7. The Word of God

Because of the historical background of GPIB as the state Church, I present the document on the Understanding of Faith of GPIB, in particular Chapter V, "State and Nation".

V. State and Nation
1. God, as the source of power, gives the power to the nations' government for bringing justice and prosperity, maintaining orderliness, and preventing and abolishing disorderliness and wickedness. Thereby, as the servant of God, every single government is obliged to account for its power to God.
2. The government and the state execute their power and authority under the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He says, "*render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.*" Thereby, the

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[149] *Pemahaman Iman & Akta Gereja*, Buku 1 (The Understanding of Faith and Act, Book 1), Majelis Sinode GPIB, 2015, pp. 174-180.

government and the state have autonomy, but it cannot go beyond the autonomy of the Church as the body of Christ, because Caesar exists under the sovereignty of God.

3. The power given by God can be misused by the government when power is seen as a goal so that arbitrariness, wickedness, and unrest emerge. If this occurs, the Lord Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God as the judge and the King, will judge the governments and the authorities.

4. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of courage, will help believers to obey God more than humans. As witnessed by the Apostles, the Church is called to proclaim the prophetical message upon the interest of the state, the nation, and the society.

5. Based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the members of the congregation, as citizens, are obliged to obey the Laws and Regulations based on the general agreement of society, but they are also obliged to make proposals for the constructive improvement of justice and welfare of the nation, through the channels of social control.

6. Based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the members of the congregation, as citizens, are supposed to develop the sense of togetherness as one nation, Indonesia, building mutual understanding and tolerance in order to animate national harmony and to foster the common progress for the people of Indonesia.

7. Based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the members of the congregation, as citizens, are supposed to develop the sense of unity and oneness in the life of state, nation, and society, in order to protect the diversity and equality that have been part of the civil society, in which Human Rights are highly appreciated.

As the church that was historically the state church, GPIB experienced the struggles for understanding the church - state relationship. The Understanding of Faith of the GPIB on the state and nation, as quoted above, seems to show a critical position of GPIB towards the state. In practice, GPIB's position remains the same as in the past. There are at least two characteristics that appear; (1) GPIB tends to stay close to the government and follow, with full respect, the government's policies, and (2) GPIB is too bureaucratic in the sense that GPIB places the church office-bearers on a level similar with that of government officials.

Singgih sees, even though for a long time GPIB has no longer been the state church, the remains of the past existing at present in the sense of a tendency to pretend that GPIB is the national church (which in fact it is not) and to be close

to the government or state officials. This tendency also influences the church in stressing the position of presbyters as 'officials' rather than servants. Therefore, the domination of the church office-bearers is quite strong in GPIB.[150] Purwanto, who explored the function of the members and the office-bearers in GPIB as found in the Church Order of GPIB, came to this conclusion:[151]

> *The Preamble intentionally regards the presbyters, the office-bearers, as the core of its organizational system making their function determinative in it. This ecclesiological idea is consistently followed in the Church Order as a whole with respect to its content and arrangement. The organization of GPIB described in the Church Order is built into an office-bearers dominated structure. Accordingly, it is not an exaggeration to say that the church order itself, in view of its structural arrangement, has become an office-bearers' Church Order. The Preamble, heavily occupied by the idea of the determinative function of the office-bearers, ecclesiologically puts the church members and the office-bearers in an object-subject relationship.*

I agree with Singgih that the leadership problem in GPIB is rooted in the history of GPIB. In its early years the church was characterized as the office-bearers church (Ind.: *gereja pejabat*), or the minister church (Ind.: *gereja pendeta*). From the perspective of Church Order 1982, Purwanto proves this. According to Singgih, GPIB needs to build a public theology of GPIB. In his view, the public domain is influenced by three axes, namely state, market, and community. The state is related to politics, the market is related to the economy, and community is related to religion/culture. The three axes should be placed in balance, as an equilateral triangle.

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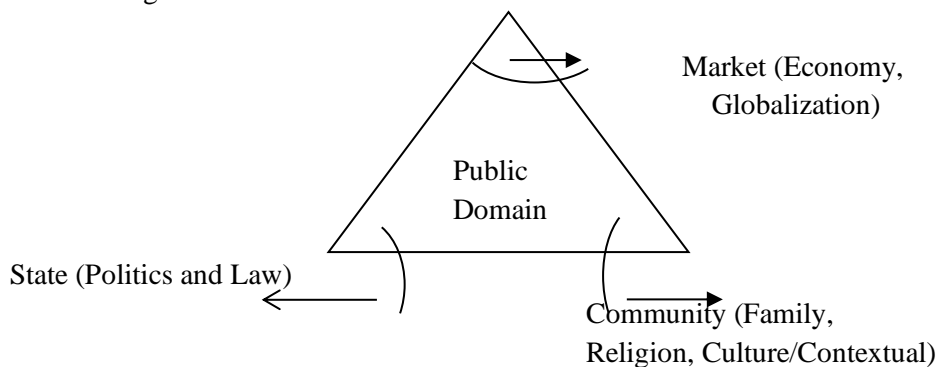
[150] E. Gerrit Singgih, *Membangun Sebuah Teologi Publik GPIB Dalam Rangka Menghadapi Tantangan Konteks Indonesia Masa Kini* (Building a Public Theology of GPIB In Order To Deal with the Challenge of the Current Indonesian Context), a paper presented in the Seminar on The Church Order of GPIB, 15 July 2007, p. 6.
[151] Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders*, 2007, p. 20. He explores this from the perspective of the church order 1982, pp. 16-20.

Furthermore, Singgih explains that if we relate this equilateral triangle with the life of churches in Indonesia, roughly we can say that GKI is traditionally in the market side; GKJ and HKBP are traditionally in the community side, while GPIB is traditionally in the state side (because of the *Staatskerk*). The struggle of every church, then, is a double one; to be in solidarity with its own side, but also to dare to keep distance with it so that it is able to perform its prophetic task; as well as to propose constructive criticism towards each side. Thus, GPIB should strive to be part of civil society and to balance the three axes (state, market, and community). This is the horizontal public theology of GPIB. According to Singgih, the term 'civil society' cannot be understood simply as the antithesis of 'military society' or anti-military, although civil society opposes militarism. Civil society relates to the term 'civilized' and 'civilization', a society that is developed on the principles of justice, freedom, and tolerance. For Singgih, through its involvement in the public domain, this balance will enable GPIB to have a position to offer constructive criticism as a part of civil society.[152]

3.3. GPIB's Official View on Interfaith Marriage

The ecclesiastical basis of GPIB towards marriage is stipulated in *Pemahaman Iman GPIB* (The Understanding of Faith of GPIB).[153] The Understanding of Faith of GPIB gives a description of its understanding of marriage. GPIB understands marriage from two perspectives, namely from a social phenomenon perspective and from a Christian faith perspective. From a social phenomenon perspective, marriage is an embodiment of human existence as social beings who have the will to build an intimate relationship based on mutual love. From a Christian faith perspective, marriage is an embodiment of the decision of a man and a woman to be husband and wife who consent to live with each other based on love, faithfulness, and equality; with principles of monogamy; and marriage cannot be terminated (indissoluble union). For GPIB, marriage is a sacred institution, but it is not a sacrament. The Understanding of faith of GPIB about marriage states:[154]

> *III.3.2 Being United into Marriage*
> The Church understands that a marriage is a social event between two human beings with different sexes, who love each other, which is legitimized into a husband – wife relationship by society through social order, namely through

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[152] Singgih, *Membangun Sebuah Teologi Publik GPIB,* 2007,p. 8.
[153] *Pemahaman Iman dan Akta Gereja – Buku I,*2015, pp. 130-144.
[154] *Pemahaman Iman dan Akta Gereja – Buku I,* 2015, pp. 144-145.

Government. The Church blesses the couple whose bond has been legalized by the Government through a Civil Registry official.

Some understandings should be confirmed:

a. The Church understands marriage as an institution conferred by God to the life of humankind. Marriage is a symbol of the relationship of Christ and his Church (Eph. 5:31, see the Liturgy of Holy Matrimony). Therefore, the Church will not allow a divorce of the couple whose bond has been legalized by the Government and blessed by the Church.

b. Marriage is a legalization of the relationship of love between two human beings of different sexes.

c. The state, in accordance with the Marriage Law 10974, is responsible and has authority to legalize and legitimize the marriage of two Indonesian citizens of different sexes.

d. By referring to the application of the couple and the family of both parties, the Church conducts the Holy Matrimony after the couple fulfills the requirements.

e. In Holy Matrimony, all families and the couple who consent to the marriage vows must believe that through Holy Matrimony God unites the couple. Therefore, there is no reason to separate and being separated (Matt. 19:6, Mc. 10:9) because the marriage is for two persons who have the same faith in Jesus Christ.

f. In accordance with the Bible, the Church refuses a legalization and to legitimize same sex marriage (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13).

g. The Church will not encourage, will not support, and will not justify a divorce. Divorce is understood as a violation of the Bible that proclaims that the Church is a bride of Christ (Eph.5:31-32).

Concerning the legal aspect of marriage, GPIB takes into serious account Marriage Law No. 1 1974. This can be found in the Act of Synod XIX 2010 about Marriage, which states (quoted partly):[155]

Marriage
1. *Issue*
    1.1 Marriage Law No. 1 1974, particularly on the guidelines of the Christian-Protestant marriage, and the explanation of ML on article 2 (page 30), reads: "The meaning of 'the marriage must be conducted in

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[155] Akta Gereja GPIB, Buku I, 1b, Persidangan Sinode XIX, Oktober 2010, (Eng.: Act of the Church GPIB, Synod XIX October 2010), Majelis Sinode GPIB, Jakarta, 2010, pp. 6-9.

accordance with one's own religion and belief', includes in accordance with all regulations and rules of one's own religion as long as it does not contradict this law."

1.2   The church's view on the steps of the implementation of the marriage procedure are:

a.   First step, the Civil Registry. When it is conducted, on the same day and date:

b.   Second step, the holy matrimony is conducted by the church office-bearer.

1.3   The church's understanding: after fulfilling the requirements as stated in Marriage Law (ML) no. 1, 1974 chapter II, article 6 & 7, the parents' approval is the first entity that is decisive for the marriage in order to be legalized, then followed by a blessing of the marriage conducted by the church office-bearer.

2.   *The conclusion of the church's examination.*

2.1   The parents' approval (ML chapter II article 6 point 2) and the agreement of the couple (ML chapter II article 6 point 1) are the first steps that are decisive for the basic human aspect of the marriage. Based on that step above, then the marriage is registered by the officer in accordance with the Law. In this regard, the Law not merely registers, but even legalizes the marriage. The legal aspect of the marriage: in accordance with the Law (namely the approval of the parents and the statement of both parties), it must be declared before the witnesses of marriage that the couple will obey the Law (Constitution 1945 article 27 point 1). After the first step the procedure is then continued by the affirmation and blessing of the marriage conducted by the church office-bearer (as according to the Marriage Law No. 1, 1974 chapter I article 2 point 1 and the Constitution 1945 chapter XI article 29).

2.2   The church's way to examine is based on the Bible, Romans 13:1 "*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*"

3.   *The Principles of the Solution*

3.1   GPIB recognize the view of the Protestant Church tradition that the church conducts the marriage by giving a blessing, but does not

       legalize the marriage. The legalizing of marriage is regulated by the first entity (parent) and second entity (Registry).

3.2 The marriage blessing in the church can be conducted after fulfilling all requirements that are ordered by the church.

3.3 The couple must attend marriage pastoral/catechism before the marriage blessing. This preparation is a more pastoral matter. The marriage pastorate will be arranged by the local pastor in accordance with the local church regulations.

3.4 Every local church is supposed to establish a "board/unit/commission of the welfare of the family and legal aid" in order to deal with problems of the marriage and family. This board is also charged to be concerned with the developing of human resources within families.

4. The Guidelines

4.1 The marriage of the members of GPIB, first of all, should start with submitting the application to the Civil registry. A copy of the document is also submitted to the church.

4.2 It is necessary for GPIB to have the same form of the "*Surat Keterangan Gereja*" (the Description Letter). This letter is needed for the process of registering because Civil Registration will be held prior the marriage blessing.[156]

4.3 The board/commission of the family welfare and legal aid build cooperation with the government, in particular with the Civil Registry Department, in order to have the same understanding of the technical implementation of the marriage.

The official view of GPIB towards interfaith marriage can be found in the Act of Synod XIX 2010, as follows:[157]

The Interfaith Marriage

1. Issue

1.1 An interfaith marriage in this issue is understood as a marriage of a couple who belong to different religions. The GPIB exists in the context of the plural society. In the pluralistic context and the era of openness, the members of GPIB will more often face these interfaith

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[156] According to the Marriage Law, the blessing of the marriage should be conducted first.
[157] *Akta Gereja* GPIB, 2010, pp. 9-11.

marriage problems, not only a interfaith marriage between a Protestant and a Roman Catholic/non Protestant but also with a non-Christian.

1.2 The Marriage Law No. 1, 1974 does not regulate interfaith marriages.

1.3 In practice, in the GPIB more often occurs a separation between the Baptism (of an adult) and the Confirmation, just because of administrative reasons to fulfill the Marriage Law No.1, 1974.[158]

2. *The Conclusion of Assessment*

2.1 It is still needed to examine further the theological basis of interfaith marriage in order to make a decision upon the marriage blessing of the couple with different religions.

2.2 It is needed to outline the guidelines of the interfaith marriage by the Synod Board. The guidelines must consider the interest of the pastoral program and the nurturing program. The Synod Board is supposed to consult with the Roman Catholic Church regarding the implementation of interfaith marriage. If the interfaith marriage with the Roman Catholic Church occurs, the affirmation and blessing of marriage should be done on both sides, not only on one side.

3. *The Principle of the Solution*

3.1 GPIB does not recognize the separation between the Baptism (adult) and the Confirmation, as well as the Holy Communion. Therefore, such separation is forbidden by GPIB.

3.2 The affirmation and blessing of the marriage should be understood in the sense that "God will be with the couple, and the couple received the obligation from God to manifest their life of marriage in accordance with the Will of God."

4. *The Guidelines*

4.1 The affirmation and blessing of the marriage is only for the members of GPIB. For the member of another church, the marriage can be conducted if there is a written agreement from the church leader.

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[158] It is more often in GPIB that in order to fulfill the ML 1974, the non-Christian spouse must be baptized as soon as possible. With this Baptism, the non-Christian spouse will be recognized as a Christian so that the couple has met the ML 1974. The Baptism is simply an emergency effort. After the Wedding, although he/she has been baptized, he/she will be required to attend the Confirmation of faith. Thus, in this case, the Baptism and the Confirmation are separated.

4.2 For helping the member of the congregation to fulfill the administrative requirements in the Civil Registry, particularly for those who are not yet baptized, they can get the statement letter of the membership of the GPIB. Prior to receiving this statement, they have to submit the official letter of statement (and have a seal affixed).

4.3 The Synod Board of GPIB provides the same form of the statement letter of the membership of GPIB.

4.4 For the non-Christian spouse who will be baptized later on, the marriage can be blessed.

4.5 The affirmation and blessing of the interfaith marriage for the Protestant and the Roman Catholic couple can be conducted by using a particular liturgy agreed to by all parties.

With regard to both the regulations for marriage in GPIB and the official view of GPIB on interfaith marriage above, GPIB obviously puts Marriage Law No. 1, 1974 as the basis of the implementation of the marriage. As we see in the previous part, this position shows the characteristic of GPIB that is visible in the domination of the government. We can say that GPIB is very much dependent on governmental policy. The former General Chairman of GPIB (2010 – 2015), MF. Manuhutu, said that the stance of GPIB towards an interfaith marriage is very much determined by the Government, in this regard by Marriage Law 1974. Although the implementation of Marriage Law 1974, particularly towards interfaith marriage, is multi-interpretable, the stance of GPIB towards interfaith marriage fully follows the stance of the Government. The GPIB intends to examine this issue further, theologically, in order to take a decision on it. However as long as the Marriage Law is not changed, GPIB will subject itself to the law and the Government.[159]

Referring to the view of Singgih, I think that GPIB needs to more seriously take into account its role in civil society by making a balance with the other two axes (market and community). In this way, GPIB will be capable to perform its prophetical appeal upon this nation. (Total) obedience to the policy of government does not mean that GPIB is not proclaiming the Bible, the word of God. I agree with Singgih, that the current position of GPIB will make GPIB incapable of having a critical position on the issues of justice, pluralism, and humanity in the community. Singgih proposes a public theology of GPIB; my question is: is

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[159] Interview with Rev. MF. Manuhutu, the Former General Chairman of GPIB (2010 – 2015), at Jakarta in February 2015.

the position on interfaith marriage included? It can be, although Singgih does not mention this issue explicitly.

3.4. Conclusions

1. GPIB refuses interfaith marriage. This position can be found in the Act of Synod XIX 2010. If a member of the congregation will marry to a non-Christian spouse, then the non-Christian spouse must be baptized first. Even, apparently, the non-Christian spouse who has been baptized is still not allowed to participate in Holy Communion because the Baptism is regarded as an emergency case. After the matrimony service has been conducted, the ex-non-Christian spouse must attend catechesis. All this must be put in the letter of statement (having a seal affixed) which is submitted by the non-Christian spouse before the marriage.

2. The official stance of GPIB to refuse interfaith marriage is more based on its priority to subject itself to the government, in this regard to Marriage Law 1974. This position and character of GPIB can be seen as a strong attachment to state institutions as it appears in the sociocultural historical background. GPIB does not have an adequate theological foundation for refusing interfaith marriage.

4. GKPB – Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali (The Protestant Christian Church in Bali) and Interfaith Marriage

The island of Bali is unique within the Indonesian archipelago because the majority of Bali's population is Hindu. The religious beliefs and culture of Balinese Hindus as a single entity is the determinate identity for Balinese. As such, the Christian community is a small community in such a context. GKPB has developed in the context of such a religious belief and culture; therefore, it is interesting to know how GKPB deals with the issue of interfaith marriage. In this chapter, I will elaborate the stance of GKPB towards interfaith marriage. I begin with the historical background of GKPB, then the ecclesiastical basis of GKBP, and at the end the stance of GKPB towards interfaith marriage.

4.1. Historical Background of GKPB

Missionary work in Bali started with Walter Henry Medhurst from the London Missionary Society who worked in Indonesia from 1829 to 1842 and Jacob Ennis (1838) from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission. Medhurst and Ennis were not successful in their mission work in the way they

approached Balinese customs. They strongly confronted Balinese customs and they ended their mission work with no result at all.

A different approach towards Balinese culture for mission work was proposed in 1846 by W.R. Baron van Hoëvell. Hoëvell was a Dutch historian, ethnographer, and minister in Batavia who became a politician after he returned to the Netherlands. In his report of his travel to Bali, Hoëvell appealed that the Gospel must be spread to the people of Bali in a way that is acceptable for them. Therefore, Hoëvell suggested starting a mission on Bali by translating the Bible into the Balinese language. Hoëvell wanted Balinese society to be developed under the influence of the Bible. For Hoëvell, the Balinese would not need to leave behind what they had; their music, songs, poetry, and dances could be instruments to nurture Christianity and to glorify Christ.[160] Hoëvell's proposal would be deliberated, only to be applied years later by the *Utrechtsche Zendings Vereeniging* (UZV). According to Waspada, Hoëvell had actually begun the effort of contextualization in Bali 85 years before the GKPB was established (in 1931).[161]

In 1863, the *Utrechtsche Zendings Vereeniging* (UZV) sent W. van der Jagt as a missionary to Bali to prepare a mission program. He arrived in Bali on October 26, 1864. Van der Jagt worked there for only 2 years. Some later missionaries sent by UZV were R. van Eck (1866 – 1875), Jacob de Vroom (1866 – 1881), and N. Wiggelendam (1880 – 1881). In 1870, UZV translated the Bible into Balinese. Van Eck and De Vroom's approaches focused more on cultural interaction. The fruit of Van Eck's and De Vroom's work was obvious in the first baptism, received by I Gusti Wayan Karangasem on Easter Day 1873 in Singaraja. Mid 1875, Van Eck left Bali because he was ill, whereas in June 1881 De Vroom was killed. The UZV's 15 years of work ended with this sad incident.[162] The murder of De Vroom caused a tense situation that forced the colonial government to reaffirm Article 123 of the *Regeering-Reglement* of 2 September 1854, by revoking the work permit for missionaries in Bali for reasons of security and orderliness. It is commonly said throughout the mission history of Bali that Bali was a forbidden area for missionary work, but according to Waspada, that is not fully true because there has never been a regulation that prohibited missionary work in Bali.[163] Article 123 of the *Regeering-Reglement* of 2 September 1854

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[160] *Cf.* I Ketut Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali Hingga Lahirnya Gereja Bali,* in: Tim Penulis Sejarah GKPB, *Dinamika GKPB Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah*, (*Evangelization in Bali Island until the Church of Bali was Established)* in: GKPB's History Team, *The Dynamic of GKPB in the Historical Journey*), Sinode GKPB, Jakarta, 2012, pp. 77-85.
[161] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, p. 84.
[162] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012*,* pp. 109-110.
[163] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012*,* pp. 121-124.

was reaffirmed in Article 177 of the *Indische Staatsregeling* of 1 January 1926, which reads: [164]

1. *De Christen-leeraars, priesters en zendelingen moeten voorzien zijn van eene door of namens den Gouverneur-General te verleenen bijzondere toelating om hun dienstwerk in eenig bepaald gedeelte van Nederlandsch-Indië te mogen verrichten*

   (Christian teachers, pastors, and missionaries must have a special letter of permission issued by the Governor-General in order to work in a certain area of the Netherlands-Indies)

2. *Wanneer de toelating schadelijk wordt bevonden, of de voorwaarden daarvan niet worden nageleefd, kan zij door den Gouverneur-General worden ingetrokken.*

   (When the permit is found to be disadvantageous, or its conditions are not being met, the permit can be revoked by the Governor-General).

In 1930, the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), an evangelical mission organization that was established in America in 1897, obtained its work permit for Bali. C&MA had an agency known as the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union (CFMU). Through the CFMU, C&MA sent Tsang To Hang to Bali with the permission of the Governor. Even though Hang was permitted to work only among Chinese, at the end, Hang also spread the Gospel to the Balinese. Hang's mission was fruitful as Hang baptized 12 disciples in his first baptism. They were baptized by R.A. Jaffray (the head of C&MA that was based in Makasar) on November 11, 1931 in *Tukad Yeh Poh* (the river of Yeh Poh).[165] The baptism in *Tukad Yeh Poh* is defined as the birth of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali.[166] It means that GKPB does not use the baptism of I Gusti Wayan Karangasem as the momentum for the birth of GKPB. Apparently, the involvement of I Gusti Wayan Karangasem in the murder of De Vroom is the reason.[167]

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[164] Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, pp. 121-122.

[165] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, pp. 129-135. See also: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* 2008, pp. 732-733.

[166] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, p. 136. Waspada notices that the birth of GKPB is not based on the first baptism received by I Gusti Wayan Karangsem, but on the baptisms on 11 November 1931 in *Tukad Yeh Poh*. There is a different version regarding the year of birth of GKPB. Hendrik Kraemer wrote that the first baptism was in November 1932 (and is then quoted by some authors), but Waspada argues that according to the report of ANETA (*Algemeen Nieuws en Telegraaf Agentschap*) edition 29 March 1932 there were already about 300 Christians in Bali who were baptized after 1931 that, according to Waspada, Kraemer missed.

[167] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, p. 110 – 121. In his historical analysis, Waspada explains the involvement of I Gusti Wayan Karangasem in the murder of De Vroom. For Waspada,

Hang and C&MA's mission approaches were very confrontational towards Balinese culture. The Balinese who converted to Christianity had to leave all of their customary traditions. As proof that they had disconnected themselves from their ancestors, Hang asked everyone who wanted to be a Christian to tear down their *sanggah* (family temple). They needed to leave their old habits behind, including the jewelry they used to wear. Hang also forbade his disciples to donate to village rituals. This attitude, as the fruit of Hang's and C&MA's mission, separated the Christian community from Balinese society.[168] Such attitudes caused Christianity to be strongly opposed by Balinese Hindus. Because of a Hindu-Christian conflict in *Tuka* village on August 1933 that was triggered by a case of stealing, Hang's and C&MA's permit was revoked by the colonial government.[169]

Meanwhile, missionary work in Bali was also initiated by GKJW (*Grejo Kristen Jawi Wetan* – the Christian Church in East Java). In December 1932, Synod Assembly III of GKJW decided to spread the Gospel to their neighboring island, Bali. The decision was encouraged by Hendrik Kraemer who had already sent *Guru* (teacher) Tartib Iprajim to Bali in May 1932. Because of the problems with a missionary permit, Kraemer could not be sent to Bali himself. On January 24, 1933, *Guru* Tartib was sent by Kraemer again to Bali, together with *Guru* Darmoadi, also without a missionary permit. The first fruit of their work consisted of 40 people who requested to be baptized. A problem arose when they had to decide where the baptism would be conducted, in Bali or in East Java? At the end of October 1933, Kraemer came to Bali to solve the problem. On October 29, 1933, 38 people (out of 40) were baptized in Bubunan, Bali. The baptism was strongly opposed by the colonial government and society because it was seen as an illegal activity. In December 1933, Synod Assembly IV of GKJW decided to send Tartib and Darmoadi officially as missionaries on behalf of GKJW.[170]

As we have seen before, the attitude of Balinese Christians who separated themselves from society resulted in hatred by other villagers. Balinese Christians were the fellowship of the exclusive. Although Hang was absent from Bali since December 1933, C&MA did not want to hand over its missionary work in Bali to

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I Gusti Wayan Karangasem had a personal problem with De Vroom. It means that the murder of De Vroom was purely criminal, not based on a political or social motive.

[168] *Cf.* Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, pp. 149-182.

[169] *Cf.* I Ketut Suyoga Ayub, *Gereja Menuju Sinode (1931 – 1949),* in: Tim Penulis Sejarah GKPB, *Dinamika GKPB Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah*, (*The Church goes to Synod (1931-1949)*) in: GKPB's History Team, *The Dynamic of GKPB in the Historical Journey*), Sinode GKPB, Jakarta, 2012, p. 218.

[170] *Cf.* Ayub, *Gereja Menuju Sinode,* 2012*,* pp. 219-225.

GKJW. Regarding the stance toward local customs, Kraemer suggested some practical suggestions:[171]

1. Balinese Christians were supposed to follow Balinese customs, especially as a part of the society or village.
2. *Sanggah* (temples) or *pamerajan* (altars) of those who converted to Christianity were not supposed to be torn down, in order to avoid misunderstanding from the surrounding society.
3. During Balinese Hindu ceremonies, Christians were supposed to donate, but they should not participate in worship.
4. During a cremation ceremony, Christians were supposed to help so that they would not lose their heritage rights.

Kraemer's suggestions were rejected by C&MA. The attitude of C&MA deeply influenced Balinese Christians, particularly the theological students who were educated by C&MA. Therefore, Balinese Christians remained under pressure in society. Even though it was opposed by Kraemer, in order to deal with the pressure from society, an idea to open a Christian settlement emerged. The idea was fully supported by the colonial government. As a result, the Balinese Christians moved to west Bali and opened a new settlement. The first Christian village was named *Blimbingsari*. In 1935, Kraemer left Bali and Indonesia. However, Kraemer had laid the foundation of the church organization by designing the concept of Church Regulation 1935.[172]

Subsequently, the local Balinese churches went on further under the supervision of GKJW until 1947. In 1938, the *Pasikian Kristen Bali* (PKB) was established. PKB was a forum in which local churches of Bali gathered to deal with the problems they faced. This forum was a kind of synod. This organizational structure was prevalent until 1947, after the Japanese occupation. In that year, the willingness to be an autonomous church emerged. A letter from the *Majelis Agung GKJW* (the Great Board of the Christian Church in East Java) of November 17, 1947, stated that the *Majelis Agung GKJW* handed over the responsibility for the Balinese churches to the Balinese Christians. The first Synod meeting of the Christian Church in Bali was held on January 14-15, 1948 in Blimbingsari. Ds. Made Rungu (later the first bishop of the Christian Church in Bali) opened the meeting. Made Rungu, the first pastor of the Christian Church in Bali, was ordained in *GKJW* (the Christian Church in East Java) in Mojowarno, in 1943.[173]

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[171] Waspada, *Penginjilan di Pulau Bali,* 2012, pp. 151-152.
[172] *Cf.* Ayub, *Gereja Menuju Sinode,* 2012, pp. 225-226, 228, 250.
[173] *Cf.* Ayub, *Gereja Menuju Sinode*, 2012, pp. 250-252.

In 2015, the GKPB had 84 congregations, 117 ordained ministers, and 13,520 congregation members. GKPB is a small community on an island where the majority are Hindus.

4.2. Sociocultural Background

From its identity as embedded in its name, it is obvious that Balinese society and culture are the context in which GKPB lives and grows. In 1930, it was recorded that 97% of Balinese were Hindu. In 2008, the percentage of Balinese Hindus was 88%, whereas that of Protestants was 1% (60,304 people). The meaning of "*bali*" is offerings. The name was given by Hindu missionaries from India to describe the people in the island who do rituals by using *bali*.[174]

Referring to N.V. Shadeg, a Roman Catholic resident in Bali, Sugden states that Bali Hinduism is in fact a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism, finely overlaid with elements of the islander's original nature worship.[175] Sugden explains that the Balinese worldview integrates many elements such as the individual, the village community, ancestors, as well as natural, supernatural, and cosmic elements. Religion is the basic aspect of culture. To leave religion entails separation from society and culture. The community is a decisive aspect of identity. Sugden says, "The community is the locus of individual identity and religious affiliation. This community emphasis, focused on ancestor worship by the clans, is a source of dignity and identity, and brings strong social pressure against changing religious affiliation."[176]

According to Puspitha, the Balinese believe that the universe runs with a power behind it. The manifesting power in natural phenomena brings both welfare and disaster. Balinese describe the powers behind the universe as a pantheon of supernatural beings. Thus, in Balinese culture, following the order of nature is the source of an entirely religious life, with daily religious rituals constructing the structure of daily life. In other words, from a Balinese point of view, culture and religious belief cannot be separated from one another. Culture and religious belief are interwoven into a single entity determining every structure and order of life for the people of Bali. This forms a *desa adat* (customary village), a system of an

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[174] *Cf.* Tjatra Puspitha, *Pulau Bali sebagai tempat Pelayanan GKPB,* in: Tim Penulis Sejarah GKPB, *Dinamika GKPB Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah* (*Bali Island as the Place of the Ministry of GKPB)* in: GKPB's History Team, *The Dynamic of GKPB in the Historical Journey*), Sinode GKPB, Jakarta, 2012, pp.12-16.

ë[175] See: Chris Sugden, *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus, A Critical and Comparative Study of the Practice and Theology of Christian Social Witness in Indonesia and India 1974 – 1996 with Special Reference to the Work of Wayan Mastra in the Protestant Christian Church in Bali and of Vinay Samuel in the Church of South India*, Regnum Books International, New Delhi, 1997, p. 20.

[176] Sugden, *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus*, 1997, p. 32.

autonomous religious society in which every *desa adat* has its own custom based on ancestral customs.[177]

The life of customary society is formulated in *tri hita karana*, three elements that bring welfare, [178]

1. The *Parhyangan* element, namely the deity, which refers to supernatural powers.
   Parhyangan in the customary village is manifested in *kahyangan tiga* (three areas of deity) namely;
   a. *Pura Puseh (*the *Puseh* Temple) The temple for worshipping the spirits of the predecessors, the founders of the village.
   b. *Pura Bale Agung (*the *Bale Agung* Temple) The temple for adoring and worshipping the spirit of the predecessors who are esteemed by the villagers for imposing the orderly custom and religions in that customary village.
   c. *Pura Dalem (*the *Dalem* Temple) The temple for worshipping the cemetery gods.
2. The *Palemahan* element refers to macrocosm, which is namely land or territory.
3. The *Pawongan* element refers to microcosm, which is namely human beings.

Tri hita karana is the village code of conduct that binds all villagers. We can see here that anyone who is born in the village is strongly attached to the code of conduct of the village. The villagers, and whoever is born in the village, are obliged to obey the three elements of *tri hita karana*, including being attached to the village's ancestral spirits. Disobedience to the *tri hita karana* will bring bad things or even disaster to the whole village.

In the past, the land of Bali belonged to the kingdom as *tanah adat* (customary land). Since the independence of Indonesia, those lands were not converted into state land, but to the *desa adat* (customary village). Even today, the residents who occupy the *tanah adat* are not asked to pay taxes, but they are obliged to contribute an amount of money for all ceremonies in the temples (*kahyangan tiga*), as well as for maintaining the temples. All costs must be paid together. This obligation is without any exception.

A problem often emerges when a Christian has no willingness to obey those customs. Some cases and incidents occurred when a Balinese who converted to

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[177] See: Puspitha, *Pulau Bali sebagai tempat Pelayanan GKPB*, 2012, p. 17.
[178] Puspitha, *Pulau Bali sebagai tempat Pelayanan GKPB*, 2012, p. 17.

Christianity neglected their obligation in the customary village. Husada, the former Bishop of GKPB, insists that a suspicion towards Christianity is that the Christians tend to escape from their customary obligation.[179] In my opinion, the Christian's view towards custom can be traced from the early missionaries' view toward custom. There is a historical legacy. The missionary leaders tended to judge Balinese culture as totally pagan. This attitude became a characteristic of their mission work. They encouraged Christian converts to separate themselves from Balinese culture and to establish a village in order to live and develop a certain Christian religious tradition that avoids any use of the symbols or practices of Balinese culture. The tense relationship between the Church and culture has resulted in a long historical journey of GKPB because in the context of Bali, culture and religious belief cannot be separated from one another. This caused religious tensions. The former Bishop I Wayan Mastra (1972-1984, 1984-1988, and 1992-2000) played an important role in promoting the enculturation of GKPB. In 1970, he wrote a doctoral dissertation on "*The Salvation of Non-Believers. A Missiological Critique to Hendrik Kraemer and the Need for a New Alternative*". He criticized the cultural strategy of the Protestant mission.[180] Sugden, in his study of the work of Mastra's approach to Balinese culture, comes to the conclusion: "Mastra argues that a positive approach is needed in order to show that Jesus is Lord of Bali. Mastra disagreed with Kraemer because Kraemer's theology allowed no place for Balinese religious culture in Christian belief, demeaned Balinese culture, and so was counterproductive to the growth of the church. Mastra claims that his own approach allows a place for culture and thus affirms Balinese Christian identity since it shows that Jesus is Lord of Balinese culture and not its destroyer. There is a need for further articulation of the Christian faith in terms that specifically address the Balinese world view."[181] It seems that Kraemer's approach to Balinese customs was practically rather open[182] but in terms of Balinese religious beliefs Kraemer was strongly confrontation.

4.3. The Ecclesiological Basis of GKPB
Until 1951, GKPB managed its organizational matters in accordance with Basic Regulation 1948 that was adopted by the first Synod. The first Church Order was

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[179] Interview with Rev. I Made Sudira Husada, on 21 January 2015 in GKPB Debes 10 Denpasar - Bali.
[180] See: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 736-738.
[181] Chris Sugden, *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus*, 1997, p. 147.
[182] See the previous pages; Kraemer suggested some practical suggestions toward local customs.

adopted at the Synod Assembly in 1952. Church Order 1952, which was completed in 1964, was amended two times, resulting in CO 2006 and CO 2014.[183]

From a confessional perspective, GKPB can be seen as a Reformed or Calvinist church. It is characterized by holding the Reformation motto; *sola fide, sola gratia,* and *sola scriptura*.[184] GKPB recognizes the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed. Synod 2004 decided to draft a basic understanding of faith of GKPB as the ecclesiastical basis of GKPB. In 2006, the official book, *The Basic Understanding of Faith of GKPB,* was published. It is stipulated in the introduction of the book that the document will not replace the Apostle's Creed, but explain the appropriate understanding of GKPB about God, the providence of God, salvation, human beings, and about the Church.[185]

The text of The Basic Understanding of Faith of GKPB reads as follows:[186]

We, the members of GKPB, confess that the foundation of our confession is the Apostle's Creed. The Apostle's Creed is binding and unites us with all Christians worldwide. However, we are also living together among other believers on the island of Bali. Therefore, we need to have an appropriate understanding of each part of the essence of the Christian faith.

We believe in,
God, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, full of love, who reveals Himself through Jesus Christ to redeem His creatures, who has bestowed the Holy Spirit on everyone who believes in Jesus Christ and leads them to live in righteousness.

We believe that
the universe, heaven and earth as well as all things in it, visible or invisible, is a creation of God and belongs to God. All creatures are truly good, but all that is created by God may not be devoted and worshipped. The whole creation is established by God in the harmony of mutual life, in accordance with His providential grace upon His creation. God does not want His creation to

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[183] *Cf.* I Nengah Ripa, *GKPB dan Pelayanannya (1950 – 2010)* in: Tim Penulis Sejarah GKPB, *Dinamika GKPB Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah*, (*GKPB and its Ministry (1950 – 2010)* in: GKPB's History Team, *The Dynamic of GKPB in the Historical Journey*), Sinode GKPB, Jakarta, 2012, pp. 306-307. Church Order 1952 was amended in 2002 and the result was adopted in 2006.
[184] F. Ukur and F.L Cooley, *Jerih dan Juang, Laporan Nasional Survei Menyeluruh Gereja di Indonesia*, (Struggle and Strive, National Report of the Comprehensive Survey of Churches in Indonesia) Balitbang PGI, Jakarta, 1979, p. 121.
[185] *Cf.* Ripa, *GKPB dan Pelayanannya (1950 – 2010)*, 2012, p. 301.
[186] Ripa, *GKPB dan Pelayanannya (1950 – 2010),* 2012, pp. 301-303.

fall into chaos and mutual destruction, although sin has brought the whole of creation into emptiness and makes it also groan and complain, waiting eagerly for the time of redemption. God has granted authority to human beings to be involved in the stewardship and mastery of His whole creation.

We believe that
God created human being according to His image. As the image of God, man is the only creature who is able to love in accordance with the will of God. God grants authority to human beings to steward all creation.

We believe that
God loves His whole creation unconditionally although man has sinned and rebelled against God. God took the initiative to reconcile man to Himself through Jesus Christ who bore the burdens of the fruit of sin by suffering till the death on the cross in Golgotha. Those who believe and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour will have their sins forgiven by God. They will be set free from death and receive eternal life.

We believe that
the Kingdom of God is the reign of God performed by Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God that is revealed by the Bible.
Those who are empowered by the Holy Spirit to respond to the Kingdom of God have a personal relationship with God so that they improve their lives in accordance with the guidance of the Kingdom of God.

We believe that
the Church is a fellowship of believers who are called and sanctified by God through Jesus Christ, and authorized by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. The Church acknowledges that the state is an instrument in the Lord's hand for the welfare of the people and maintaining the creation of God.

We believe that
the Bible is the Word of God which constitutes the sum total of the witnesses of the believers led by the Holy Spirit upon the whole work of God.

In the evaluation of its ministry, GKPB reckons that its Basic Understanding of Faith, the Church Order, and other regulations have not yet been enough to deal with the concrete problems that emerge within congregations. Therefore, the 41st

Synod 2008 decided to establish the Committee of Act of GKPB. The committee was charged to examine some theological issues and cases that were not regulated in the Church Order or any other regulation of GKPB. It is a legal text as an addition to the Church Order. Synod 2010 adopted the Act of GKPB that consists of the following issues: re-Baptism, the involvement of Children in Holy Communion, adoption, betrothal (pastoral preparation for marriage) and the cancellation of betrothal, interfaith marriage, divorce, the admission of polygamous new members, funeral, cremation, and heritage.[187]

Ripa states that the 40th Synod 2006 was pivotal because of some significant decisions, i.e;[188]

1. The Basic Understanding of Faith of GKPB.
2. The Vision and Mission of GKPB, which would be applied at the 41st Synod 2008.
3. Ratifying the Church Order of GKPB as result of an amendment in 2002.
4. Ratifying the Liturgy of GKPB.

The 41st Synod 2008 adopted the Vision and Mission of GKPB 2008 – 2028. The Vision was summarized as 'The Earth Rejoices in Peace'. The Mission was defined as:

a. Being a blessing and light to the nations.
b. Building civilization by the spirit of a loving God, others, and the environment.

The Vision and Mission 2008 – 2028 document is split into 5 periods. The first period 2008 – 2012 is called a period of "Building Friendship with Society", with the theme to "Become a Missionary Church".

The Act of GKPB was adopted in the period 2008-2012. In my opinion, the acceptance of interfaith marriage in GKPB was obviously supported by the implementation of the spirit of inclusivity as reflected by the Vision and Mission of GKPB. This position has a clear foundation.

4.4. GKPB's Official View on Interfaith Marriage

The regulation of marriage of GKPB can be found in Church Order 2014 Chapter V Articles 29 – 37.[189] GKPB officially accepts interfaith marriage as stipulated in the Church Order, Chapter V Article 36 point 1:

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[187] *Akta Gereja GKPB* (*The Act of GKPB*), Kantor Sinode GKPB, Bali, 2010.
[188] Ripa, *GKPB dan Pelayanannya (1950 – 2010)*, 2012, pp. 376, 379.
[189] *Tata Gereja GKPB*, (*The Church Order of GKPB*) Kantor Sinode GKPB, Bali, 2014, pp. 5-7.

GKPB can give a blessing to a marriage in which one of the spouses is a non-Christian, based on a written application of those concerned.

Subsequently, Act of GKPB Chapter VI gives references and the basic understanding of the acceptance of interfaith marriage.[190] The Act regarding interfaith marriage reads as follows:

Issue

1.1   The term mixed marriage in this issue means the marriage of a couple who have different religions (beliefs), whereby each of them consents to live in his/her own religion (belief).

Theological Understanding

2.1   The theological understanding for the acceptance of interfaith marriage is based on 1 Corinthians 7:12-14, "If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy."

2.2   Guided by the verses of the Bible above, GKPB gives a blessing to the marriage in which one of the spouses is non-Christian.

The Principles of Solution

3.1   The Decision of GKPB to give a blessing for interfaith marriage should be understood in this way:

3.1.1   God calls the interfaith couple to take their responsibilities seriously for implementing their marriage, living in accordance with the will of God.

3.1.2   The interfaith marriage can be a witness for the non-Christian spouse because in the service of matrimony, the Word of God will be administered, and God will be glorified.

3.1.3   The Christian spouse must make his/her marriage holy.

The Guidance of Implementation

4.1.   The confirmation and blessing of an interfaith marriage can be conducted only if there is a letter of application from the non-Christian spouse

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[190] *Akta Gereja GKPB* (*The Act of GKPB*), *ibid.,* pp. 16-18.

4.1. stating that he/she has no objection to follow the Christian wedding ceremony.

4.2. For the Civil Registration requirement, the non-Christian spouse submits an official agreement (having a seal affixed) that he/she consciously will follow Christianity.

4.3. The interfaith marriage in which one of the spouses belongs to the Catholic Church can be conducted by using a particular Liturgy as agreed on by the couple and both families.

From the Act of GKPB, it is obvious that GKPB accepts interfaith marriage. GKBP refers to the Biblical text 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 as the Biblical argument for the acceptance of interfaith marriage. Unfortunately, GKPB does not give an interpretation of the text: how this text is understood or why this text was chosen. How about the other texts that also speak about interfaith marriage, both in the New Testament and the Old Testament? Although there is no interpretation of the text, in my opinion GKPB conceives that the text explicitly gives room for the interfaith couple to get married. In order to have an appropriate theological argument, in my opinion, the Act of GKBP needs to be complemented by a Biblical interpretation and pastoral guidelines that are related to interfaith marriage. Otherwise, the same text can be used as a Biblical argument to reject interfaith marriage.

Referring to the Basic Understanding of Faith and the Vision and Mission of GKPB, GKPB seriously takes into account its pluralistic context in its way of doing theology. GKPB includes interfaith discourse in contextual theology. Although GKPB, as a minority group amidst a Hindu majority, has had difficulties and even experiences of oppression,[191] GKPB has never been discouraged from building harmony within society. I think the Vision and Mission of GKPB for the next 20 years is not simply a part of an organizational tool, but a standard of conduct for those who serve the ministry of GKPB. A little question can be raised: is that because GKPB has a small number of members and this stance toward interfaith marriage is simply a strategic method of evangelization for increasing the number of members? As stated in the Vision and Mission of GKPB, GKPB is far from that motivation. The Vision and Mission of GKPB for the next 20 years expresses the longing of GKPB to be an inclusive Church, profitable for humanity, society, and the nation. From a historical perspective, we have seen

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[191] *Cf.* Ripa, *GKPB dan Pelayanannya (1950 – 2010)*, 2012, pp. 322-330. Ripa notices that historically the relationship between GKPB and Hindu society was up and down and even entered a critical tension, especially concerning funerals and the place for Christians in the customary obligation.

when the Bible was brought to the island by missionaries with judgments towards local beliefs and customs. Christianization always becomes a strong issue in the relationship with other believers. As Sarpi says, "The missionary who came to Bali and converted the Balinese Hindu has created a shock within Balinese society. The evangelization has had big implications for the social order of society in Bali. Initially, Christianity was brought into the island with a hostile attitude against Balinese traditional society."[192] Such historical burdens must be dealt with by GKPB. However, the documents express that GKPB is truly aware of this issue.

The openness towards interfaith marriage by GKPB still faces obstacles regarding legal regulations. Marriage Law no 1 1974 is still understood by local authorities, in this regard the Bali Civil Registry, as concerning a marriage with someone of the same religion. This can be seen in the Principles of Solution point 4.2 that for the purpose of Civil Registration the non-Christian spouse must submit an agreement letter to follow Christianity. Unfortunately, GKPB takes this policy. I think this is an administrative emergency solution. In my opinion, it has a nuance of tactic because surely GKPB does not require that a non-Christian spouse must be baptized or must become a Christian before his/her marriage is blessed.[193] I appreciate this very courageous policy. Waspada affirms, "The choice to marry someone who has a different faith is not the best alternative, but at least the Church may not be unwilling to offer the opportunity. Hopefully, this is understandable, so to some extent, this openness does not mean that the Church opens itself for promoting interfaith marriage. We live in a plural society. Interfaith marriage is a reality that cannot be denied and avoided. The Church may not preclude the opportunity. GKPB must respect human rights. Love is universal, beyond religious boundaries. It cannot be precluded by religion."[194]

In practice, the problem often emerges in interfaith marriage (Hinduism and Christian) when the groom is Hindu. According to Balinese custom, those who marry a non-Hindu person will be considered as having decided to leave Hinduism. Leaving Hinduism is understood as leaving the customs and the entire relationship with the ancestors. However, that can still be solved by the path of peace when the ceremony of *pamitan* (farewell or last words) is held. Husada had such

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[192] Ni Kadek Surpi, *Upaya Penginjilan dan Faktor Penyebab Konversi Agama dari Hindu ke Kristen Protestan di Kabupaten Badung Bali* (The Effort of Evangelization and the Causative Factor of the Religious Conversion from Hindu to Christian Protestant in Badung District Bali)*,* Harmoni - Jurnal Multikultural dan Multireligius (Harmoni – Multicultural and Multi religious Journal), Vol.12, 2013, p. 84.

[193] See point 1.1; each spouse will consent with his/her own religion (belief).

[194] Interview with Bishop I Ketut Waspada (2012 – 2016) on 20 January 2015 in the headquarters of GKPB - Bali.

an experience when he left Hinduism and also experienced his daughter's inter-faith marriage. He explains that in practice there is particular difficulty if the groom is Hindu. Essentially, in the Balinese Hindu tradition of marriage, *pamitan* is a farewell ceremony of the bride to her family and the ancestors because she will join the groom's family and ancestors. If the groom is non-Hindu, then she will be under pressure. If it is the other way around, the Hindu groom will not face any problem because the non-Hindu bride is considered as a party who will join the Hindu family, as well as its customs and ancestors. However, the diffi-culty can still be solved by the path of peace if it is continued by the farewell ceremony. Husada says, "My son, my second child, married a Hindu girl. His wife remains Hindu. They love each other. They conducted their wedding cere-mony in both the Hindu and Christian way. In Hindu Bali, for women, marriage is a moment to leave her family and her ancestors to join her husband's family and ancestors. If the bride is Christian, that will be rather difficult. If the farewell ceremony has been held then the bride officially belongs to the groom's family. She belongs to us and she is no more bound to early custom and ancestors. Alt-hough she has not become a Christian yet, it does not matter."[195]

Furthermore, he explains that honesty is required in this regard. If it is not honest to the extended family then it will affect the villagers. 'Being honest' means: if one wants to leave the ancestral customs or Hinduism, it should be con-veyed to the custom leaders of the village and also to the ancestors by holding a certain ceremony. If this is done well, there will be no complaining. In this regard, Balinese appreciate a personal choice.

4.5. Conclusions

First, GKPB officially accepts interfaith marriage as an ecclesial ministry. The stance of GKPB towards interfaith marriage is based on the Biblical text 1 Corin-thians 7:12–14. Although the Act of GKPB does not present an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:12-14, the text is conceived as an inclusive point of view regard-ing the context of a plural society. The spirit of inclusiveness is also obviously implemented into the vision and mission of GKPB for the next 20 years. The Act of GKPB needs to be completed with an adequate Biblical interpretation of inter-faith marriage. Second, GKPB lives in the context of Balinese culture with a very strong emphasis to implement the order of customs. Although the relationship of GKPB with the majority does not prevent all problems, a cultural approach can even be applied to favor the acceptance of interfaith marriage. From a historical

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[195] Interview with the former Bishop (2008-2012) Rev. I Made Sudira Husada, on 21 January 2015 in GKPB Debes 10 Denpasar Bali.

perspective, we have discovered that there has been a period in the history when the Bible was spread to the people of the island in a confrontational way towards local beliefs and customs. GKPB must deal with such a historical burden to overcome prejudice. I do believe that GKPB is truly aware of this challenge. The acceptance of interfaith marriage in GKPB as expressed by the church documents is the embodiment of its sense of a plural context.

5. GKI – Gereja Kristen Indonesia (The Christian Church of Indonesia) and Interfaith Marriage

Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI), Christian Church of Indonesia, is a rather new church among the Protestant Churches in the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. It is a result of the unification of three churches: *GKI Jawa Barat* (GKI West Java), *GKI Jawa Tengah* (GKI Central Java), and *GKI Jawa Timur* (GKI East Java). They have mostly developed from a Chinese community in Java. In this chapter, first of all I will present the historical background of GKI and afterwards I will elaborate the stance of GKI toward interfaith marriage. In order to understand the argumentation of its stance, we need to know the ecclesiastical basis of GKI related to the issue of interfaith marriage.

5.1. The Historical Background of GKI

GKI is a result of the unification of three churches. However, each has a long history. I will present the historical background of each in order to know their origins.

Christian Church of Indonesia - Central Java

The beginning of the Chinese Christian community in Central Java is related to Gan Kwee. He was a missionary of GIUZ (*Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending*) who came from Amoy (South Tiongkok) and worked in Batavia (1851 – 1873). He baptized Khouw Tek San in Purbalingga (1866). Khouw Tek San followed the missionary spirit of Kwee to proclaim the Gospel in Purbalingga, and as a result, there were about 68 Chinese Christians in Purbalingga in 1867. Unfortunately, there is no further information about the progress of this group.[196]

The Chinese Christian community in Southern Central Java was also a result of the mission work of ZGKN. The missionary work of GKN in Southern Central Java resulted in two churches: *first*, *Pasamoewan Gereformeerd Djawi Tengah* (The Reformed Church of Central Java) in 1931 for the Javanese, and *second*, the Chinese Christian congregation, *Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee* (THKTKH).

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[196] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* 2008, pp. 682-683.

The first Chinese Christian congregations in Central Java were THKTKH in Sangkrah-Surakarta (1933), THKTKH in Bayeman-Magelang (1933), and THKTKH in Ngupasan-Yogyakarta (1934). In 1936 these Chinese Christian congregations united under the name THKTKH *Classes Djogja*. Later on, the *Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk Kwitang* in Kwitang - Batavia joined THKTKH *Classes Djogja*.

Meanwhile, the missionary work of the Salatiga Mission in Northern Central Java resulted in Chinese Christian groups in Northern Central Java: Semarang, Ambarawa, and Salatiga. Private missionary work in Semarang was also done by Liem Sio Kie. In 1932, there was a missionary community in Semarang and in 1935, the THKTKH Semarang was established. After that, it was followed by THKTKH Salatiga and THKTKH Blora. In 1936, these three THKTKH united under a similar name, THKTKH-*Khu Hwee Djawa Tengah Utara* (THKTKH Northern Central Java).[197]

During the Japanese occupation, THKTKH Southern and Northern Central Java came into a difficult situation. However, the establishment of THKTKH congregations went on, namely in Purbalingga (1942), Temanggung (1943), and Tegal (1944).

In the time of the struggle for independence of the Republic of Indonesia, the first Synod of two THKTKH churches, namely THKTKH *Classes Djogja* and Northern THKTKH Central Java, was held in Magelang, 6 – 8 August 1945. The Synod decided to unite THKTKH *Classes Djogja* and THKTKH Northern Central Java to become *THKTKH-Thay Hwee Djawa Tengah.* In 1956, they changed their name to become the *Sinode Geredja-geredja Kristen Indonesia Djawa Tengah* (the Christian Churches of Indonesia – Central Java Synod).[198]

Christian Church of Indonesia - West Java
In 1863, missionaries of NZV (*Nederlandsche Zending Vereniging*) arrived in West Java.[199] Mission work was established in a number of towns: Bandung, Cianjur, Bogor, Indramayu, and Cirebon. However, this mission found a difficult field. The inhabitants of West Java, and especially the Sundanese, are in general loyal and devoted Muslims who mostly fulfill the basic obligations of Islam.[200]

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[197] *Cf.* S.H. Widyapranawa, *Benih Yang Tumbuh, Suatu Survey Mengenai Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah* (Eng.: The Growing Seed, A Survey of the Christian Church of Indonesia – Central Java)*,* BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1973, pp. 26-31.
[198] *Cf.* Widyapranawa, *Benih Yang Tumbuh,* 1973*,* pp. 31-33.
[199] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008*,* p. 651.
[200] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* 2008*,* p. 653.

On 13 December 1858, Ang Boen Swi was baptized in Indramayu. He was the first Chinese Christian in West Java. In 1880, the NZV mission baptized about 220 people, half of them were Chinese. Because of the tension with the Muslim society (they felt oppressed by the Muslim community) a number of indigenous Christian settlements came into being, namely in Cideres (1882), Pangharepan (1887), Palalangon (1902), and Haurgeulis-Rehoboth (1912).[201]

In 1932, the Missionary Conference of West Java asked Hendrik Kraemer for his opinion about the situation on the mission field. Kraemer recommended setting the congregations in West Java on their own feet. This advice was accepted, and on 14 November 1934, the *Gereja Keristen Boemipoetera di Tanah Pasoendan* (the Indigenous Christian Church in Sundaland) was instituted.[202]

Meanwhile, some Chinese Christian communities in West Java had close contact with the Methodist mission, which worked in Batavia and Bogor from 1905 until 1928, as well as with the Christian Church in China. They wanted to imitate events in China, where in 1927 the Church of Christ in China had been formed. Unfortunately, some other Chinese Christian communities did not want to do so. This contrast more or less coincided with different backgrounds between the *peranakan* Chinese, those who had been born in Indonesia (often from mixed marriages) and mostly Malay speaking, and the *singkeh* Chinese, born in China and mostly Hokkien speaking. At the end, on 24 March 1940, the *peranakan* Chinese Christian communities founded *Tiong Hoa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee - Koe Hwee Djawa Barat* (the Chinese Christian Church Djawa Barat), which in 1958 took the name *GKI Jawa Barat - Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat* (the Christian Church of Indonesia - West Java).[203]

Christian Church of Indonesia – East Java
Christianity in East Java was started by a lay evangelist in Surabaya, the German watchmaker Johannes Emde (1774-1859). Another lay evangelist was Coenraad Laurens Coolen, who established a Christian village in Ngoro (1827). An indigenous evangelist in East Java was Paulus Tosari from Madura. Like Sadrach, Tosari had studied in *pesantrens*. During his visit to Coolen in Ngoro, he had become a follower of Coolen. He was baptized in Emde's community in Surabaya in September 1844. Subsequently, Tosari established a Christian village in Mojowarno (six kilometers from Ngoro). From 1851, *Nederlands Zendeling Genootschap* - NZG's missionary J.E. Jellesma served this new congregation in

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[201] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 653-654.
[202] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 657.
[203] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 657-658.

Mojowarno.[204] The process of founding autonomous congregations was started in Mojowarno (1926), and later on resulted in the *Grejo Kristen Jawi Wetan –* GKJW (the Christian Church of East Java), on 10-11 December 1931. Hendrik Kraemer (who worked in Indonesia between 1922 and 1935) was the great promoter of this move towards ecclesiastical autonomy.

There is not enough historical data regarding the Chinese Christian community in East Java. Until the end of the nineteenth century, there were Chinese Christian communities only in West Java and Central Java. In the first decades of the twentieth century, they spread to East Java after the ethnic clashes in Kudus (Northern Java) in 1910. The American Methodist Mission started its work in the first decade of the twentieth century in Surabaya (East Java) until 1927 when they left for North Sumatera. Their work was continued by NZG. Commonly said, a central figure of Chinese Christians in East Java was Oei Soei Tiong who was baptized in 1898 together with some other Chinese in Malang.[205] Apparently, missionary work of the NZG in East Java resulted in two churches: first, GKJW in 1931 for the Javanese community, and then *Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Timur –* GKI Jawa Timur (the Christian Church of Indonesia, East Java) for the Chinese Christian community, on 22 February 1934.

The process of unification of three GKI churches (GKI West Java, GKI Central Java, and GKI East Java) began on 17 March 1962, when they established the *Sinode Am GKI*. After three decades, the unification came into being when the union synod was declared on 29 August 1988. Since then, the membership of GKI in the Communion of Churches in Indonesia was recognized as representing one church. The former Synods now are called Regional Synods.[206]

5.2. The Ecclesiological Basis of GKI

The Synod Assembly XVI of GKI 2009 adopted a new church order as a result of the amendment of the church order 2003. In the Preamble, paragraph 10 says;[207]

> *(10) In the togetherness that is animated by Christian faith and the spirit of the oneness and the unity of the nation, GKI opens itself for cooperation and dialogue with other churches, the government, and other communities in*

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[204] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, pp. 640, 713-715.
[205] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* 2008, p. 911.
[206] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* 2008, p. 916.
[207] *Tata Gereja dan Tata Laksana Gereja Kristen Indonesia (*The Church Order and the Order of Implementation of the Christian Church of Indonesia), Badan Pekerja Majelis Sinode GKI, 2009, p. 15.

society, in order to strive for welfare, justice, peace, and integrity of creation for all people of Indonesia.

The explanation of paragraph 10 says:

GKI is called to strive for welfare, namely shalom, which contains justice, peace, and integrity of creation. In order to manifest it, GKI must open itself for cooperation and dialogue with all parties and groups who have good intentions.

Striving for justice, peace, and integrity of creation is a missionary threefold that is mutually attached and inseparable. The peace which is strived for by GKI is a peace in justice/equity, not merely in the status quo. The justice which is strived for by GKI is a justice in peace/reconciliation, instead of polarizing one group with another and one class with another. And finally, the justice and peace are not only for human beings, but peace and justice also stand in the context of the integrity of all God's creation.

The draft of Confession GKI 2010 was adopted in the Synod Assembly 2014. The preamble of the Confession 2014 states:

As a manifestation of the union of Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Timur (Christian Church of Indonesia, East Java), Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Tengah (Christian Church of Indonesia, Central Java), and Gereja Kristen Indonesia Jawa Barat (Christian Church of Indonesia, West Java), GKI is present in the world in the Indonesian context. GKI, in the intimate fellowship of love and the salvation work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, lives and works in the midst of wealth and diversity of the historical inheritance, cultural inheritance, and the natural environment, both in its own body and in the midst of the Indonesian society. Therefore, since it was established on 26 August 1988 GKI has had a longing to have a formal and contextual confession of GKI as its affirmation of faith before God and the world, particularly in Indonesia.

The confession of GKI is an expression of the confession of faith that is appreciated and recognized by GKI. In practice, GKI recognizes the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. These three confessions are the confessions of faith derived from the Bible, recognized and owned by the churches ecumenically. Thus, on the one hand, by recognizing these three confessions, GKI binds itself to the ecumenical fellowship in the universal church. On the other hand, by formulating its own

confession, GKI binds itself with the intimate fellowship of love, both in its own body GKI and in the context where GKI lives, in the diverse cultures, religions, and the environment of Indonesia.

The 3rd section of the Confession 2014, particularly point 3, is formulated as follows:

We believe in Jesus Christ,

Who redeems the sinners and calls them to repent, who indiscriminately loves all people, upholds justice and peace with non-violence, blesses every person, family, and children, empowers the poor, heals the sick, sets free those who are oppressed, and being a best friend for those who are exiled.

Further, the Synod also accepted the explanation of the Confession. It states:

(1) Forgives the sinners and calls them to repent
   a. The Gospel shows that Jesus forgives the sinners and calls them to repent.
   b. Sin is understood as the broken relation in multidimensionality between God and all creations. It covers the broken personal relation, namely the relation between a person and God; the broken social relation, namely the inter-personal relation; and the broken structural relation, namely the relation of the worldly structure of institutions.
   c. Repentance is the way to turn back to the intimate relation of love with God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.
   Biblical references: Mat. 9:1-8; 18:1-5; Mark 1:15; 2:1-12; Luc. 7:36-50; John 8:2-11; Col. 3:13; 1John 1:9; 2:12

(2) Indiscriminately loves all people
   a. The Gospel shows that Jesus indiscriminately loves all people.
   b. Discrimination of others, both personally and communally, is a deed of injustice that is caused by a negative prejudice against persons or groups based on the differences of age, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, education, economy, and social status.
   c. Indiscriminate love does not mean compromising with wickedness.
   Biblical references; Mat. 5:38-48; 9:9-13; 22:35; Mark 12:31; Luc. 6:27-36; John 13:34-35; 15:17; Rm. 13:9; James 2:8; 1Peter 2:17; 4:8; 1John 2:7-17; 3:11-18

(3) Upholds justice and peace with non-violence:
   a. The Gospel describes that Jesus upholds justice and peace with non-violence for all people.
   b. Upholding justice and peace includes multi-dimensional efforts in order to realize equality, harmony, and welfare for all people.
   c. Upholding justice and peace must be done by non-violent, i.e. emancipatory, and creative ways.
   Biblical references; Det. 1:17; Mat. 5:3-12; 1Peter 3:8-12.

5.3. The GKI's Official View of Interfaith Marriage

The understanding of marriage of GKI can be found in the Church Order GKI chapter X article 27 – 31. Ecclesial marriage is described as follows:

1. Ecclesial marriage is the affirmation and blessing of a marriage of a man and a woman in order to be a couple of husband and wife, for a whole life and to consent to be monogamous, and inseparable, based on love and faithfulness before God and His congregation.
2. Ecclesial marriage is conducted in a worship service in the church for the affirmation and blessing of the marriage.

Meanwhile, stipulations regarding interfaith marriage can be found in the Church Order Article 31 point 1.b, under the title 'Ecclesial marriage with particular requirements', which reads:

The Church Board may conduct the ecclesial marriage with particular requirements and in particular cases, among others:
b. One of the spouses is a baptized member and the other is not a member.[208]

Furthermore, the procedure of interfaith marriage is regulated in Article 31, point 2b, which reads:

If one of spouse is not a member, she/he must make a declaration/statement by using the particular form as formulated in the Administrative Tools, that:
1) She/he agrees that the marriage will be affirmed and blessed in Christianity.
2. She/he will not hamper or preclude wife/husband to remain a Christian and to worship in accordance with Christian faith.
3) She/he will not hamper or preclude their children to be baptized and educated in Christian faith.

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[208] 'Not member' does not mean she/he belongs to another church, but she/he is non-Christian.

The Church Order of GKI chapter X Article 27 – 31 is obviously implementing the ecclesiastical basis of GKI as stipulated in the preamble of the church order and the GKI Confession of 2014. GKI takes into serious account the proclamation of peace, justice, and integrity of creation in the religiously plural Indonesian context. By referring to its calling, GKI accepts interfaith marriage as an ecclesial marriage. It means that GKI accepts interfaith marriage as a legal Christian marriage in accordance with its theology of marriage. Unfortunately, there is no appropriate theological argumentation regarding the acceptance of interfaith marriage. Therefore, it is necessary to complement that document with a theological understanding of marriage and particularly a theological understanding of interfaith marriage from the perspective of GKI.

From a historical and a sociological perspective, GKI is present in the context of pluralism. Even more, GKI represents a double minority: Christian and Chinese. Such a double minority remains a challenge for GKI until today. The ecclesial documents of GKI obviously show that GKI is fully aware of its position among other believers and ethnic groups. GKI is aware that they do not live in a homogeneous society. This awareness is reflected in its openness toward the reality of intercommunication with people of a different faith. In a pluralistic society, it cannot be denied that the church members will have encounters with persons of different faiths. This reality is responded to by GKI with inclusive and open attitudes in order to build peace and justice in the society. In the context of GKI, although the double minority reality still represents a struggle for being an Indonesian Church, the acceptance of interfaith marriage as ecclesial marriage is evidence that GKI embraces diversity.

From a pastoral perspective, in order to protect the Christian spouse and children, GKI Church Order Article 31 point 2b regulates the requirements for the non-Christian spouse. However, it is necessary to have a pastoral guideline as a standard of conduct on how to manage the interfaith family as a consequence of the acceptance of the interfaith marriage. Otherwise, these requirements will be misunderstood by the non-Christian party as a hidden Christianization.

5.4. Conclusions

1. GKI accepts interfaith marriage as a Christian marriage. It is stipulated in the GKI Church Order chapter X Article 27 – 31. From a historical and sociological perspective, GKI is present in the context of pluralism with its double minority. This has sharpened their journey of theological discourse to seriously take into account the religiously plural context into their ecclesiastical basis.

2. The ecclesial documents of GKI reflect a stance toward this undeniable reality. However, these documents need to be complemented with a theological understanding of the acceptance of interfaith marriage. GKI is challenged to formulate pastoral guidelines to manage the interfaith family as a consequence of the acceptance of interfaith marriage.

6.   GKJ – Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa (The Christian Churches of Java) and Interfaith Marriage

Java is not the biggest island in Indonesia; however, from a social-political and economic perspective, Java has been the center of change in Indonesian history. The Christian Church of Java developed in such context. In this chapter, I will present the stance of GKJ towards interfaith marriage. In order to have a complete description of GKJ, I will begin with the historical background of GKJ, present the ecclesiastical basis of GKJ and, at the end, the stance of GKJ toward interfaith marriage.

6.1. The Historical Background of GKJ

Speaking about the history of GKJ, first of all, I have to mention the private evangelistic efforts in the nineteenth century in Central Java by three women: Elisabeth Jacoba Le Jolle-de Wildt (1824 – 1906), Johanna Christina van Oostrom-Philips (1815 – 1877), and her sister in-law, Christina Petronella Philips-Stevens (1825 – 1876).

Mrs. Le Jolle proclaimed the Gospel to the Javanese laborers of the coffee plantation in Simo (near Salatiga) that was administered by her husband. She had contact with J.E. Jellesma, a *Nederlands Zending Genootschap* (NZG) missionary in Mojowarno (East Java) who supported her evangelistic work by sending a Javanese assistant, Petrus Sedoyo, to Nyemoh (near Salatiga). In 1855, around 50 people in Nyemoh were baptized by W. Hoezoo, an NZG missionary who worked in Semarang. They were the first Christian community as a result of Le Jolle's mission work. After Le Jolle returned to the Netherlands in 1857, her mission work was continued by R. de Boer (*Ermelo Mission*) in 1868. Later the *Neukirchener Mission* in Germany joined this work by sending a number of missionaries who succeeded in founding several communities in the residencies of Semarang and Rembang. Afterwards, the *Salatiga Zending* (Salatiga Mission) was established in Utrecht (1889) in order to support the evangelistic efforts of Mrs.

Le Jolle that focused on the northern part of Central Java.[209] The first congregation as a fruit of the *Salatiga Zending* was Purwodadi (1926) and it was followed by several other congregations. In 1937, the *Parepatan Agung* (Great Meeting) was convened, which is defined as the beginning of the independent Synod of GKJTU - *Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Utara* (The Christian Church of North Central Java).[210]

In southern Central Java, Mrs. Van Oostrom-Philips (in Banyumas) and Mrs. Philips–Stevens (in Purworejo) were private evangelists who had a great role in the mission work in this area. Mrs. Van Oostrom owned a *batik* industry in Banyumas and she was fluent in Javanese. Mrs. Van Oostrom's activities were mainly confined to the servants and workers, while Mrs. Philips focused on the surrounding village where her husband became a supervisor of an indigo plantation. Since Mrs. Van Oostrom had contact with Hoezoo, the first group of nine persons was baptized by Hoezoo in Semarang in 1858. Mrs. Philips (Dutch-Javanese) was inspired by the Javanese Christians who had been baptized by the missionary Hoezoo in Semarang. She shared the Gospel among the Javanese. For that, she cooperated with her sister in law, Mrs. van Oostrom, in translating some literature into Javanese. Several of her female workers and others became Christians because Mrs. Philips held services with them in her home in Purworejo. Each time there were Javanese who wanted to be baptized, she brought them into contact with the minister of the Protestant church in Purworejo (*Indische Kerk*).[211] Mrs. Philips-Stevens and Mrs. Van Oostrom were also in contact with the NGZV (*Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendings Vereeniging*). The first missionary of the NGZV was A. Vermeer, who started his work in 1862, in Tegal, on the Northwest coast of Central Java.[212] Through contact with Mrs. Philips, NGZV found its new mission field in the southern district of Central Java, namely Begelen,

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[209] See: Th. Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads, Indigenous Churches, European Missionaries, Islamic Association and Socio-Religious Change in Java 1812-1936,* Leiderdorp, 1991, p. 18. Another version regarding the *Salatiga Zending* is given by Soekotjo. He says that *Salatiga Zending* was actually a part of the *Neukirchener Mission's* work. In 1884, the *Neukirchener Mission* sent a number of missionaries to northern Central Java. In the missionaries' assembly of June 1888, they established an association, the *Bond van Zendelingen van de Salatiga Zending op Java,* later well known as *Salatiga Zending*. The *Salatiga Zending* was then more popular than the *Neukirchener Mission*. See: Sigit Heru Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa*, *Di Bawah Bayang-bayang Zending 1858 – 1948*, *Jilid 1*, (The History of Christian Churches of Java, Under the Shadow of the Missionary 1858 – 1948, Vol.1), TPK & Lembaga Studi dan Pengembangan Sinode GKJ, Salatiga, 2009, pp. 110-111.
[210] *Cf.* Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia,* 2008, pp. 671-672.
[211] *Cf.* Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 1991*,* pp. 18-19.
[212] *Cf.* H. Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, Zoetermeer, 2001, pp. 3-13. See also: Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008*,* pp. 674-675.

Banyumas, and Kedu. Talking about the mission work of Mrs. Philips-Stevens, I have to mention the evangelistic work that was done by the famous indigenous apostle of Java, Kyai Sadrach.

Sadrach's given name was Radin. He was born in 1835 in Jepara, Central Java. As a young boy, Radin was a devoted Muslim *santri* (a pupil of *Pesantren*; a Quran School). When he was around seventeen years old, he went to East Java and studied in various *pesantrens* there. After that, he went to Semarang and lived in *Kauman* (an area where Muslim communities are concentrated), and there he added the Arabic name Abas to his name. An important event occurred when he returned to Semarang, and met Pak Kurmen. Pak Kurmen had been his former teacher of Javanese religion (*ngelmu,* literally means knowledge). However, Pak Kurmen was no longer a teacher of *ngelmu,* but a Christian because he had been defeated by Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung in a public debate. Before becoming a Christian, Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung was also a *guru ngelmu* (*ngelmu* teacher), and he settled down with a large group of followers in Bondo, the northern part of Central Java. Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung had contact with J.E. Jellesma who baptized him. From his background as *guru ngelmu*, Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung affirmed his conviction that Javanese Christians should remain Javanese – *Kristen Jawa, bukan Kristen londo* (Javanese Christian, not Dutch Christian).[213]

Through Pak Kurmen, Radin Abas was introduced to Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung. These were decisive encounters for Radin Abas. He was very much impressed by Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung and learned from him how to become a Christian without leaving the Javanese *adat* (custom). In this period, he also made contact with Hoezoo in Semarang. In 1866, he went to F.L. Anting[214] in Batavia and he was baptized there in 1867 by Rev. Ader, the minister of the *Indische Kerk*. Radin Abas took a Christian name 'Sadrach' at his baptism. For a time after his baptism, Sadrach became a disciple of Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung.[215]

Subsequently, Sadrach moved near Mrs. Philips-Stevens and helped her to expand her home community together with two helpers: Abisasi Reksadiwangsa and Tarub. Motivated by 'self-confidence and a spirit of independence', he left Mrs. Philips and founded his own community in Karangjasa, Bagelen in 1870.

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[213] *Cf.* Sutarman S. Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community and Its Contextual Roots, A Nineteenth Century Javanese Expression of Christianity,* Amsterdam, 1988, p. 58.
[214] F.L Anting was a judge in Semarang and later in Batavia. He was also a private evangelist who wanted to spread the gospel to Javanese people and others.
[215] *Cf.* Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community,* 1988, p. 58.

Because of his conviction regarding the way to teach the Gospel, Sadrach faced opposition from NGZV's missionaries and even had tragic experiences. He was condemned as syncretistic by NGZV and was perceived to be harmful for Christianity. However, Jacob Wilhelm (NGZV's missionary in Purworedjo 1883-1892) viewed that Sadrach was not guilty.[216] In the early 1880's the number of Sadrach's followers was around 3,000, spread in the area of the southern part of Java: Kutoardjo, Purworedjo, Temon, Djogjakarta, and surroundings. On 10 April 1883, Sadrach's community took *Golongane Wong Kristen Kang Mardika* (the Group of Independent Christians) as its official name.

In 1894, NGZV handed over its work in Central Java to the *Zending Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (ZGKN).[217] In April 1899, Sadrach was ordained as the apostle of Java by G.J. Hannibals from *Hersteld Apostolische Zending Gemeente* (Restored Apostolic Mission Church). The ordination of Sadrach by the *Apostolische Gemeente* meant that cooperation with ZGKN was severed.[218] After the death of Sadrach (1924), Yotham Martareja (Sadarch's adopted son) succeeded his father. Through a leadership crisis, Sadrach's community was faced with ministerial difficulties and disunity. In 1933 Yotham decided to join ZGKN, but this was opposed by some congregations. Finally, 40 congregations of Sadrach's 86 congregations decided to remain with the *Apostolische Gemeente*, 31 congregations joined with ZGKN, and 15 congregations that were neutral decided to establish *Pasamoewan Kristen Djawi Netral* (Christian Church of Java - Neutral).[219]

The mission work of GKN was well organized by local "sending" churches and regional networks of congregations. According to the principles that were agreed upon by the Synod of Middelburg of 1896 and the Mission Order of 1902 (*de zendingsorde van 1902*), they did not send lower educated and non-ordained missionaries but ordained ministers, alongside teachers and medical doctors.[220] One of the principles of the missionary work, as raised in the Synod of Middelburg 1896, was that missionary work must be done by Church. It should not be done by private persons or groups/organizations. The aim of the mission was

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[216] See: Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community,* 1988, pp. 75-80.

[217] See: Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* 2001, p. 28.

[218] See: Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community,* 1988, pp. 85-96.

[219] *Cf.* Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa*, *Di Bawah Bayang-bayang Zending 1858 – 1948*, 2009, pp. 251-258.

[220] See: Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* 2001, pp. 30-67. See also: Chr.G.F. de Jong, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1931 – 1975*, Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, Zoetermeer, 1997, p. 4. Based on the Synod of Middelburg (1896) and the Missionary Order (Arnhem 1902), the missionary work was conducted through 3 instruments: (1). *de hoofddienst* (the main service) with a verbal method, (2) *de schooldienst* (the school service), and (3) *de medische dienst* (the medical service).

formulated more clearly with the concept of *plantatio ecclesiarum* (establishing local churches). With this clarification of the aim of the mission, the work-plan could be directed towards efforts in the nurturing and maturing of congregations. Learning from the experience with Sadrach, the mission did not subordinate indigenous congregations, but provided coordination and direction so that they could achieve full maturity as autonomous churches. Cooperation with the indigenous people as mission helpers was also formulated.[221]

As an implementation of the principles of missionary work, ZGKN divided the mission field in southern Central Java into seven regions:[222]

a. The Purworejo residency region consisted of Purworejo, Kutoarjo, Jenar, Cangkrep, and Karang Kemuning–Pakualaman. This area was under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in the city of Utrecht, in cooperation with churches in the province of Gelderland.

b. The Kebumen region was under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in Heeg and the province of Friesland.

c. The *Kasultanan* Yogyakarta and *Pakualaman* region were under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in Amsterdam, supported by churches in the province of Noord–Holland.

d. The Banyumas residency region consisted of Purbalingga, Banyumas, Purwokerto, and Ajibarang and was under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in Rotterdam, in cooperation with churches in southern Zuid Holland.

e. The Wonosobo region was under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in Delft and churches in northern Zuid Holland.

f. The Kedu residency region (headquartered in Magelang) was under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in Middelburg, supported by churches in the provinces of Zeeland, Noord-Brabant, and Limburg.

g. The Surakarta region was under the auspices of the missionary work of churches in Amsterdam, supported by churches in Noord–Holland.

Afterwards, ZGKN mission work had a progressive result, compared with the work of the NGZV. On 1 May 1900, self-governance within Javanese Churches began when the congregations in Purworejo and Temon were institutionalized,[223]

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[221] *Cf.* De Jong, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1931 – 1975,* 1997, pp. 4 -5. See also: Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroad*, 1991, pp. 77-79.

[222] Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa*, *Di Bawah Bayang-bayang Zending 1858 – 1948,* 2009, p. 279. See also: Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* 2001, p. 32-35.

[223] Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* 2001, p. 325.

then followed by the local churches in Glonggong - Kebumen (1911), Gondokusuman - Yogyakarta (1913), Margoyudan - Solo (1916), and Probolinggo (1919).[224]

The first Javanese minister, Ponidi Sopater, was ordained on 29 April 1926 in Yogyakarta. Two years later, he was followed by four others: Raden S. Wirjatenaja (1928 in Tlepok, Kutoarjo), Zacheus H. Soesena (1928 in Kebumen), Idris Nakam Siswawarsana (1928 in Magelang), and Soedarmadi (1929 in Purbalingga).[225] On 17-18 February 1931, the first Synod meeting gathered in Kebumen. It began under the name "*Pasamoewan Gereformeerd Djawi Tengah*" (The *Gereformeerd* Church of Central Java).[226] The 2nd Synod 1932 adopted the first church order, the "*Pranatan Pasamoewan Kristen ing Tanah Djawi sisih Kidoel*" (Regulations of the Christian Church in Southern Central Java). The Heidelberg Catechism was accepted as the appropriate guideline to interpret the Bible. Five classis delegations attended the first Synod 1931, namely: Solo, Yogyakarta, Purworejo, Kebumen, and Purbalingga. There were 5 Javanese ministers and 6 Dutch ministers who were present at the first Synod. Since the first synod in 1931, the Synod assembly was always moderated by Javanese ministers; Rev. Soeseno from Kebumen in 1931, Rev. Wirjotenojo from Tlepok in 1932, Rev. Siswawarsana from Magelang in 1934, and Rev. Ponidi Sopater from Yogyakarta in 1935.[227] In this regard, GKN's mission succeeded to implement their missionary work-plan to provide an opportunity for indigenous leaders. Nevertheless, to some extent, the dependency of the indigenous ministers on the *Zendingspredikant* (I: *pendeta utusan*, Eng: missionary minister) firmly existed.

On the one hand, the progressive achievement of GKN's mission cannot be separated from the role of the *Zendingspredikanten*. They did their missionary work vigorously and diligently. On the other hand, the spirit of *plantatio ecclesiarum* that they brought also produced another effect. They provided facilities for indigenous congregations in order to achieve autonomous churches; in fact, they succeeded in planting *Gereformeerd* churches in Java. At that moment, *Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Selatan - GKJTS* (Christian Churches in Southern Central Java) were *Gereformeerd* churches of the Netherlands in Java. GKJTS had no Javanese cultural identity except language and costume. Even the

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[224] Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* 2001*,* p. 835.

[225] Reenders, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1859-1931,* 2001*,* p. 889.

[226] The term '*Gereformeerd*' was understood as a characteristic of the identity of the new Church of Central Java. This term was not used anymore in the 2nd Synod 1932. But in the 7th Synod 1940, the term '*Gereformeerd*' was used again. *Cf.* Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa*, *Di Bawah Bayang-bayang Zending 1858 – 1948,* 2009, pp. 385-395.

[227] Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders,* 1997, p. 56.

Javanese ministers did not appreciate their own Javanese culture, as Sadrach had. Examples of Javanese culture include *tembang* (Javanese songs), *wayang* (Javanese puppets), *gamelan* (Javanese traditional music), Javanese traditional fiestas, etc. They took a confrontational position towards Javanese culture.

In 1935, the congregation of Purworejo asked the Synod to consider its own missionary work in Lampung (South Sumatera), to serve the Javanese community who lived there since 1905 when the colonial government opened the possibility for Javanese farmers to migrate to southern Sumatera. In 1937 GKJTS Purworejo sent its minister Josafat Darmohatmodjo to Lampung. The Synod Assembly 1938 in Kebumen officially recognized the mission work for Javanese migrants in Lampung. From this moment on, the growing congregation in Lampung remained part of GKJ until 1987 when they became an autonomous Synod named *Gereja Kristen Sumatera Bagian Selatan* (The Christian Church in Southern Sumatera).

On 6 July 1949, the Christian Church in Southern Central Java and the Christian Church in Northern Central Java (GKJTU - *Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Utara*) were united under the name "*Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah - GKJT*" (the Christian Churches in Central Java), well-known as "*Sinode Kesatuan*" (the Uniting Synod). Since GKJTU had no contacts with the (German) *Neukirchener Mission* anymore because of war, it had been weakened in finance and personnel, and then had to hand over part of its work to the GKJTS. The church order of the Christian Church in Southern Central Java was approved as the church order of the Uniting Synod. Unfortunately, in 1953 some congregations of the Christian Church in Northern Central Java were no longer satisfied with the Uniting Synod and then withdrew from it. One of the reasons of the breach in 1953 was that the leaders of the GKJTU had felt "forced" into it and the proposed church order 1951 was too *Gereformeerd* in their eyes.[228] Apart from that, this period was known as the period of the implementation of the *Regionaal Akkoord* (Eindhoven 1948) and the *Kwitang Akkoord* (1949), in which GKJTS and GKN-NHK had signed a joint cooperation to further missionary work in Java. Apparently, although the leader of GKJTU was also a delegate of *GKJT – Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah* at the *Kwitang Akkoord* meeting,[229] GKJTU was

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[228] Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, p. 687. Soekotjo explores the details of this division, identifying at least 8 reasons. Two of them are (1) the strong feeling of attachment to their own *Zending,* including tradition between them and (2) the problems with the property. See: Sigit Heru Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa, Merajut Usaha Kemandirian 1950-1985,* Jilid.2, (History of the Christian Churches of Java, Knitting the Self-Reliance Effort 1950-1985, Vol.2), TPK & Lembaga Study dan Pengembangan GKJ, Salatiga, 2010, pp. 35-66.

[229] The *Kwitang Akkoord* meeting was held on 7 – 9 July 1949, a day after the Uniting Synod was established. Two of the five delegations from the Uniting Synod came from GKJTU.

not happy with this cooperation because later on GKJTU objected to this cooperation. In 1956, the Uniting Synod failed because the Synod of the Christian Church in Northern Central Java broke away from it.[230] Meanwhile, GKJTS decided to maintain church order of the Uniting Synod, namely Church Order 1932. Since 1956, GKJTS has used the official name *Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa – GKJ* (the Christian Churches of Java).

The Japanese occupation was a crisis situation for GKJTS because contact with GKN was severed. It was followed by the difficult era between 1945 and 1950 when there was the struggle between the young Indonesian Republic and the Dutch who refused to recognize its independence. It was partly fought out in Central Java, where Yogyakarta was the heartland of the Republican troops, the north coast predominantly being in the hands of the Dutch occupier. In the spirit of independence, GKJTS and churches in Java (Christian Church in East Java, Christian Church in Northern Central Java – *Parepatan Agung*, Christian Church of Java in the surroundings of *Muria*, *Tiong Hwa Kie Tok Kauw Hwee* (Central Java), and Pasundan Christian Church (in West Java) established *Dewan Permoesjawaratan Geredja-geredja Protestan* (The Consultative Council of Protestant Churches in Indonesia) in Yogyakarta 1949.

As I mentioned above, the relation between GKJ and GKN through missionary work since 1949 was set up in the *Regionaal Akkoord* and the *Algemeen Akkoord* as a result of the Synod Eindhoven 1948. The *Regionaal Akkoord* was a regional agreement between a classis of GKN in the Netherlands that would send a missionary and a classis of GKJTS that would receive. The *Algemeen Akkoord* was a general agreement between the Synod of GKN and the Synod of GKJTS that covered health services, education, theological education, social-economy affairs, etc.[231] By these agreements, GKN had a great role for doing missionary work in GKJTS by providing many facilities for educational services, health services, literature services, diaconal programs, and also building churches. These agreements went on until June 1955 when Rev. Basuki Probowinoto submitted his evaluation of the implementation of that cooperation, the "*Nota Probowinoto*". From the perspective of GKJ, as Probowinoto evaluated, the financial support which had flown abundantly from the partner in the Netherlands had produced a negative effect within GKJ's community. GKJ had gradually lost its spirit of self-reliance. The ample financial support from the *zending* had produced a character of *kamizendingen* (Javanese word, literally meaning '*zending*

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[230] De Jong, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1931 – 1975,* 1997, p. 36.
[231] *Cf.* Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa, Merajut Usaha Kemandirian 1950 – 1985,* 2010, p. 6.

oriented';[232] characterizing the acute dependence on the *zending*). As an effect of the *Nota Probowinoto*, the spirit of self-reliance of GKJ grew, while the GKN gradually reduced (*afbouw*) its financial support (*Nota Kopeng* - June 1969).[233] Finally, from 1970 support from GKN decreased until the *Regionaal Akkoord* was ended on 1 January 1973.[234]

In 2016, the Christian Churches of Java consisted of 321 congregations and 544 *pepanthan* (communities before institutionalization), spread in 32 Classis (6 provinces in Java), with a total of 212,651 members, and served by 334 ordained ministers.[235]

6.2. The Ecclesiological Basis of GKJ

As mentioned above, the first GKJ church order was adopted in the 2nd Synod Assembly 1932 and was named *Pranatan Pasamuwan Kristen in Tanah Djawi Tengah Sisih Kidul* (The Regulation of the Christian Church in Southern Central Java), written in the Javanese language. It was divided into four parts:

a. *Bab Kaloenggoehan Sadjroning Pasamoewan Kristen* (Concerning Offices in the Christian Church)

b. *Bab Parepatane Pasamuwan* (Concerning Church Meetings)

c. *Bab Tumindake Ajahane Gusti Sadjroning Pasamuwan* (Concerning Implementation of the Lord's Work in the Church)

d. *Bab Pamardi Tjara Kristen* (Concerning Discipline in the Christian Way)

If we thoroughly read all of these parts, we can easily observe that in terms of its structure, *Pranatan Pasamuwan Kristen ing Tanah Djawi Tengah Sisih Kidul* followed the Church Order of Dordt.[236] The 1932 Church Order (CO) was amended several times, resulting in Church Order 1964, the CO 1984, the CO 1998, the CO 2005, and the latest, CO 2015.

The 26th Synod of GKJ 2015 adopted Church Order 2015. The Preamble of the church order contains the ecclesiological foundation of GKJ, as follows:[237]

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[232] This Javanese term was used for the first time by Ds. S. Wirjotenaja in 1936. See: Sukotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa, Merajut Usaha Kemandirian 1950 – 1985,* 2010, p. 355.

[233] *Cf.* De Jong, *De Gereformeerde Zending in Midden Java 1931 – 1975,* 1997, pp. 54-55.

[234] *Cf.* Soekotjo, *Sejarah Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa, Merajut Usaha Kemandirian 1950 – 1985,* 2010, pp. 176-190.

[235] http://gkj.or.id/index.php?pilih=halaman&aksi=arsip&id=13.

[236] Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders*, 1997, p. 58.

[237] *Tata Gereja dan Tata Laksana Gereja Kristen Jawa* (The Church Order and the Order of Implementation of the Christian Church of Java), Sinode Gereja-gereja Kristen Jawa, Salatiga, 2015, p. 5.

The Church is the people of God that believe in Jesus Christ and respond to the vocation of God to proclaim His work of salvation upon humankind and the world (1Peter 2:9). In the consciousness of the people of God, the Church is a community that gathers for worship and sharing of life in the world as the salt and the light of the world (Mat. 5:13-14). Further, as revealed by the Bible, the community becomes a living fellowship which persistently grows and develops throughout the world.

GKJ is called to respond to the vocation of God from diverse perspectives, in accordance with the context of each. Therefore, the Church can be understood as follows: the Church as the learner community or the community of the disciples of Christ, the Church as the family of God, the Church as the community of believers, the Church as the procession of pilgrims in solidarity and togetherness with other believers, and the Church as the reformer community striving for the values of life which are willed by God.

The Christian Churches of Java is a part of the broadness of God's work of salvation upon all of His creation in which GKJ is animated by the values of Javanese culture and the legacy of theological traditions in accordance with their own context, as far as it is not in contradiction with the will of God. GKJ understands itself as believers living together centered in Jesus Christ, as well as the response to God's work of salvation in which the Holy Spirit works. GKJ recognizes and embraces diversity in the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia.

GKJ recognizes the broadness of God's work of salvation through its unique and authentic way within history. Diversity is perceived and accepted as a reasonable thing that positively gives advantages of mutual enrichment and mutual strengthening in togetherness. In its awareness that the Church is part of the broadness of God's work of salvation, together with other Churches and all communities, GKJ actively participates in efforts to embody justice, peace and welfare for the sake of the restoration of human dignity as the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27, Col. 1:15-20).

6.3. GKJ's Official View on Interfaith Marriage

Interfaith marriage regulations in GKJ could be found in Article 49, point (1) 7 of Church Order 2005, which reads: [238]

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[238] *Tata Gereja dan Tata Laksana 2005* (The Church Order 2005), Sinode GKJ, 2005, pp. 217-218.

The procedure of ecclesial marriage

7. For a spouse who is not a member of the Church, additional require-
ments apply; he or she must state in writing that:

    a. He/she agrees that the marriage will be conducted only in GKJ.

    b. He/she promises to allow wife/husband to remain a Christian
       and to worship in GKJ.

    c. He/she agrees that the family will be educated in Christianity.

    d. He/she promises to allow the children to attend the Church if
       they want to do so.

However, Church order 2015 gives a new structure. It contains the principles whereas its implementations are regulated in the Guidelines. The principle of marriage is described in Article 8, point 5e;[239]

    e. Matrimony is an ecclesial event of the affirmation and blessing
       of a marriage of a man and a woman in order to be a couple
       (husband and wife) for a whole life, in the consent before God
       and the congregation to be a monogamous couple based on love
       and faithfulness.

      i. Holy Matrimony is conducted in a particular worship under the re-
        sponsibility of the Church Board by using a formula that is enacted
        by the Synod.

      ii. The technical procedure of ecclesial marriage is enacted by the
        Church Board referring to the regulations and Guidelines which are
        regulated by the Synod.

Subsequently, interfaith marriage is stipulated in the Guidelines of GKJ 2015 chapter II point E.3.g, which reads as follows:[240]

    g. For prospective bridal couples, one of whom is not a church member,
       additional provisions apply, the person concerned must be willing to
       state in writing that:

      i. He/she agrees that the marriage will be affirmed and blessed in GKJ.

      ii. He/she gives freedom to the husband/wife to stay and worship at
        GKJ.

      iii. He/she gives freedom for their children when they want to attend
        GKJ service.

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[239] *Tata Gereja dan Tata Laksana 2015,*p. 53.

[240] *Tata Gereja dan Tata Laksana Gereja Kristen Jawa 2015*, *Pedoman-pedoman Gereja Kristen Jawa 2015* (The Church Order of GKJ 2015, The Guidelines of GKJ 2015), Sinode GKJ, Salatiga, 2018, p. 129.

Basically, this guideline on interfaith marriage is the same as Article 49 Church order 2005. However, point c was removed.

The Church Order of GKJ states that GKJ accepts interfaith marriage as an ecclesial marriage. It shows that GKJ seriously takes the context of religious plurality into account in its church polity. As its ecclesiastical basis, the Preamble of Church Order 2015 reads, '*the Church as the procession of pilgrims in solidarity and togetherness with other believers'.* This is implemented in the acceptance of interfaith marriage. GKJ recognizes that other believers are brothers and sisters as pilgrims on earth for a better life. The acceptance of interfaith marriage reflects that 'the other' is not seen as a competitor but as a partner for the sake of human dignity. However, the acceptance of interfaith marriage is not completed by a theological argumentation from the perspective of GKJ.

Article 49 points c – d of the 2005 Church Order ensure that a Christian spouse and children must be able to worship Christ. In this regard, a pastoral guideline is necessary in order to have a standard of conduct for the pastoral care of the interfaith family. However, Article 49 point c and d can be suspected by the non-Christian party as an effort of Christianization. The issue of Christianization is always a crucial issue concerning interfaith marriage. Mujiburrahman recognizes that Muslims highlight suspect interreligious marriages, even oppose them, because they are perceived as an effort of Christianization. He says: "The strong Muslim opposition to inter-religious marriage, for instance, has been partly influenced by the suspicion of Christianization. Some Muslim scholars have recently tried to promote a new interpretation of Islamic sources to justify absolute permission for inter-religious marriage. The opposition from other Islamic leaders to this idea, however, has been very strong, and it is difficult to expect that the idea will be widely accepted among Islamic groups."[241]

Fortunately, the Guidelines of church order 2015 have discarded article 49 point c of the Church order 2005. It is a challenge for GKJ to prove, through the pastoral guidelines on the interfaith family, that the acceptance of interfaith marriage is not an effort of Christianization. The acceptance of interfaith marriage is part of its vocation to build welfare, peace, and justice in this pluralistic society.

6.4. Conclusions

1. GKJ accepts interfaith marriage as a Christian marriage as stipulated in church order 2005 and the church order 2015. The acceptance of interfaith marriage is an implementation of its vocation that, indeed, "*GKJ actively participates*

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[241] *Cf.* Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 2006, p. 205.

in efforts to embody justice, peace, and welfare for the sake of the restoration of human dignity as the image of God", as the Preamble of the church order states. Nevertheless, a theological argumentation for accepting interfaith marriage has not been presented yet.

2. GKJ Church Order 2005 Article 49 point d is an embodiment of its responsibility to ensure with certainty that a Christian couple and children may be able to worship Christ. However, the issue of Christianization is crucial concerning interfaith marriage. The acceptance of interfaith marriage has to be completed with pastoral guidelines on how to manage the interfaith family as a consequence of the acceptance of interfaith marriage. Otherwise, the acceptance of interfaith marriage will be suspected by the non-Christian party as an effort of Christianization.

7.   Analytical Remarks

In 2015, the results were published of research conducted by the PGI (*Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* - Communion of Churches in Indonesia) in 2013.[242] The research aimed to know how the PGI member synods responded to and played their prophetic roles regarding the significant changes that had taken place in Indonesia over the 15 years of the reformation era (beginning in May 1998).[243] One of the research points is about the relationship and cooperation with other religions and beliefs. The results of the research show that the theological discourse of interfaith dialogue and pluralism has been very strong among churches in Indonesia. Data show that interfaith activities and cooperation have been carried out by local churches (91%), local councils/presbyteries (64%), and synods (86%). This indicates something good. The report from researchers on the acceptance of other religions and beliefs is very positive, "There is a tendency to be positive and open in developing cooperation with people from other religions and beliefs. It means that other religions/beliefs are no longer seen as enemies, competitors or even threats, but are viewed as partners in facing communal problems".[244] Some of the churches in PGI have even carried out further programs. Take, for example, *GKI* (Christian Churches of Indonesia) which requires their candidate pastors to live in a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) for a period of time; *GKJW* (East Java Christian Church) offers a program of Islam-Christian Intensive Study (*Studi Intensif Kristen-Islam* (SIKI); *GKJ* (Christian Churches of

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[242] Trisno Sutanto (Coord), *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene, Laporan Penelitian Survei Oikumene PGI 2013* (Portrait and Challenge of the Ecumenical Movement, Ecumenical Research Report PGI 2013), BPK GM-PGI, Jakarta, 2015.

[243] Sutanto, *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene*, 2015, p. 12.

[244] Sutanto, *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene,* 2015, pp. 60-61.

Java) offers a program of Islam Intensive Study *(Studi Intensif Islam* (SITI); and further routine dialogue forums are held with Muslim communities and other religions for economic development programs (Batak Karo Protestant Churches and Kalimantan Evangelical Churches) and advocacy regarding mining cases (GKS, the Christian Church of Sumba).[245]

Concerning the issue of interfaith marriage, research shows that 75% of PGI churches state that they accept interfaith marriage.[246] However, there is doubt over the findings because the respondents understand "interfaith marriage" as the marriage between a Christian and a Catholic (in Indonesia, Catholicism is officially recognized as a different religion from Christian, i.e. Protestant), not between Christians and Muslims or other religions. The PGI research team confirmed the weakness in their questionnaire concerning this issue. However, the PGI research team included an important note that most of the respondents answered that they were willing to accept and bless the marriage only if the bride or groom were Catholic, not a non-Christian such as a Muslim.[247]

The data obviously indicate that in terms of interfaith discourse, interfaith cooperation, and interfaith dialogue, 91% of the churches in Indonesia are reportedly open, but in terms of the most concrete form of living together in religious diversity, interfaith marriage, there is still doubt. It shows that there is a gap between theological discourse on the one hand and the concrete attitude of Indonesian churches in the plural context on the other hand. Of the 88 PGI synods, based on my observation in 2020, only three synods have included the acceptance of interfaith marriage in their Church Orders. In 2018, 4 synods explicitly included an interfaith marriage service in the Church Order. However, in 2019, 1 synod removed their interfaith marriage service from the Church Order. It could have occurred because of the existing understanding of ecclesial marriage as a service that can only be conducted for same-faith couples. It means that interfaith couples have no right to holy matrimony. In practice, churches cannot accept the idea that their brother/sister who belongs to another religion can receive blessings upon their marriage, even though the churches claim to be very open in the theological discourse on interfaith dialogue. It is also commonly understood by the Protestant churches in Indonesia that churches do not legalize marriage. The authority to legalize marriage is in the hand of the state. Churches do not legalize marriage; they bless the marriage and confirm the marriage before the church attendees in

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[245] Sutanto, *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene,* 2015, p. 62.
[246] Sutanto, *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene*, 2015, p. 63.
[247] Sutanto, *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene*, 2015, p. 63.

the name of God.[248] Therefore, the objection to blessing an interfaith marriage is closely related to the question of whether or not the blessings can be given to those who belong to different religions. Here we see the understanding gap and doubt of churches in Indonesia over the acceptance of people from different religions in the church.

Based on the description of the stance of churches to interfaith marriage that I have explained in the previous section, we will now see if the PGI research findings are similarly reflected. From the previous explanation, we have concluded that three churches – GKJ, GKI, and GKPB – have accepted and conducted interfaith marriage blessings, whereas two other – HKBP and GPIB – reject interfaith marriage blessing services. The question is what factors influence each stance? To answer that, I will present some analytical remarks on the struggles of churches toward interfaith marriage.

7.1. GKJ - Christian Churches of Java

From its historical background, GKJ has inherited a not-so-open attitude towards other cultures and religions. GKJ values culture in a less than positive way. As we saw earlier, Sadrach, who is acknowledged as a Javanese Apostle, brilliantly used the Javanese cultural approach in communicating the Gospel. However, in its history, GKJ chose to embrace the attitude of the missionaries who were rather confrontational against Javanese culture. With the accusation of syncretism, the effort to value local culture is rejected. Already at the beginning of its history, GKJ followed an assumed superiority of Western Christianity and actively sought to forget its own culture.

From another perspective, Sumartana highlights that even though Sadrach was very successful in giving room to Javanese traditional wisdom (*Kejawen*) in encountering Christianity, he failed in building a relationship with Islam. The Christian – Islam tension was almost ignored by Sadrach.[249] Sumartana's view can be further discussed, as has been done by Adi. Adi states that Islam in Java in the 19th century cannot be compared to the current expression of Islam militants.[250] According to Adi, Islam in Java was influenced by Sufism (a spiritual, mystical life path) in that era and was a part of the Javanese context, and Sadrach was very

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[248] Weinata Sairin (ed.), *Pesan-pesan Kenabian Di Pusaran Zaman, Dokumen Terpilih PGI Seputar Reformasi dan Isu Sosial – Kemasyarakatan* (Prophetic Messages in the Whirl Era, Selected PGI Documents of the Reformation and Surrounding Social Issues)*, Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI), Jakarta, 2002, p. 27.

[249] Th. Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 1991, pp. 80-81, 86.

[250] Raden Bimo Adi, *Wedha Tama, A Framework for GKJ to Formulate Principal Teachings in the Context of Java,* VU Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2015, p. 190.

aware of it. What Sadrach did, according to Adi, was to accommodate various aspects, including Islam, so that Christianity could be easily accepted in Islamic society. Adi provides examples, such as Sadrach calling a church a mosque, referring to the leader of the congregation as an *imam*, and formulating a creed consistent with Islamic Shahada, "*lha illah lha illallah, Yesus Kristus ya Roh Allah.*"[251]

Adi argues that Sadrach never tried to look for followers through Christianization. What Sadrach did was to proclaim the Gospel through *Ngelmu Kejawen* (Javanese wisdom), proclaiming Jesus as a teacher, role model, and Just Ruler. If in the end people became Christian, that was because of their personal decisions based on the knowledge and awareness they received. Therefore, Adi suggests that GKJ has to follow Sadrach's way of proclaiming the Gospel so that the communication process with Islam will be more meaningful and constructive.[252]

In my opinion, Sumartana's analysis gives a valuable suggestion because, at the beginning of its development, GKJ did not pay enough attention to building a relationship with Islam, but rather built distance with Islam through the apologetic method. Converting people from other religions to Christianity was seen as a successful achievement. Other religions were approached not in order to build a generous relationship living in togetherness, but to convert people to Christianity. This approach was based on the belief that Christian teaching is superior and better than any other religion, not on the idea to build dialogue to accept each other and appreciate differences. Even if Sadrach did not Christianize, his approach to Islam was not one of equality and dialogue, but an approach to conquer Islam. This was the tradition of the *ngelmu* teachers in that era for *ngelmu* debates. The loser of the debate must give up and become a follower of the winner.

GKJ that was born and lives in Javanese culture is helped by the openness of Javanese culture. Javanese culture is a flexible culture in accommodating the incoming influence and religions of immigrants such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. Therefore, Javanese culture intersects with others and is quite complicated. In Javanese thought, unity and harmony are important elements in life. Relationships must be developed in peace and friendliness to achieve unity. About the concept of harmony, Mulder writes, "quiet and peaceful, like the ideal relationship of friendship, without quarrel and strife, friendly, and 'united in purpose while mutually helping each other'. Ideally, communal life

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[251] '*lha illah lha illallah, Yesus Kristus ya Roh Allah*' means 'there is no god but God, Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God.' This is similar to Islamic Shahada, "*lha illah lha illallah, Muhhamadur Rasulallah*" – There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God.' See: Adi, 2015, p. 110.

[252] Adi, *Wedha Tama*, 2015, p. 188.

should be informed by the spirit of 'rukun', implying the smoothing over differences, cooperation, mutual acceptance, and willingness to compromise".[253] With this spirit, in general, Javanese families are relatively open to the reality of interfaith marriage. Suhadi, in his research on identity transformations in relationships between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia during the post-reformation era, chose the city of Solo to conduct a case study. Solo has unique characteristics. It is located in Central Java and is also seen as the center of Javanese culture, in addition to the Royal Palace in Yogyakarta, due to the presence of one of the Islamic Mataram kingdoms, *Keraton Kasunanan.* Another unique characteristic of Solo is its religious diversity, including the *Pesantren Al-Mukmin* led by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, a radical Muslim group known to have a link with Al-Qaeda. In his conclusion, Suhadi cites the statement of his respondents that people of Solo are elastic and flexible. Even though there were times of tension among the different religions, Suhadi repeatedly states that many families consist of different religions. A father and a mother of different religions, brothers and sisters of different religions, in-laws of different religions, etc. Suhadi's findings point out that Javanese wisdom has an important role. Suhadi says, "In our study, for example, people speak about 'sameness of custom' between Muslims and Christians when they go together to the graves of the same ancestors. When Muslims spoke about Christianization, they said that 'Javanese Christians are not like that'. And when Christians referred to Islamic extremism, they said that 'Javanese Islam is different'. (….) In talking about interreligious relations our research finds that Javanese culture or 'sameness of custom' bridges the gap between Muslims and Christians as individuals and society."[254] The findings of Suhadi reemphasize the openness of Javanese culture that leads to the openness of Javanese families to religious diversity in the families.

With the experience of interacting with people of different religions and the relatively open cultural characteristic, GKJ is finally encouraged to open itself to the reality of interfaith marriage. This is a change in attitude because, in the beginning, GKJ viewed that difference was not good and that marriage must only be between same-faith couples. If the couple is of different religions, one of them must be Christianized. Therefore, it can be understood that before the Church Order 2005, GKJ specified that a couple could only receive marriage blessings if both were Christians and had been baptized. Before the Church Order 2005, a

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[253] Niels Mulder, *Mysticism in Java, Ideology in Indonesia,* the Pepin Press, Amsterdam, 1998, pp. 62-63.
[254] Suhadi, *I Come from Pancasila Family, A Discursive Study on Muslim-Christian Identity Transformation in Indonesian Post Reformation Era,* LIT Verlag, Zürich, 2014, pp. 214-215.

couple of different religions were registered in the Civil Registry Office, but it was not blessed by the church.

The change in GKJ is encouraged by the development of contextual theology by focusing attention on the local context, both cultural and religious. The positive and accommodative attitude of GKJ toward local cultures and other religions is explicitly stated in the *Pokok-pokok Ajaran GKJ* 2015 (The Principal Teachings of GKJ 2015) and the Church Order 2015. Javanese culture and the Islamic context have allowed GKJ to develop a good interaction in theology and in the concrete vocation of living together. They also characterize the theological discourse of GKJ. The works of GKJ scholars such as Th. Sumartana[255], Sutarman Partonadi[256], Bambang Subandrio[257], Simon Rachmadi[258], Raden Bimo Adi[259], and many more, show an eagerness in GKJ for doing theology in the Javanese culture and the Islamic context. It is important to note that it is not merely about theological discourse, but it is also concretely manifested in the acceptance of living together with those of different religions. In my experience, the discussion among Christian Churches of Java in the Salatiga classis that started in 2000 on blessing interfaith marriages highlighted two important points: (1) The reality of pluralism is unavoidable in the Indonesian context. Interfaith marriage is a logical consequence of this realistic context. Rejecting interfaith marriage is unrealistic, (2) commonly, churches refuse interfaith marriage, but they never give a solution to those in the congregation who want to marry a non-Christian without leaving his/her faith. Not giving a solution means letting the church members take their own way, and that generally means taking a shortcut to non-Christian marriage thereby leaving his/her faith. This reality, direct interaction and experience in more intense cooperation between GKJ and other religions, although facing some problems, has led GKJ to open itself up to and fully accept interfaith marriage as an ecclesial marriage.

The stance of GKJ to accept interfaith marriage is not the endpoint. GKJ has fully accepted non-Christian couples in marital blessings, but GKJ still has to develop a liturgy for interfaith marriage where the theological understanding of

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[255] His dissertation is entitled "*Indigenous Churches, European Missionaries, Islamic Association and Socio-religious Change in Java 1812-1936*".

[256] His dissertation is entitled "*Sadrach's Community and Its Contextual Roots: A Nineteenth Century Javanese Expression of Christianity*".

[257] His dissertation is entitled "*Eikon And Ayat, Points of Encounter Between Indonesian Muslims and Christian Perspectives on Jesus*".

[258] His dissertation is entitled "*Reformed Spirituality in Java: The Reformed Tradition and The Struggle of the GKJ to Actualize its Reformed Spirituality in Indonesia*".

[259] His dissertation is entitled "*Wedha Tama, A Framework for GKJ to Formulate Principal Teachings in the Context of Java*".

interfaith marriage as an ecclesial marriage is formulated. One of the important factors of the service to bless an interfaith marriage is the willingness of the non-Christian partner to participate. The homework for GKJ is to develop a liturgy that gives room for the non-Christian spouse in the marriage blessing service, especially in the marital vows. The marriage vow is of course based on Christian marriage principles. However, a non-Christian spouse needs to be given room to express their vow according to their own belief. In developing this, it needs to be remembered that the marriage service involves an interfaith couple where the non-Christian spouse is also the subject of the marriage, not only the object. It will be more meaningful if the non-Christian spouse is given room to say the marriage vow in the expression of his/her belief. In this way, the vow is not only a formality, but is deeply rooted so that the person is encouraged to strive to fulfill their promise.

7.2. GKI – Christian Church of Indonesia

GKI is one of the churches in Indonesia that formally accept and conduct interfaith marriage blessings, as stated in Church Order X Articles 27 – 31. As described in the previous section, from historical and sociological perspectives, GKI, whose members are greatly ethnic Chinese (Tionghoa), was born and grows in Java Island as a church with a double minority position, as Christians and as Chinese descendants. As a double minority community, GKI is one of the groups vulnerable to the issues of ethnicity, religions, and races. The history of Indonesia is also filled with discrimination against Tionghoa. During the colonial era, Chinese and ethnic Chinese were administratively separated from indigenous people and hatred towards them resulted. During the Old Order after independence, around 1959 – 1960, Soekarno passed a discriminative order not to permit any small enterprises owned by foreigners in the villages. The rule was especially pointed to Tionghoa traders who were the majority of the foreigners running businesses at the village level. During the New Order era, discriminative treatment against Chinese descendants became worse. Only a few communities of Chinese descendants were close to Suharto and they benefitted from collusion and access to power for the sake of developing their businesses. This triggered a view in the society that Chinese descendants are opportunists. Hatred and social envy peaked. During the New Order Era, Suharto issued his policies regarding the Tionghoa/ethnic Chinese. (1) They had to have *Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia* (Certificate of Indonesian Citizenship) and their *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (identity cards) were stamped with a different sign. (2) They were not allowed to be civil officers or soldiers, (3) They were not allowed to own property

in villages and further, on behalf of the assimilation process, Suharto 'forced' (even though the word used at that time was 'suggested') them to change their names. This Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 240/1967 was enforced as *Kebijaksanaan Pokok Jang Menjangkut Warga Keturunan Asing* (Main Policies Regarding Citizens of Foreign Descent). In the decree, citizens of foreign descent were advised to change their names. Coercion towards Chinese-Indonesian assimilation in the Suharto era did not only regard names. In *Ketetapan MPR Sementara* (Decree of Temporary People's Consultative Assembly) No.32/1966, the government prohibited the use of Chinese script and Chinese language in mass media and in store/company names. Suharto also issued Presidential Instructions No. 14/1967 on *Agama Kepercayaan dan Adat Istiadat Cina* (Chinese Religious Belief and Customs). The main point of the Instructions was to review the Chinese culture rooted in China; it had to be monitored and its practices could not be openly expressed.[260] During that era, Tionghoa communities often had a bitter experience.

During the Reformation era, President Abdurrahman Wahid tried to provide justice for ethnic Chinese/Tionghoa. He revoked Presidential Instructions No. 14/1967 and the Decree of Temporary People's Consultative Assembly No. 32/1966, negating the assimilation policy full of prohibition and coercion and granted them freedom of expression. During the era of democratic freedom, Tionghoa figures with strong nationalism emerged. One of the phenomenal figures is Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, or 'Ahok', an ethnic Chinese man who successfully won the 2014 election for gubernatorial office of DKI Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Nevertheless, his presence does not imply that ethnic Chinese are free from racial tension. The tensions were even stronger when Ahok campaigned for Governor in the second term, leading to his loss.

The discussion above describes the struggles of ethnic Chinese Indonesians as a double minority group. Amid the tensions and discriminatory treatments, it is possible, for any ethnicity, to develop a tendency to isolate themselves and to be exclusive. Therefore, it is understandable that they are more comfortable with ethnic Chinese Christians marrying other ethnic Chinese Christians rather than those of other ethnicities or even those of different religions. Even though, in general, many ethnic Chinese Indonesians hold this attitude, it is not seen in the official stance of GKI in dealing with religious pluralism.

From the previous section about the historical aspect, we know that GKI was formed through the unification of three regional synods with different

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[260] https://www.tionghoa.info/diskriminasi-etnis-tionghoa-di-indonesia-pada-masa-orde-lama-dan-orde-baru. Accessed on 18 February 2020.

backgrounds because of the different missionary institutions in the three regions. The Regional Synods of GKI were all born in Java and are called to take part in what is faced by GKI in Indonesia. Being a double minority does not make them ignore the nation's problems nor does it make them exclusive and living in enclaves, but it calls them to be present for Indonesia. Interaction with the plural society in Java sharpens its sensitivity to the context faced. Nowadays, GKI reveals itself as a church not characterized by ethnic Chinese members. GKI is home to many ethnicities, even though most of the congregational members are Tionghoa.

The stance of GKI on interfaith marriage represents a change in responding to the context of religious pluralism. In the beginning, GKI Central Java Synod (which is the sibling of GKJ since both were born from the work of the *Gereformeerde Zending*) embraced the same stance as GKJ, allowing marriage blessings only for same faith couples. However, the reality as a minority created difficulties for GKI. Before 2003, there was an effort to help interfaith couples, informally and in local policy, by giving a dispensation so that the non-Christian spouse could be baptized soon or if they promised to follow the catechism, they could be baptized afterward. Nevertheless, it often happened that the non-Christian spouse, even though they were baptized, turned back to their religion and often influenced their spouse to follow. In addition, the non-Christian spouse often broke their promise to follow catechism and baptism after the marriage. Regarding the change in GKI about interfaith marriage, according to Susilaradeya[261], besides practical reasons, the change is also based on *first*, the strong identity of GKI as an inclusive church. GKI builds its character as a church that embraces all people, and it means to accept and accommodate differences, not to set people aside because of them. *Second,* inheriting the Reformation tradition, GKI does not recognize marriage as a sacrament, but as a pastoral service. It is confirmed in the GKI Liturgy that places marriage affirmations and blessings in the framework of Pastoral Liturgy. Susilaradeya says, "Considering that (interfaith) marriage is in pastoral service, the problems regarding the marriage need to be dealt with in a pastoral way. When a brother (brother in faith) wants to marry and asks the church to affirm and bless his marriage, even with someone of a different faith, who is the Church to reject his request? As the instrument of God and His peace, an interfaith marriage affirmation and blessing request is supposed to be served well." The struggle about the acceptance of interfaith marriage in GKI is based on the understanding of church marriage itself. Due to the fact

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[261] Official website of GKI Pondok Indah - Jakarta: https://gkipi.org/pernikahan-beda-agama-dalam-perspektif-gki/. Accessed on 12 December 2019.

that marriage is not a sacrament and does not influence salvation, the approach must be a pastoral, not dogmatic. If this is the background of thought, it is also important to learn from the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes marriage as a sacrament, but gives room to a marriage with those of non-Catholic, backgrounds such as Protestant or Islamic. This will be discussed further in the next chapter in order to discover the meaning of the sacrament of marriage from a different perspective.

The awareness of being a multi-ethnic church and the interaction with people of different faiths have shaped the theological discourse of GKI. The longing to be an inclusive church is the answer to the unrest in seeking its identity, not as a church with a particular ethnic background, but as a church that explicitly bears the name of Indonesia. It is obvious from its ecclesiological formula that GKI chooses the Indonesian context rather than the Tionghoa context for developing a theological framework.

The acceptance of interfaith marriage, however, is implemented differently in GKI. In my experience, some GKI churches do not serve the interfaith marriage blessing because of the different policies of the Civil Registry and the lack of knowledge on how to carry it out. Another factor to be considered is that, similar to GKJ, there remains an absence of pastoral guidelines to develop a liturgy for the interfaith marriage blessing, as well as guidelines for pastoral care for inter-faith families.

7.3. GKPB – Christian Protestant Church in Bali

The openness of GKPB toward interfaith marriage is unique since GKPB was born and lives as a minority, the second after Islam, on an island with Hinduism as the majority. Bali is well-known throughout the world as a unique island. Balinese society has internalized its tourism business. The strongest economic power in Bali is tourism. To keep Bali conducive and safe for tourists is the main factor to drive the local economy. The 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings had a devastating impact on the Balinese economy. The dramatic decrease in the number of visits made the tourism business slump and created much unemployment. The tragedy, however, increased Balinese awareness of their heavy dependence on tourism. Bali is tourism. It cannot be denied. GKPB has to accept that reality as a church in an international tourism area.

Does rapid tourism growth in Bali affect GKPB? The answer is yes. The openness regarding interfaith marriage in GKPB was initially related to tourism, namely the increasing requests from foreign tourists to marry in Bali. GKPB owns a hotel business in Seminyak and a chapel is built in the hotel complex to

serve mixed marriages. The sense of business is obvious here; therefore, there is a department in GKPB that deals with this service. This openness triggers the pros and cons in GKPB members. The statement on interfaith marriage in the Church Order 2014 is a sign of positive acceptance.

Business is not the only influential factor for openness. If GKPB blesses interfaith marriages, GKPB also has to struggle with its theological understanding. From the previous explanation, we know that there is flexibility, tolerance, and openness toward foreigners in Balinese culture. There is a solution for a person who wants to marry someone who is not Balinese Hindu. In my opinion, it is encouraging for GKPB to open itself and to be inclusive toward the reality of the Hindu majority.

We can see once again that the presence of the church amid a plural situation has given a particular experience for responding to the reality of pluralism. Inclusiveness not only exists in discourse, but also in the acceptance toward those who are different in a concrete way of life, marriage. Similar to GKJ and GKI, GKPB, which is struggling with the reality of pluralism, has fully opened itself to accept reality. Their existence in the plural context does not make them anti-difference or close themselves from those who are different. Moreover, Christian Balinese do not disassociate themselves from their Balinese culture. Christians in Bali, though minorities, do not want to pull themselves out from their Balinese culture.

From a historical perspective, we can see that GKPB has inherited different theological backgrounds from the missionaries contributing to their growth. The openness toward the Balinese religion and culture has been struggled with in such a way and will always be a challenge for GKPB in aligning different theological views among GKPB members. Even until now, for some parties, Bali is seen as a field for evangelism to raise the numbers of Christians. There are many denominations in Bali, GKPB is not the only Christian church there. The tourism business has opened the opportunity for newcomers, including some other church denominations, to come to Bali. Local cultural approaches that have been positively internalized may face similar views, but with the aim to Christianize the Balinese. Local culture is approached not to build acceptance and appreciation, but to be conquered. Surpi's research makes it even clearer. In her research, Surpi focused on studying 2 important points: (1) the evangelism process in Badung Regency, Bali, and (2) the factors that cause Balinese Hindus to convert to Protestantism. Surpi reports that evangelism with hostility toward local culture is present in the history of Balinese Christianity and is still taking place in Bali. One of the reasons for why a Balinese Hindu converts to Protestantism is marriage. According to Surpi, most Balinese women who marry Christian men will follow their husbands' religion because of the patriarchal system of the Balinese. However, some

Hindu men follow their future wives' religions. Those Hindu men who convert to Christianity are generally not the family's beneficiary. They do not have to be responsible for customary ceremonies, taking care of the *sanggah* (family temple), or the familial inheritance.[262] To avoid a negative perception, GKPB has to show that its acceptance of interfaith marriage is an inclusive attitude by respecting the difference of faith. GKPB should not use its acceptance of interfaith marriage as a hidden agenda for evangelism. This emphasis is important because GKPB has to face aggressive evangelism regarding the use of marriage to convert from Hinduism to Christianity. GKPB has to struggle to face the issue of Christianization through marriage by assuring the public that interfaith marriage is not a form of Christianization. This can be done if GKPB possesses positive pastoral care facilities for families of a different faith.

7.4. HKBP - Batak Christian Protestant Church

Similar to GKJ and GKPB, cultural factors play an important role in determining the stance of HKBP toward interfaith marriage. The difference is that in the case of GKJ and GKPB, cultural norms encourage openness toward the reality of pluralism and the acceptance of the reality of living together amidst differences, which is marriage, while in HKBP the culture encourages rejecting interfaith marriage. However, it is important to study whether or not Batak culture is an exclusive culture in HKBP.

Batak culture bears a form of marriage idealism, which is to marry other Batak people. This applies not only to Christian Bataknese, but also to Muslim Bataknese. However, it does not mean that there is no opportunity for Batak people to marry those who are not Batak. Batak people can marry those of non-Batak backgrounds by undergoing a customary process. It means that Batak culture is an open culture, not anti-difference, because there is a solution to mixed marriage. What is interesting is that the opportunity is only open to those of different ethnicities, but not to those of different religions. Therefore, the problem is not merely culture, which tends to be exclusive, but the attitude toward other religions.

From a historical perspective, we have seen that the strong bond between Christianity and Batak culture is the result of the mission strategy started by converting the local kings or authorities to Christianity. It was a very successful mission strategy in the history of HKBP because all systems and the culture of the society identified with Christianity. When the mission strategy was successful,

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[262] Surpi, *Upaya Penginjilan,* 2013, pp. 74-85.

the whole Batak land was identified as a Christian culture. Batak is Christian, and there is no room for interaction with non-Christians. HKBP exists inside a strong homogenous cultural Christianity. We find explicit statements appreciating other religions, but when it comes to a concrete area, such as the area of interfaith marriage, there seems to be no open door. Dialogue with other religions and people of different religions has taken place, but there is no concrete discussion about the deadlock regarding interfaith marriage. No one even has the courage to discuss or suggest interfaith marriage in the pastors' meeting (*Rapat Pendeta*).

In my opinion, this is a big challenge for HKBP to free themselves from the rooted assumption in the life of Batak Christians that Batak is Christian and that there is no place for interfaith marriage. In practice, the stance of HKBP towards other religions is positive. As the biggest Protestant church in Indonesia, the stance of HKBP towards other religions needs to be explored further in the form of concrete cooperation, not only in discourse and discussion. The more open attitude of HKBP (and its pastors) outside Batak territory indicates that the shackle of homogeneity exists. Once again, we see that concrete interaction with other communities in the plural world bears a positive value because the experience encourages openness. As I have explained before, it is also the struggle of HKBP because there is a gap between the pastors in Batak territory and in other parts of the country. This is similar to Yusuf's conclusion in his research suggesting that religious teaching in schools in homogenous areas will tend to be more exclusive compared to the schools in heterogeneous areas.[263]

The blend of cultural identity and Christianity is supposed to be a big power for HKBP to take part in developing and empowering society. This topic has always emerged in theological discussions, including in the context of North Sumatera, throughout the history of theology in Indonesia. In his study on ethnicity in North Sumatera, Singgih narrates the reality that people of HKBP value their culture negatively and assume that HKBP has committed 'syncretism'.[264] Singgih emphasizes that for many people in Indonesia, not only Batak people, ethnicity remains problematic since ethnic churches will always be threatened by the danger of exclusivism or territorialism. A big challenge for ethnic churches is the tendency to formulate a self-identity that can be reduced to a specific definition as an effort to separate from other groups, legitimize cultural closedness, and at the end, leads to a closed identity. To avoid this, valuing one's culture and other

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[263] Mohamad Yusuf, *Religious Education in Indonesia, An Empirical Study of Religious Education Models in Islamic, Christian and Hindu Affiliated Schools,* LIT-Verlag, Zürich, 2016, p. 97.

[264] E. Gerrit Singgih, *Mengantisipasi Masa Depan, Berteologi Dalam Konteks di Awal Milenium III* (Anticipating the Future, Doing Theology in Context at the Start of the Third Millennium), BPK Gunung Mulia, 2nd edition, Jakarta, 2005, p. 146.

cultures positively serves as a means to struggle for the welfare and good rela-tionships with each other. If it is not done, other cultures will be seen as threats. If a particular culture has its closeness with a particular religion, the presence of other cultures will be seen as a threat. Batak is identified with Christianity, *Minang* or Malay is identified with Islam. Batakness is formed because of the worry about being absorbed into the Islamic *Minang* or Malay. It can be said that the success of integrating the Christian faith with culture was to develop self-identity that is face to face with Islam present in other cultures. Singgih states that if in another context Islam is worried about Christianization, in the context of North Sumatera, Christians may be afraid of Islamization.[265] Singgih clarifies that problems related to ethnicity in HKBP bring about cultural shielding rather than empowerment for the people.

The official stance of HKBP to refuse interfaith marriage is based on I Corin-thians 7. This becomes interesting because this same text also serves as the foun-dation for GKPB (Bali) in accepting interfaith marriage. In this case, the inter-pretation of I Corinthians is also a factor in determining the stance on interfaith marriage. Therefore, the Biblical interpretation of interfaith marriage will be ex-plained in the next chapter. The chapter will also investigate selected Biblical texts related to interfaith marriage.

7.5. GPIB - Protestant Church in Western Indonesia

As a church with a multicultural background because most of its members belong to diaspora congregations, GPIB is unique in responding to interfaith marriage. Whereas GKJ, GKI, GKPB, and HKBP are influenced by cultural factors and a pluralist context in responding to interfaith marriage, GPIB, born from the *Staats-kerk* (state church of the colonial era), inherits this attitude and continues by align-ing itself with government regulations.

As churches that were born from the *Staatskerk* and inherited a specific rela-tion between church and state, GPIB seems to be struggling with this. It is obvious from the Understanding of Faith of the GPIB, in particular, Chapter V, "State and Nation".[266] This document describes the struggle of GPIB to determine its self-position as the partner of the government. It means that GPIB still struggles to be critical of the government. GPIB, which tends to submit to government decisions, is not alone. As we know, GPIB is part of GPI – Protestant Churches in Indonesia – descendants of the *Staatskerk*. The GMIM - Evangelical Churches of Minahasa (in North Sulawesi), as part of GPI, has the same tendency. GMIM rejects

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[265] Singgih, *Mengantisipasi Masa Depan*, 2005, pp. 153-154.
[266] See pp. 85-86.

interfaith marriage because the government does not legalize interfaith marriage. This stance indicates that GPIB accommodates itself to the understanding that the government is from God, as an interpretation of Romans 13. According to Singgih, this excessive reliance on Romans 13 is the way to gain protection from the government.[267] Nevertheless, as Singgih said, GPIB is still introverted.[268] In my opinion, there is hope that in the future GPIB will deal with its position, as suggested by Singgih. GPIB has to take part in developing civil society.

Besides the tendency to submit to the government, the attitude, according to Singgih, is strengthened by the inheritance of pietism. This inheritance leads to an apolitical attitude, which means that GPIB does not want to be involved with important problems or issues in particular contexts. This inheritance of piety makes GPIB project inward, to be introverted, and to take care of domestic rites such as how to have more members without any institutional projection for the world they have to serve.

As the second biggest Protestant church in Indonesia, GPIB has significant capital from the ethnicity of its members. Sociologically, GPIB consists of diaspora churches of several ethnicities from eastern Indonesia namely Maluku, Minahasa, and Timor, as well as other ethnicities. GPIB is not an 'ethnic church', of which the members are from one ethnicity, but an "ethnic-diaspora church".[269] Ideally, GPIB can serve as the foundation to participate in the goal "to be Indonesia" in the form of "Indonesian churches". However, ethnicity still dominates GPIB's view. On the other hand, the three big ethnicities (Moluccas, Minahasan, and Timorese) are from culturally homogenous Christian backgrounds/contexts. Again, there is a tendency of acceptance toward cooperation and relations with other religions, but at the same time a tendency of rejection toward the concrete reality of living in togetherness, interfaith marriage. GPIB does not explicitly demonstrate its theological rejection toward interfaith marriage. However, it is worth investigating that the openness toward other religions is possibly a formal formulation, but in practice, GPIB still recognizes people of other religions as a missionary field to raise the number of members.

As visible from the above description of the stance of churches in Indonesia toward interfaith marriage, various foundations underlie their attitude. There are two important points to note.

1. There are still pros and cons among churches in Indonesia regarding interfaith marriage. Churches that accept interfaith marriage have generally experienced

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[267] Emanuel Gerrit Singgih, *Iman dan Politik Dalam Era Reformasi di Indonesia* (Faith and Politics in the Indonesian Reformation Era), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2000, pp. 13-15.
[268] Singgih, *Mengantisipasi Masa Depan*, 2005, p. 310.
[269] Frank Cooley, *Indonesia: Church and Society,* Friendship Press, New York, 1968, p. 50.

interactions and struggles amidst this plural society and they strive to manifest inclusivity. Churches such as GKJ, GKI, and GKPB are 'gathered churches', churches where most of their members belong to a particular ethnicity, but are located in places where Christians are the minority. Meanwhile, HKBP is categorized as an ethnic church because most of its members are of the Batak ethnicity and are also the majority of Christians in Batak territory. GKJ, GKI, and GKPB are churches that were born and live in a heterogeneous area, while HKBP was born and lives in a context that is dominantly, homogenously Christian. This is likely to influence the stance toward interfaith marriage. Openness is more obvious among churches in Java, I suppose, because of traditional Javanese religious culture that is open toward families consisting of members with different religions.

2. Interfaith marriage is a barometer of inter-religious relationships in a specific context. The PGI research, which indicates that 75% of the PGI churches declare that they accept interfaith marriage, raises some questions: is the very positive statement above sincere and honest, or does it intentionally conceal particular negative feelings? Is it impossible for us to also be together in terms of theology, teaching, worship, and tradition? Is it true that in terms of teaching, Christianity is totally different from Islam and other religions? Do we have to close ourselves, morally and ethically, from the possibility that people of different religions will fall in love with each other and want to start a family, despite the difference in their religions? In the present diverse world, people from different backgrounds, including the wandering youth, meet others who leave their homogenous surroundings and enter the heterogeneous world. As mentioned above, Javanese traditional culture seems to accept religious diversity in the family. I am not sure whether the cultures of other regions are not similar to Javanese culture. Possibly it is not a cultural factor that determines the openness that prevails, but rather religions that become stricter in defining a religion's identity, leading to closed identities. I suggest an open identity that allows harmonious interaction among people of different religions, including interfaith marriage.

Chapter 4

CONTEXTUAL CHURCH POLITY
IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

1. Introduction

As we have seen in chapter 3, interfaith marriage is addressed in very different ways by the churches in Indonesia. We have found that at least a number of arguments have emerged relating to interfaith marriage, including:

a. Arguments based on ecclesiastical traditions in understanding and interpreting the nature of marriage. This argument is evident from the stance of the church which bases itself on the inherited tradition. Therefore, in this chapter a description of the understanding of marriage in the Church tradition will be presented, with the intention of inviting us to once again read in new ways the theological struggles of theologians in the past.

b. Both churches that accept and that reject interfaith marriage use the same Biblical text, namely 1 Corinthians 7, as a Biblical basis for addressing interfaith marriages. It is truly surprising that the same text is understood differently by the churches. In building theological arguments, the churches in Indonesia legitimize their arguments with the Biblical interpretation. Surely, this is a primary principle. However, it is interesting to examine how these texts are being interpreted. Therefore, this chapter will also present an interpretation of Biblical texts that have a direct correlation with interfaith marriage both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

c. The acceptance of interfaith marriage by churches is not accompanied by sufficient theological understanding. The stance of acceptance of interfaith marriage is a form of openness to the concrete struggle and makes it a matter of doing contextual theology. Therefore, this chapter will also present a theological understanding of interfaith marriage.

All those points have become important in completing the formulation of ecclesiastical regulatory considerations related to the implementation of interfaith

marriages. Contextual theology efforts should also appear in the Church Order. There are many contextual theological discourses through a variety of discussions and studies, but all of that is often not appearing in an important church document, the Church Order. The Church Order is often seen as just an old structure which is left to decay and loses its strength in facing the onslaught of changing times. If the fate of the Church Order is such, it is not surprising that there is disconnection and gap between theological discourse and the concrete life that is lived by the church. The struggles of the churches' stances towards interfaith marriage subsequently result in a study of contextual church polity in the context of a pluralistic Indonesian religion.

Departing from the above, the next section will discuss contextual church polity in Indonesian context. This section will answer the question: what do churches in Indonesia have to do in the context of the changes they must face? How do churches in Indonesia reformulate fundamental understandings of marriage, and about family, in the changing context that is happening? What is the further relevance of this contextual study of interfaith marriages in considering the challenges of the Indonesian churches going forward? And finally, the concrete step that must be found is how to build a contextual and relevant Church Order amid ongoing context change.

2.   Marriage in the Church Traditions

When two persons who love each other agree to live together and bind themselves with a pledge of faithfulness for their entire lives, it is a marriage in nature. However, marriage is not as simple as that. The question is, in which domain does marriage belong? Is it a private, public, or religious matter? Why does the Church take this matter into account? How can marriage become a part of the Church's domain? If marriage belongs to the Church, what is its understanding of marriage? Is it regarded as a sacrament or not? These kinds of questions contributed to fiercely theological debates throughout Church history. By this, we need to know the theological argument in which the Church develops its understanding of marriage. For this purpose, it is necessary to have an adequate description from the historical perspective of the struggle by the Church toward this issue.

In this chapter, I will present the origin and development of the theological understanding of marriage in the Church traditions. I perceive that the doctrine of marriage is inevitably the result of a process of doing theology that responds to the changes of context. Hence, I will examine the development of the theological understanding of marriage from the history of the Church. For this purpose, I will begin with marriage in the Catholic tradition and then the development of the

doctrine of marriage in the Protestant traditions. In my opinion, this examination will be very relevant for dealing with our main issue about interfaith marriage. The Church's understanding of marriage will determine the stance of the Church on the interfaith marriage.

2.1. Marriage in the Catholic Tradition

Throughout the early period, centuries before the fall of Roman Empire, marriage was seen as a family matter, as it had traditionally been in the Roman Empire. Bishops and clergy were not involved in the wedding ceremony except as guests. Marriages were blessed by clergy, but the blessing was not an essential matter for marriage.[270] There was no obligatory church ceremony connected with marriage. Therefore, the wedding ceremony was held outside the church. In the eleventh century, the circumstances began to change. The Popes Evaristus and Calixtus demanded that all marriages were to be solemnly blessed by a priest. Gradually, it became a tradition to hold a wedding ceremony around the church so that the new couple could go inside for the priest's blessing. Eventually, the wedding ceremony was performed in the church and followed by a matrimonial mass in which the marriage would be blessed. By the twelfth century in various parts of Europe, established church wedding ceremonies were conducted entirely by the clergy. Then, marriage became a part of the ecclesial rites.[271]

Until the twelfth century, there was no systematic theology of marriage emerging from Christian writings, but several perspectives on marriage can be found throughout the writings of St. John Chrysostom (345-407). Chrysostom perceives marriage from several perspectives such as a natural perspective, a spiritual perspective, a contractual perspective, and a social perspective. From the natural perspective, Chrysostom believes that marriage is created by God, and that there is nothing evil in it. From the spiritual perspective of marriage, Chrysostom views that the union of the Christian couple is sanctified by and in Christ; for that reason, Paul uses a Christian marriage as an image of the union of Christ and His church. From the contractual perspective of marriage, he wrote that marriage was formed by special agreement; it is a fellowship of life. From the social perspective of marriage, he viewed that by marriage, the family and the state are formed. The love of husband and wife is coherent to the harmony of society.[272]

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[270] Joseph Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches,* in: Kieran Scott and Michael Warren (eds.), *Perspectives on Marriage, A Reader,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 33.
[271] See: Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches*, 2001, pp. 33-37.
[272] See: John Witte, Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract - Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition,* Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1997, pp. 20-21.

The Church Father St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) also draws forth the natural, contractual, and spiritual perspectives of marriage. Martos views that Augustine's thought on marriage is ambivalent. Augustine views that marriage is a beneficial social institution, necessary for the preservation and continuation of human race, but on the other side, Augustine conceives sexual desire as a dangerous and destructive human energy. Augustine is the first patristic author to write productively about sex and marriage, and at the end Augustine insists that marriage is good even though sex is not. Augustine views that sexual desire is evil, a result of original sin. According to Augustine, the only legitimate reason for marriage is to produce children.[273] From the natural perspective, Augustine regards marriage as a creation of God, to render sexual intercourse licit, to perpetuate the human species by nurturing children. From his contractual perspective, Augustine regards marriage as a contract of fidelity that gives husband and wife equal power, rights, and service to avoid adultery and illicit intercourse. From the spiritual perspective, Augustine says that marriage is a sacramental bond, a non-dissolvable bond, a source and symbol of the permanent union between Christians. In this respect, Augustine does not use the term 'sacrament of marriage', but rather 'sacramental marriage'. For Augustine, a sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing, a visible sign of invisible grace. The term 'sacrament' for marriage, according to Augustine, means symbolic stability. Christian marriage is a stable and permanent union demanding fidelity.[274] Augustine views that marriage is a sacred sign, *sacramental*, of the union of Christ and His church. He reads the New Testament in Latin and the word Greek *mysterion* has been translated into Latin as *sacramentum*. Marriage is a visible sign of the invisible union of Christ and His church. Augustine sees a deeper meaning of marriage as *sacramentum* by understanding it as the pledge of a soldier that is also called *sacramentum*. It is a sacred pledge of fidelity. He affirms that the *sacramental* marriage, therefore, is a permanent bond that cannot be dissolved, and it is not even permissible to remarry.[275]

From the period of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) and his successors, the Roman Catholic Church became an autonomous legal and political power within Western Christendom. This era is seen as the first modern era of the West. The first modern Western universities were established in Bologna, Rome, and Paris with the core faculties of theology, law, and medicine, as well as a great interest to rediscover and study ancient Roman law, Greek philosophy, and patristic theology. This period was a great advance in trade and commerce, art, literature, and

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[273] Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches*, 2001, pp. 30-31.
[274] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, pp. 21-22.
[275] See: Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches*, 2001, p. 31.

natural sciences. In this era, the Catholic Church developed a systematic theology and law of marriage. From the twelfth centuries onward, the Church's doctrine of marriage was systematized. In this respect, Witte notes the work of Hugh of St. Victor's *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (1143), Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* (1150), and Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (1265-1273). The canon law of marriage was also systematized. In 1140, Francis Gratian published his *Decretum,* a collection of canon law of marriage. Witte notes that from a theological understanding and legal sources, *Decretum* teaches that marriage is regarded at once: 1) as a created thing, though of natural origin – the natural perspective; 2) as a consensual contract, it has a legal law aspect – the contractual perspective; and 3) as a sacrament of faith, it has a spiritual significance – the sacrament perspective.[276] The new theological understanding of marriage is found in the use of term 'sacrament'. Marriage is conceived to be raised by Christ to the dignity of sacrament, thus it is a subject to the jurisdiction of the Church. As a sacrament, marriage is seen as a visible sign of the invisible union of Christ with His Church. Like the other six sacraments, marriage was conceived to be an instrument of sanctification that confers grace upon the couple. Marriage sanctifies the Christian couple by allowing them to meet God's will for marriage and by reminding them that their physical and spiritual union in love symbolizes the gracious union, the eternal binding of Christ with His Church. Unlike the other six sacraments, the ministers of the sacrament are the couple themselves. The consent from both partners in the couple is an essential matter of marriage. Marriage requires no clerical or lay instruction, no intermediary, and no witness.[277]

The debate on marriage as a sacrament emerged in this era. One question raised was: to what extent can marriage be seen as a sacrament? The *Decretum* of Gratian insists that sacramental grace is conferred only on consummation of the marriage through sexual intercourse because the consent to marry is fulfilled by intercourse as a married couple. How about Joseph and Mary in the Bible? The next question raised is, how can sexuality be a channel of grace? A rejection to the idea of the sacrament of marriage was put forth by Peter Lombard. In his *Book of Sentences,* he views that the difference of marriage from other sacraments is that marriage is a sign of something sacred, but representative of grace. According to Lombard, some reasons are that 1) marriage sometimes involves financial matters, then it would give the impression that a sacrament such as grace could be bought and sold; 2) marriage obviously existed before the coming of

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[276] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 23.
[277] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 26-30.

Christ, so it is hardly a purely Christian institution as are the other six sacraments; and 3) marriage involves sexual intercourse. It is necessary to note that in the Western theological tradition through the eleventh century, marriage was considered as good, but sexual activity was usually considered as sinful. Virginity was esteemed higher than marriage.[278] According to Lombard, marriage is "a sacred sign of a sacred reality, namely, the union of Christ and Church,"[279] but it is not a sacrament. Thus, Lombard excludes marriage from the list of sacraments.[280]

John Duns Scotus insists that the blessing by the priest renders marriage sacramental. He refers to the role of the priest in other sacraments; sprinkling the water in Baptism, offering bread and wine in Eucharist, the declaration of absolution in confession, but how about a marriage that is contracted and consummated without consecration from the Church? To declare such a marriage nonsacramental is the same as to remove them from the spiritual jurisdiction and sacramental care of the Church. Eventually, sacramental marriage came to be viewed through the mutual consent of the couple in the beginning of their married life.[281]

By the late thirteenth century, the idea of the sacrament of marriage was widely accepted as something performed by the simple exchange of a promise between the parties. Like the other six sacraments, marriage was conceived as an instrument of sanctification when mutual consent by the couple was given, as a contract between Christians, and therefore it conferred grace upon them. Marriage is a sacrament, a channel of God's grace whose proper celebration and performance sanctifies the couple, their children, and the Church. Consequently, interfaith marriage was strongly opposed. Such a marriage, with an unbaptized spouse, cannot properly symbolize the union between Christ and His church. A marriage that is contracted properly between Christians in accordance with the law is an indissoluble union, a permanently open channel of grace. Neither consecration nor consummation was critical for sacramental marriage. Even a secret contract and an unconsummated marriage could be an instrument of sacramental grace. The sacramental marriage produced the doctrine that such marriage is a permanent bond, an indissoluble union. By the time of Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, he put marriage in the list of the Catholic Church's seven

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[278] See: Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches*, 2001, p. 40.
[279] *Sententiae,* 4,d.26,c.6, quoted in Michael G. Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant in the Catholic Tradition,* in: John Witte and Eliza Ellison (eds.), *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective,* Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2005, p. 77.
[280] See: Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches*, 2001, p. 39, *Cf.* Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, p. 77.
[281] See: Martos, *Marriage in the Western Churches*, 2001, pp. 39-44, *Cf.* Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 28.

sacraments with efficacy to confer grace.[282] This became canonical. Concerning the sacrament of marriage and dissoluble union, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

> *Since the sacraments effect what they signify, it is to be believed that grace is conferred through this sacrament on the spouses whereby they might belong to the union of Christ and the Church. And this is very necessary to them so that as they concern themselves with carnal and earthly matters, they do not become detached from Christ and the Church.*
>
> *Now since the union of husband and wife is an image of the union of Christ and the Church, the image must correspond with that which it images. Now the union of Christ and the Church is union of one person with one person, and it is to last in perpetuity. For there is only one Church…and Christ will never be separated from His Church. It follows necessarily then that a marriage, in so far as it is sacrament of the Church, must be a union that is indissoluble.* [283]

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) responds to the teaching of reformers. In the *Decree Tametsi* (1563), the Council of Trent confirms the idea of the sacramental model of marriage. The *Decree* confirms some other points; polygamy was forbidden, the mandatory clerical celibacy, the spiritual superiority of celibacy and virginity to marriage, marriage was forbidden during the seasons of Lent and Advent, and divorce was understood as only the separation from bed and board with no right of remarrying. In the *Decree*, the Council of Trent also issued other rules including that the wedding must be contracted in the Church before the priest and in the presence of two or three witnesses. If the marriage contract was not consecrated by the priest, it was automatically deemed invalid and null, and the parties were subject to spiritual and temporal sanctions.[284] The Catechism issued in 1566 defined marriage as the "conjugal union of man and woman, contracted between two qualified persons, which obliges them to live together throughout life."[285] There must be a mutual agreement. The marriage promise is not merely a promise, but a transfer of rights. As a sacramental union, marriage conferred grace upon the couple in order that the couple might be brought up for the service and worship of the true God and of Christ. As a symbol of Christ's bond to His Church, marriage introduces an indissoluble bond between husband and wife, a bond of the greatest affection and love. The blessing of sacramental marriage is,

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[282] See: Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, p. 77.
[283] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* bk.4, chap 78, quoted in: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 28.
[284] *Cf.* Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 36-39.
[285] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 40.

as explained by the Catechism, that God confers the blessing where the couple abides in His duties of marriage as elaborated in the Bible.[286] Witte affirms that the thirteenth century sacramental model of marriage lies at the heart of Catholic Church theology. Although the canon law has been amended over the centuries, it is unchanged in its fundamental form. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) set the basic theological and legal procedure of the Catholic Church's tradition of marriage until the canon law revisions of 1917 and 1983.[287]

Although the focus of this chapter is on Protestant traditions, I think it is valuable if we also grasp the development of the Catholic tradition in modern time, namely the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The Council's teaching on marriage is constituted in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes)*. It is written:

> *(47) The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. Hence Christians and all men who hold this community in high esteem sincerely rejoice in the various ways by which men today find help in fostering this community of love….*
>
> *(48) The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. Hence by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their off-springs as well as of society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone. For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes.*[288]

It is evident that the Council teaches that marriage is a community of love, an intimate partnership of life and love. Conjugal love is an essential element in marriage. The new approach to marriage in this Council is by using the Biblical term 'covenant'. According to Lawler, the Council preserves the idea from the traditional canon about contractual language. However, the Council has no longer used the term 'contract', but intentionally selects the more biblical, religious, and personal word 'covenant'. The idea of contractual language about marriage has been well known among Western theologians and canonists since Gratian and

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[286] *Cf.* Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 40-41.
[287] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 36.
[288] *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*), paragraph 47 & 48.http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

Lombard, but has been canonized in official church documents only since the 1917 Code of Canon Law.[289] It is interesting to me because the term 'covenant' will also be used by Calvin as a ground for his theology of marriage.

Lawler examines the use of the term 'covenant' in the Council. He says that the biblical term 'covenant', as used by the Council, is dependent upon the intuition of the Eastern churches. In Orthodox teaching, referring to Ephesians 5:32, marriage is a great mystery of the union of Christ and the Church. The purpose of marriage is to create between them a bond of covenant responsibility and faithfulness that represents and re-actualizes the eternal bond between God and his chosen people. According to Lawler, the use of 'contract' would create some difficulties. The use of 'covenant' rather than 'contract' takes marriage out of its narrow and juridical sphere and places it in the sphere of the interpersonal, the religious, the committed, and the responsible. The Council intentionally chose the term 'covenant' to confirm that an intimate partnership of life and love is more than a legal act witnessed by a contract regulating mutual rights of both parties. It is an interpersonal vow witnessed by God in which there is mutual giving and acceptance. It is not revocable, as it could be under a contract, but permanent, irrevocable, and no longer dependent on human action. The Council emphasizes that marital love of the spouses is ordained for the procreation and education of children, but marriage is not instituted solely for procreation. For Lawler, this is the outcome for the first time in Catholic history that conjugal love and procreation are co-essential prime ends of marriage. The mutual conjugal love between spouses, including sexual life, is eminently human, good, noble, and worthy. Marital love, intimate partnership, and the solemn covenant that creates an irrevocable union are now part of Roman Catholic theology and law of marriage.[290]

In response to the question, 'How is this 'covenant' marriage related to marriage as a sacrament?', Lawler says, "When a man and a woman covenant in the sacrament of marriage, they commit themselves mutually to a life of equal and intimate partnership in loyal and steadfast love. They commit themselves mutually to create and sustain a climate of personal openness, availability, and trust. They commit themselves mutually to behavior that will respect, nurture, and sustain covenant, two in one body, and steadfast love. They commit themselves mutually to explore together the religious depth of human life in general, and of their marriage in particular, and to respond to that depth in the light of their shared

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[289] Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, pp. 84-85.
[290] See: Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, pp. 84-86.

Christian faith. They commit themselves, finally, to abide in love, in covenant, in marriage, and in sacrament for the whole of life."[291]

Furthermore, *Gaudium et Spes* teaches that when a couple enters into the conjugal covenant, "[h]ence by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their off-springs as well as of society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone."[292] Thus in a covenant of marriage, God is intimately involved as primary witness. The involvement of God in covenant marriage makes the marriage not just a legal institution, but also a mystery or a sacrament. For Lawler, in covenantal-sacramental marriage, spouses consent and commit themselves to create a life of equal and intimate partnership in loyal and steadfast love. A sacramental marriage is not just a wedding to be celebrated, it is about an equal and loving partnership to be lived for the whole life.[293] He says, "When spouses covenant to one another in the sacrament of marriage, they commit themselves to explore together the religious depth of their married life and to respond to that depth in the light of their mutual covenant to Christ and to the church in which He abides."[294]

Martinez and Brignoli conceive that the Council emphasizes the intimate partnership of married life and love. The couple, themselves, have to take into account what happens in their complete lives and find there the essence of the sacramentality of marriage. It means that the sacramentality of marriage is not added to, but is already a part of the human experience. They say, "In their total, mutual self-giving, the couple symbolizes God's life-giving gift of Himself (grace), which is always available to the spouses to transform and heal their marital relationship. In this regard, the whole of the spouses' life together, including the earthly and sexual sides, is not profane, but is graced."[295] From this perspective, Martinez and Brignoli view that the partnership model provides a vision of the couple as a dynamic entity with a past, present, and future, in the process of growing and 'becoming'. In other words, the sacramentality of the marital partnership is never something fully accomplished, because partnership is a journey, an

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[291] Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, pp. 86-87.
[292] *Gaudium et Spes*, paragraph 48.
[293] Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, pp. 87-89.
[294] Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant,* 2005, p. 90.
[295] German Martinez & Lyn Burr Brignoli, *Models of Marriage: A New Theological Interpretation*, in: Kieran Scott and Michael Warren (eds.), *Perspectives on Marriage, A Reader,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 75.

ongoing, shifting reality, dynamic, and their union can become richer and stronger. Their partnership is indissoluble, but in reality, it is still in journey.[296]

In my opinion, the idea of a sacramental-covenant marriage gives a comprehensive understanding of marriage. When we compare it with the Catholic tradition, the Council gives a new approach concerning marriage, sexuality, and family. The Council is more open and gives higher esteem to the value of love, sexuality, intimate partnership, and family life. However, the place of marriage remains under the jurisdiction of the Church. It can be evidently understood because of the place of marriage as a sacrament. The basic argument of a sacrament in the Catholic doctrine has not changed. My critical question regards the difference between 'covenant' and 'contract' in this respect.

2.2. Marriage in Lutheran Tradition

Among the leaders of the Reformation were an ex-priest and ex-monastic (married thereafter), facing prosecution. The violations of canon law involving topics such as marriage, divorce, and remarriage can be seen as symbolic acts from the Protestant side. This position is also symbolized by Martin Luther in burning the canon law and confession books (1520). Their theological and legal perspective on marriage contains political nuances against Catholicism. According to Witte, the theological orientation and legal emphasis of the Protestant Reformation regarding marriage can be observed in two broad features. First, they replaced the Catholic's sacramental model of marriage with a new model that played up another dimension of marriage. Second, although anti-Catholic and anti-canon, the Protestant reformers were commonly influenced by the traditional canon law of marriage because the Roman Catholic institution had ruled effectively and efficiently in Europe for centuries. Canon law remained part of the common law until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[297]

The Catholic Church's jurisdiction over marriage, in their view, was regarded as the Church taking over the authority of the magistrate. They denounced the traditional form and pronounced a new gospel of marriage. According to Luther, the legal responsibility of marriage belonged to the state and the local community. Consequently, it reduced the role of the Church and increased the role of state and community on the formation, governance, and dissolution of marriage. Lutherans view that marriage is one of the three foundational estates of the earthly kingdom, alongside clergy and magistracy.[298]

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[296] Martinez and Brignoli, *Models of Marriage*, 2001, pp. 75-76.
[297] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 43-44.
[298] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 42-44.

Although Roman Catholic theologians emphasize the esteem the sanctity and the valuable purpose of the sacrament of marriage, Luther argues, however, that they still subordinate marriage to celibacy and monasticism. According to the reformers, in attacking celibacy and monasticism, celibacy is for God to give, not for the Church to require. To require celibacy of clerics, priests, and nuns is beyond the authority of the Church, intruding on Christian freedom and violating the Bible. Mandatory celibacy, Luther affirms, is not essential to the true service of God. The gift of continence and contemplation is by no means superior to the gift of marriage and nurturing children.[299] Luther insists that marriage is established by God in the order of creation. He wrote:

> *If God Himself does not give the wife or the husband, anything can happen. For the truth indicated here is that Adam found no marriageable partner for himself, but as soon as God had created Eve and brought her to him, he felt a real married love toward her, and recognized that she was his wife.(…)*
>
> *But in the case of Adam, God creates for him a unique, special kind of wife out of his own flesh. He brings her to him, he gives her to him, and Adam agrees to accept her. Therefore, that is what marriage is.[300]*

God's will alone is that man and woman unite, help each other, rear children, and raise them as God's servants. Therefore, marriage should be viewed not as an inferior option, but as a divine calling and a social status for all people. All persons, in Luther's view, should accept the gift of marriage and obey the duty of marriage for the sake of society. Marriage is a divine and holy estate of life, a blessed holy calling, the foundation of society and Church. The social estate of marriage, in his view, is an agent of God's redemption plan, as well as an agent of social order and communal cohesion. It is, however, not simply a creation of civil law, but created by God in order to help the state in fulfilling its divine mandate. The social estate of the family, according to Luther, is a community of love and cooperation, meditation and discussion, song and prayer, which has to be exemplary for the sinful society. It is to take in and care for widows and desperate people, a responsibility previously assumed by monasteries and cloisters. This social model of marriage is also an argument against the Roman Catholic concept of marriage as a sacrament.[301]

The social model of marriage is grounded in Luther's two kingdoms theory: earthly kingdom and spiritual/heavenly kingdom. The earthly kingdom is the

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[299] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 50-51.

[300] Martin Luther, *A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage,* in: *Luther's Works vol.44 The Christian in Society 1,* James Atkinson (ed.), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1966, p. 8.

[301] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 48-49.

realm of creation, of natural and civic life. The earthly kingdom is fallen and distorted by sin. The heavenly kingdom is the realm of redemption, of spiritual and eternal life. The spiritual kingdom is about salvation and renewal by grace. A Christian is a citizen of both kingdoms at once and constantly comes under the structure of each. Luther regards marriage as a social estate of the earthly kingdom, in Luther's words "subject to the secular government, a secular and outward thing",[302] an external and worldly matter, although divinely ordered to serve the holy purpose. Marriage is part of the earthly kingdom, subject to civil authority, while sacraments are part of the heavenly kingdom of faith and salvation, spiritual instruments of salvation and sanctification. Luther views that as part of the earthly kingdom, marriage is a gift from God to all persons, Christian or non-Christian. As part of the earthly kingdom, the reformer regards that marriage refrains people from falling into the sin of prostitution and incontinence, just as law refrains them from destructive intentions. This is the civil use of marriage.[303]

By placing marriage within the earthly kingdom and bringing up the social estate of marriage, Luther urges that marriage can symbolize for all people the union of Christ and His Church but does not make it a sacrament. Marriage is not a sacrament that contains the promise of grace. For Luther, sacraments are gifts and a sign of grace ensuring Christians of the promise of redemption that is available only to those who have faith. Marriage renders no such promise and demands no such faith. It remains an earthly institution. Scripture teaches that only Baptism and the Eucharist confer this promise of grace. Nevertheless, in a sermon (1519), Luther taught that marriage is a sacrament. He states:

> *In the same way, the estate of marriage is a sacrament. It is an outward and spiritual sign of the greatest, holiest, worthiest, and noblest thing that has ever existed or ever will exist: the union of the divine and human natures in Christ.[304]*

Lawler views that, in this regard, Luther uses the Augustinian idea of sacrament. Lawler states, "It is not an efficacious cause of grace but only an outward and spiritual sign."[305] In my view, Luther was influenced by Augustine's views because Luther was an Augustinian monk. It is evidenced that later, Luther changed his thinking. Although Luther maintained Augustine's view of sacrament, after

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[302] Martin Luther, *The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat,* in: *Luther's Work, vol. 21*, Jaroslav Pelikan (ed.), Concordia Publishing, Saint Louis, 1956, p. 93.
[303] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 51.
[304] *Luther's Work*, Vol. 44, 1966, p. 10.
[305] Lawler, *Marriage as Covenant*, 2005, p. 78.

1520 Luther no longer used it. In his writing (1520) Luther confirms that marriage is not a sacrament. Luther wrote:

> Nowhere in Scripture do we read that anyone would receive grace of God by getting married; nor does the rite of matrimony contain any hint that the ceremony is of divine institution.[306]

The argument that he uses is that we do not read anywhere in the Bible that the promise of salvation is linked to marriage. Marriage is not instituted by Christ, nor does it confer grace. It is instituted by God in creation, and it exists everywhere, even outside the church.[307] In his writing of the *Babylonian Captivity to the Church* (1520), Luther wrote:

> We have said that in every sacrament there is a word of divine promise, to be believed by whoever receives the sign and that the sign alone cannot be a sacrament. Nowhere do we read that the man who marries a wife receives any grace of God. There is not even a divinely instituted sign in marriage, nor do we read a sign of anything. To be sure, whatever takes place in a visible manner can be understood as a figure or allegory of something invisible. But figures or allegories are not sacraments, in the sense in which we use the term.[308]

Janz affirms that by the *Babylonian Captivity to the Church* (1520), Luther finalizes the basis of his sacramental theology. For Luther, real sacraments contain three things: 1) a divinely instituted sign or symbol, attested to in Scripture, 2) the sign points to, or represents, the divine promise, and 3) there is faith to receive promise. Luther opposes the sacramental system of the Roman Catholic Church because, for him, the priests were attempting to control access to God's grace.[309]

Like the Roman Catholics, Lutherans regard that marriage contracts cannot be dissolved by anyone. However, marriage lies in the earthly kingdom, so it is subject to civil law and civil authority, not to canon law and the Church. Marital disputes are to be brought before civil courts, not to the Church court. This does not mean that marriage is out of God's authority or beyond the influence and concern of the Church. The Church, Luther affirms, has at least a fourfold responsibility towards marriage, namely first, to communicate to the civil authorities about God's law and will for marriage and family. Second, in the spirit of the

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[306] John Dillenberger (ed.), *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings,* Doubleday, New York, 1961, quoted in Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 52.

[307] *Cf.* Denis R. Janz*, The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther,* Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2010, pp. 89-92.

[308] Martin Luther, *Word and Sacrament II,* in: *Luther's Works vol. 36,* Helmut T. Lehmann & Abdel Ross Went (ed.), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 92.

[309] See: Janz, *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther*, 2010, p. 120.

priesthood of all believers, to maintain its pastoral counsel through instruction and prayer for those in trouble in their married lives. Third, to help church members make sure that the marriage has been registered. Fourth, to impose church discipline regarding marriage.[310]

The consequence of the social model of marriage, as Witte observes, is that Luther discourages the secret marriage recognized by the canon law, though not encouraged. Luther makes marriage to be a public institution, involving third parties in the marital formation. Seeking consent from the parent or guardian before wedding was important for Luther. It is grounded on the fifth of the Decalogue Commandments, namely to honor the parents. Seeking the blessing in instruction from the pastor and registry are the other ones. Parental consent reflects God's will that couples marry. The blessing from a priest reflects God's will for the marriage.[311]

Concerning the spiritual impediments of unbelief and crimes that were designed to protect the sanctity of marriage, canon law prohibited marriages between Christians and non-Christians and permitted annulments when one party permanently left the church. Only those couples who had been sanctified by baptism and who remained true to the faith could symbolize the union of Christ with His Church. The reformers rejected these impediments. They argued that marriage had no such kind of symbolic Christian function and thus there is no requirement for baptism or unanimity of faith. Concerning crime, Luther urged that crime should be punished, but by another penalty, not by forbidding marriage.[312]

The most liberal reformation of marriage is about divorce and remarriage. The Reformers' attack on the canon law of impediments is closely allied with their attack on the canon law of divorce. They discard this impediment as infringement on the right to end and enter another marriage. Luther and his followers rejected this traditional doctrine because they insisted that marriage is a natural institution of the earthly kingdom, not a sacrament of heavenly kingdom. Where the scripture permits divorce, the reformers believe, the scripture also permits remarriage. In the case of divorce because of adultery, Luther refers to the scripture that Christ permits the divorce of a husband and wife so that the innocent party could remarry. Divorce now regards the dissolution of marriage as more than the separation of a couple no longer sharing bed and board. There is tension between the indissoluble bond of marriage and the right to enter another marriage because of abuse, desertion, immoral acts, delinquency, insolence, impotence, etc. The

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[310] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 53.
[311] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 57.
[312] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 64-65.

reformers resolve this tension by distinguishing between moral laws designed for Christians in the heavenly kingdom and civil laws designed for sinful citizens of the earthly kingdom. The Reformers taught that Christ's demand is the absolute standard for Christians. Thus, it becomes necessary for civil authorities to promulgate laws that facilitate and protect marriage and its social function, as well as maintain peace and order in sinful society.[313] In other words, on one hand, the indissoluble bond of marriage remains the ideal to be protected by the Church and state, but sinful people often fail to obey moral laws. Therefore, in order to preserve the peace of civil society, divorce and remarriage must be permitted. On the other hand, the scripture witnesses that divorce is permissible because is has been allowed by Christ.

Witte notes, however, that Lutherans preserve a great deal of the canon law in their civil law of marriage. Canon law doctrine that grounds marriage in the mutual consent of the parties is continued with only minor changes. Canon law prohibitions against unnatural relations and against infringement of natural marital functions remain in effect. Canon law impediments that protect free consent are largely retained. Such canon laws are as consistent with Roman Catholicism as with Lutheran concepts of marriage, and they continue largely uninterrupted. Learned tracts on marriage law, prepared by Lutheran jurists, often make greater use of canon law and Roman law authorities than the new Luther thought. Witte points to the 1543 Tract of Matrimonial Cases by Melchior Kling, Luther's friend and colleague in Wittenberg. Although he frequently cites Scripture, he uses reference to numbers of canonists. The Reformers worked within the Western traditions of marriage. They developed a new theology of marriage while, to some extent, preserving the teaching of the Roman Catholic tradition. They constructed a new civil law of marriage heavily indebted to the canon law that it replaced. I concur with Witte, as he notes, that what the Reformers offered was a new social model of marriage, which stood alongside the traditional sacrament of marriage and within the Western tradition.[314]

In my view, it is evident that, in this respect, Luther's teaching of the sacramental nature of marriage was primarily in terms of its permanent bond, an indissoluble union. Luther's tradition of marriage introduced a new approach into the Western tradition of the social model of marriage alongside the Catholic sacramental marriage.

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[313] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 65-70.
[314] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 70-73. See also the conclusion of James Turner Johnson, *Marriage as Covenant in Early Protestant Thought; Its Development and Implications*, in: John Witte Jr. and Eliza Ellison (ed.), *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective*, Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2005, p. 129.

Until this point, we have examined that the issue of sacramentality of marriage in Luther's reformation era became a theological debate coinciding with anti-Catholic and anti-canon law arguments. The theological understanding of sacrament became a significant foundation to include or exclude marriage on the list of seven sacraments. On one side, I affirm that is true. However, on the other side, the issue of marriage as a sacrament, in my view, is not merely a theological debate. This debate also implies the concern of authority. It is about jurisdiction, power. As I state above, the theological and legal perspective on marriage in this era contains political nuances. Luther strongly insists that marriage is not an ecclesiastical jurisdiction. From our examination, we note that the issue of marriage in Church history was fiercely debated pertaining to the struggle of authority and power as an issue between the Church and the state. Marriage is subject to God's law, but it is administrated by civil authorities. Church officers are required to counsel the magistrate about God's law and to cooperate in publicizing and disciplining marriage. It means that marriage is a matter of both the Church and the state, each with their own duty.

2.3. Marriage in the Calvinist Tradition

Witte divides the period of Calvin's work into 2 phases, namely: Calvin as a jurist and Calvin as a theologian. As a jurist, Calvin gives his energy to the establishment of a new marriage law in Geneva namely the Comprehensive Marriage Ordinances of 1545 and 1547 and Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 and 1547. When these laws met resistance in Geneva in the 1550s, Calvin worked as a theologian.[315] Witte notes that Calvin's first formulation on marriage, from his *Institutes* 1536 to *Marriage Ordinances* 1545, was a very basic theology of marriage. Calvin developed the law of marriage, rather than theology of marriage, during his first phase. As a young theologian, Calvin was under the influence of the first generation of Reformers while he also improved his theology in *Institutes*. Like Luther, Calvin grounds his view of marriage into the twofold aspects of government, the spiritual aspect and the political aspect. Calvin referred to this as the spiritual kingdom and the temporal kingdom. He regarded marriage, family, and sexuality as part of the temporal kingdom. Marriage is a good and holy ordinance of God, designed to procreate children, to remedy incontinence, to promote love between husband and wife. Marriage, however, is not a sacrament of the heavenly kingdom. Although it symbolizes the bond between Christ and His Church, Calvin insisted that marriage neither had divine promise nor conferred sanctifying grace, as with other sacraments. Although it is a righteous mode of

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[315] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 75.

Christian living in the earthly kingdom, it has no bearing on salvation.[316] By placing marriage in the earthly kingdom and not seeing it as a sacrament, Calvin excludes marriage from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Marriage is placed under the jurisdiction of civil authority. By this, likewise Lutherans, Calvin attacked Catholic theology and the canon law of marriage. He said, "All men admit that it was instituted by God (Gen.2:21-24; Matt.19:4ff.); but no man had ever seen it administered as a sacrament until the time of Gregory [VII]. Marriage is a good and holy ordinance of God; and farming, building, cobbling, and barbering are lawful ordinances of God, and yet are not sacraments. For it is required that a sacrament is not only a work of God, but an outward ceremony appointed by God to confirm a promise. Even children will discern that there is no such thing in matrimony."[317] For Calvin, a sacrament is a sign and seal of the covenant, God's promise. Calvin states:

A sacrament is a seal by which God's covenant or promise is sealed. But it could not be sealed with physical things and the elements of this world, unless it were shaped and designed for this by God's power. Therefore, man cannot establish a sacrament, because it is not in man's power to cause such great mysteries of God to be concealed under such humble things. [318]

By referring to Augustine, Calvin says that the word of God must proceed, to make a sacrament a sacrament.[319]

Like that of the Lutherans, the standpoint of Calvin's teaching of marriage counters the canon law concerning celibacy. Calvin argues that celibacy is not an obligation of the earthly kingdom. That is a special gift of God. Calvin regards subordinating marriage to celibacy as a spiritual arrogance of supplanting God's ordinance with a human tradition.[320] He developed arguments against the sacraments and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Catholic Church based on his biblical interpretation. Certain rules and structure were necessary for internal discipline and maintaining peace, honesty, and good order, as he quoted from Paul the Apostle, "all things must be done decently and in order." In his view, however, the church has no authority to impose its own laws upon civil society. Marriage

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[316] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 78-79.

[317] John Witte Jr. and Robert M. Kingdon, *Courtship, Engagement and Marriage; Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin's Geneva*, Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2005, p. 49.

[318] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion vol.2,* The Library of Christian Classics, John T. McNeil (ed.), SCM Press, London, 1961, p. 1448.

[319] *Cf.* John Calvin, *Institutes vol.2*, p. 1279-1280.

[320] Witte notes that Calvin takes up the Protestant attack on the Catholic canon law of marriage that governed Genevan life until just before his arrival there in 1536. *Cf.* Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 80.

and family life are *adiaphora*, the external and discretionary things of life that do not conduct to salvation.[321]

Ecclesiastical Ordinances 1541, drafted by Calvin and revised by the city council, set out the role of the Church in the family and community. *Ordinances* defines the Church's ethic of marriage and family life, such as sexual modesty and integrity in their lives. Calvin insists, however, that ministers have no authority of civil jurisdiction. The disputes in marital cases are not spiritual matters, but are mixed up with politics and a matter of magistracy. *Marriage Ordinances* was drafted by Calvin and four councils in 1545 and adopted in 1561. However, *Marriage Ordinances 1545* is not a legal code. It is not a set of principal and systematic rules, but rather a large collection of rules for the governance regarding marital formation, maintenance, and dissolution. Its basic provisions have been an authoritative formulation of the common law of marriage for Geneva since 1561. The *Marriage Ordinances* consists of the 16 rules of marriage, namely: 1) persons that may not marry without permission, 2) persons who may marry without permission, 3) the reasons a promise may be withdrawn, 4) promise made simply, 5) terms for completing the marriage after the promise is made, 6) on bans and dependent matters, 7) the celebration of the marriage, 8) the cohabitation of the husband with his wife, 9) the degrees of consanguinity that prevent marriage, 10) the degrees of affinity, 11) cruelty and abuse, 12) reasons a marriage should be declared void and annulled, 13) reasons a marriage may be dissolved by divorce, 14) desertion of fiancés or fiancées, 15) collusion of divorce cases, and 16) jurisdiction over matrimonial cases.[322] *Marriage Ordinances* defines the consent of the couple as the essence of betrothal. Permission from the couple's parents is also needed. However, adults can proceed without their parent's consent. Nevertheless, it is more fitting if they are governed by the advice of their parents. *Marriage Ordinances* makes clear that parental consent is only a supplement to the couple's consent, not a substitution.

As stated above, Calvin's early theology of marriage is grounded on the Lutheran doctrine of two kingdoms. It counters the Catholic's sacrament of marriage. Later on, Calvin develops his theology of marriage grounded in the biblical doctrine of covenant. Calvin has already used this doctrine to defend his doctrine of sin and salvation, man and God. God invites the people of Israel to become partners in a divine covenant, to become partners in a relationship marked by trust, fidelity, steadfast love, justice, and obedience to the will of God. Calvin

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[321] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 80.
[322] Witte and Kingdon, *Courtship, Engagement and Marriage,* 2005, pp. 51-61. Witte and Kingdon present this document completely.

uses the doctrine of covenant in such a way to describe the relationship between husband and wife. As God draws the chosen believer into a covenant relationship with Him, likewise God draws husband and wife into a covenant relationship with each other. As God expects faithfulness of the elected people within a covenant relationship, likewise God expects faithfulness within the relationship of the couple.[323] Calvin wrote:

> *God is the founder of marriage. When a marriage takes place between a man and a woman, God presides and requires a mutual pledge from both. Hence Solomon in Proverbs 2:17 calls marriage the covenant of God, for it is superior to all human contracts. So, also Malachi [2:14] declares that God is as it were the stipulator [of marriage] who by his authority joins the man to the woman, and sanctions the alliance.* [324]

Calvin believed that the couple, parents, witnesses, minister, and magistracy were agents of God in the formation of marriage. Witte writes they 'represented different dimensions of God's involvement in the marriage covenant and they were thus essential to the legitimacy of the marriage itself. To omit any such party in the formation of marriage was, in effect; to omit God from the marriage covenant.'[325] Marriage is not a private contract between two individuals, but a public and integral component of the interlocking covenants comprising civil society.

Calvin believed that God takes a role in the maintenance of the covenant of marriage by the action of agents of God, but also through the continuous revelation of His moral law. In this regard, Calvin refers to God's Ten Commandments for presenting his definition of moral law. According to Haas, there are threefold uses or functions of the law in Calvin's thought.

First: the pedagogical use. The law reveals the righteousness that God demands of every person. This is like a mirror for all. It confronts all humans with their weakness in attaining God's righteousness. By this, sinners embrace the grace and mercy of God.

Second, the function of law is a civil use. The law functions to restrain civil society from evil actions that violate public peace and justice. The law becomes a means of order and harmony for the maintenance of civil society. By referring to 1 Tim. 1: 9-10, Calvin affirms that the law functions to punish because civil society does not always have the inner conviction and motivation.

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[323] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, pp. 94-95.
[324] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, p. 95.
[325] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, p. 94.

The third use is the principal use. The law as a positive instrument enables believers to understand and embrace the will of God in their lives. This is the proper purpose for which the law was originally intended.[326] Further, Calvin uses the understanding of the law to construct the structure of marriage by integrating a variety of biblical morals within the covenant of marriage. The moral law, Calvin said, had a civil use and a spiritual use. The civil use is defined as what is absolutely necessary for maintaining civil and domestic order for all persons. This is civic morality. Even pagans have always recognized the natural duties of fidelity, sexual restraint, and the like, which are essential to the survival of a marriage. Spiritual use is defined for believers as what is needed to attain holiness and sanctification. Thus, in Calvin's view, God's moral law for the covenant of marriage has two tracks, civil norms that are common to all persons and spiritual norms that are decisive for Christians. The two-track system of marital morality, Calvin affirmed, corresponds to the marital responsibility between Church and state in the earthly life. The church is responsible for teaching the spiritual norms for marriage and family life, whereas the state is responsible for enforcing mandatory civil norms. In marriage cases in Calvin's Geneva, the consistory would call the parties with spiritual duties. If such counsel failed, the parties were referred to the city council to compel them, using civil and criminal sanctions.[327]

Calvin confirms that the covenant of marriage is grounded in creation, the commandments of God, and law of nature. He believes that in creation, God ordained the structure of marriage to be a life-long union between a fit man and a fit woman based on mature consent, for three purposes: 1) mutual love and support between husband and wife, 2) procreation and nurturing children, 3) mutual protection of both partners from sexual sin. In nature, Calvin believes that a man and woman enjoy common dignity before God and the common function of completing the life and love of the other. In marriage, husband and wife are joined together in one body and one soul, but assigned with different duties and authorities.[328] From the perspective of the three purposes of the marriage covenant, Calvin addresses those married to an unbeliever. Calvin counsels Christians against marrying unbelievers. For Calvin, such unions would jeopardize all three purposes of marriage. Calvin viewed that the unbeliever could not understand the true meaning of love reflected in Christ, how to educate children in the love of God, and they might not resist the temptation of lust. However, Calvin did not regard different religions as an absolute barrier in the contracting of marriage,

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[326] See: Guenther H. Haas, *Calvin's Ethics,* in: Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 100-101.
[327] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 98-99.
[328] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, pp. 96-98.

annulments, or divorce. For Calvin, as Witte notes, "When a man is to marry, he should (as far as possible) choose a wife who will help him in the worship of God, who knows God and His word, and who is ready to give up all idolatry. To do otherwise was spiritually unlawful, though civilly permissible."[329] Witte and Kingdon examine Calvin's teaching on mixed marriage and they conclude that Calvin tolerated denominationally mixed marriage, in terms of a Protestant and Lutheran, Ana-Baptist, or other Protestant. Calvin rejected the difference of religion as a formal impediment to engagement or marriage, for instance a Protestant marrying a Catholic, Jew, or Muslim. In his commentary of 1 Cor.7:12-16, Calvin admits that mixed marriage is not ideal. Those who want to enter into a mixed marriage should be strongly dissuaded, although they cannot be prevented from such marriage. Parties who have already been in a mixed marriage should remain together unless the unbelieving spouse becomes abusive or desires to divorce.[330]

2.4. Marriage in the Dutch Protestant Tradition

Blei states that 'the beginning of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands virtually coincides with the beginning of the independence of the nation of the Netherlands.'[331] It did indeed. The Netherlands, under Spanish rule, was above all influenced by Calvin's reformation ideas. The followers of Calvin called themselves 'reformed'. The *Dutch Confession of Faith* (*Confessio Belgica 1561*) is evidence of their struggle against the Spanish authority, Philip II, because of persecution and suffering. Numbers of preachers died from persecution and inquisition by the Church (the Roman Catholic Church) and the state (Spanish authority). Amidst this struggle, the 'reformed' and the congregations of refugees manifested themselves as the one Church for the first time in Emden 1571. It is important to note that 'Emden' was not in the Netherlands, but in the German territories. The young church gathered abroad because of the dangerous political Dutch context. The struggle continued until the uprising began in 1572. The 'reformed' were at the forefront of the struggle. The motivation provided by their new faith and their rejection of Roman Catholicism made them radical resistors against the Spanish authority. They struggled not only for freedom, but also for their 'faith' (Reformed). They were not only satisfied to drive out the Spanish

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[329] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 1997, p. 105.
[330] See: Witte and Kingdon, *Courtship, Engagement and Marriage*, 2005, pp. 354-365. Witte and Kingdon elaborate Calvin's teaching on mixed marriage by using supporting documents including a Commentary on 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 (1546), Letter to Lelio Sozzini (December 7, 1549), Letter to an Anonymous Woman (July 22, 1552), *Consillium* (April 28, 1556), etc.
[331] Karel Blei, *The Netherlands Reformed Church 1571 – 2005*, translated by Allan J. Jansen, Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2006, p. 17.

troops, but even more, they wanted to purify the Church and liberate it from all the trappings of Roman Catholic ecclesiastical life. They desired a government that would take sides in Church affairs and make it possible to proclaim the true doctrine. This struggle was one in which they could appeal to Calvin's thought on the task of the government. William of Orange, the governor of Holland, who was born as a Lutheran but raised as a Roman Catholic, felt more attracted to the Reformed faith and to the struggle for freedom, as well. In 1573, he openly took the Reformed side. Eventually, the formal proclamation of independence from the Spanish King was declared in 1581.[332]

The synod of Emden 1571 resulted in the ecclesiastical foundation of the Church. The second national gathering of the Reformed Church, being the first National Synod of the Reformed Church, took place in Dordrecht 1578. One of the specific tasks of the synod was the relation between the Reformed Church and the 'new' government. This was another struggle for the Reformed Church. The synod did not come to an agreement between the Reformed Church and the government either regarding the election of elders and deacons or the calling of a preacher. The synod underscored the independence of the church over that issue. Later on, in 1586 the Reformed Church and government came to an agreement although with different policies for each region. Blei notes 'thus, absolute freedom from state interference was and remained an unattainable ideal for the Reformed Church. That coincided directly with its status as the only officially recognized church: the 'public church' within the Dutch political system, a status that it had itself striven to attain.'[333] The National Synod of the Reformed Church in Dordrecht 1578 accepted the position as a 'public church'. The 'public church' meant that the Reformed Church exists to serve the entire Dutch population. In certain matters, for example about marriage, the church and government had a joint task. Marriage was simply a matter of the government. The preacher functioned as a 'public person'. They appeared as representatives of the government. Couples who did not belong to the Reformed church were required to perform their marriage as confirmed by a Reformed preacher. So, the Reformed Church became an integral part of society. However, it does not mean that it simply became the organ of the state.[334]

From the historical perspective, the relation between the Reformed Church and the state in conducting marriages was influenced by Calvin's understanding of marriage. Witte notes that some subjects previously governed by church

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[332] See: Blei, 2007, pp. 9-18.
[333] Blei, 2007, p. 25.
[334] See: Blei, 2007, pp. 22-26.

courts, including marriage, were placed under the jurisdiction of the civil author-
ity. The legislation on marriage was produced by civil jurists that drew upon a
variety of Catholic canon law and Geneva's civil law prototypes.[335] After inde-
pendence, the Dutch civil law of marriage retained the traditional Catholic canon
law definition of betrothal as the first step to marriage. Per Calvin's thought on
marriage, marriage is a public institution in which parents, couple, and pastor all
play a role.[336]

Dutch civil law after independence adopted the basic canon law definition of
marriage: marriage is a free consensual union between a fit man and a fit woman.
In some parts, the new Dutch civil law accepted common Catholic and Protestant
impediments that protected free consent and accepted canon law of physical im-
pediments, consanguinity, and affinity. Like Calvin, the Dutch civil law insisted
that a marriage certificate was issued by magistrates, but the wedding would be
conducted by the Church. Concerning divorce, Dutch civil law blends Catholic
and Calvinist sources. On one hand, unlike Calvin, they retained the traditional
canon law of separation of bed and board, and on the other hand, unlike the can-
onists, they ordered separation of bed and board for any number of causes.[337]

Until this point, we have had a description of the Protestant tradition of mar-
riage and its development. The question can be raised; how did this tradition grow
and spread to different places that where influenced by Calvin's theology of mar-
riage? I perceive that the Dutch Protestant tradition on marriage is one example.
I am convinced that the influence of Calvin's theology of marriage can also be
found throughout the development of theological views on marriage among In-
donesian churches. From the mainline Protestant covenantal view of marriage in
American churches, Yates examines that the bonds of commonality dominate.
Yates sets forth six common characteristics of Calvin's covenantal view of mar-
riage: 1) the commitment by the partners to create a life of intimate companion-
ship, 2) the commitment on the part of couple to create and sustain a fabric of
honesty, trust, openness, and acceptance, 3) the commitment to explore and re-
spond to the religious and moral depths of human existence in the light of the
affirmation of the Christian faith, 4) the commitment to live out an ethic of cov-
enantal wholeness; love, justice, freedom, and order, 5) the commitment to create
boundaries and rules of behavior, and 6) the commitment to break the covenant

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[335] Witte points to some influential regulations on marriage, such as: *Plakkat, betreffende huwelijk,
echtbreuk enz.,*(1574), *Politieke ordonnantie van Holland* (1580), and *Politieke ordonnantie van
Zeeland* (1583). In footnote no. 276. See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, p. 252.
[336] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, p. 127.
[337] See: Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract,* 1997, p. 129.

only if the life of intimacy of the couple has ceased to exist and all available means have been exhausted in an effort to renew it.[338]

I think this is a challenge in such a way to discover the influence of Calvin's tradition on marriage in the Indonesian churches that are mostly rooted in these traditions, both Calvin and the Dutch Protestant traditions. How did it develop in the historical context of Indonesian churches? What is the implication of such a theology of marriage in the Indonesian churches especially related to interfaith marriage? I will address these respects in the chapter of the theology of marriage in the Indonesian context.

2.5. Conclusions

From our examination above, we discover that there are primary issues surrounding marriage within the Church, namely:

1. The issue of the sacramentality of marriage.

    The Church has defended its own theological arguments upon the place of marriage among other sacraments. Indeed, there are different arguments and approaches toward marriage. The debate on the sacramentality of marriage has been grounded on the theological understanding of marriage, but also on that of the sacrament. The difference in standpoint and perspective of each tradition toward the sacraments, primarily between Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, has implications on a different argument on the place of marriage. For Luther, the Reformer, marriage lies in the earthly kingdom, so it is subject to civil law and civil authority, not to canon law and the Church. By placing marriage within the earthly kingdom and bringing up the social estate of marriage, Luther urges that marriage is not a sacrament. Calvin was very influenced by the Reformer. He regarded marriage, family, and sexuality as part of the earthly kingdom. Marriage is not a sacrament of the heavenly kingdom. Regarding sacramentality of marriage there is a common Protestant view of marriage that marriage is established by God in the order of creation as divine calling, but it is not a sacrament.

2. The issue of jurisdiction and power.

    As I state above, the debate on the place of marriage as sacrament, in my view, is not merely a theological debate. This debate also implies the concern of ecclesial jurisdiction. It is about church authority, church power. By placing

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[338] Yates observes the primary source material of the Protestant marriage service and the official statements from the mainline Protestant denominations in the USA. Yates elaborates broadly these Protestant characters of covenantal marriage. See: Wilson Yates, *The Protestant View of Marriage*, in: Kieran Scott and Michael Warren (eds.), *Perspectives on Marriage, A Reader,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, pp. 444-456.

marriage in the earthly kingdom and not seeing it as a sacrament, both Luther and Calvin exclude marriage from ecclesial jurisdiction. Marriage is placed under the jurisdiction of civil authority. Protestant rejected the power that the Catholic Church wanted to exercise. There is a common Protestant view of marriage that marriage is public and civil domain. The theological and legal perspectives on marriage contain political nuance. We discover here that the scramble between authority and power play a role. Although it occurred in the historical context of the middle ages, in my view, it is still a crucial issue. Speaking about Church jurisdiction is about authority.

3. The issue of relation between the Church and state affairs.

   Whether a marriage is a sacrament or not, the marriage will bring the Church into contact with affairs of the state. As we discovered in both traditions of Luther and Calvin, marriage is a matter of civil authority. However, the Church has been involved by the civil authority for formulating marriage and even the maintenance or dissolution of marriage. The Church is responsible for teaching the spiritual norms for marriage and family life, whereas the state is responsible for enforcing mandatory civil norms. In marriage cases, as Calvin said, the consistory would call the parties with spiritual duties. If such counsel failed, the parties were referred to the city council to compel them, using civil and criminal sanctions. However, it would not be impossible that there would be different interests between them.

4. The issue of interfaith marriage

   Luther viewed that unbelief is not a spiritual impediment of marriage, but Calvin strongly rejected the mixed marriage. For Calvin, such unions would jeopardize all three purposes of marriage. Calvin viewed that the unbeliever could not understand the true meaning of love reflected in Christ, how to educate children in the love of God, and they might not resist the temptation of lust.

3. Biblical Perspectives on Interfaith Marriage

The stance of the church toward interfaith marriage is necessarily theological in nature. The reasons for its stance as stipulated in the regulations and enacted in the church order should reflect its theological arguments on this issue. Indeed, many factors influence the church in the process of decision-making. In the previous chapter, we discussed the official view of Indonesian churches toward marriage, and particularly interfaith marriage, in the Protestant tradition. We have already discussed the origin and development of the theology of marriage in its history, including the theological arguments against interfaith marriage. We have discovered there that the theological understanding developed within the history.

The doctrines of marriage by Martin Luther and John Calvin are constituted by their biblical interpretations. Undoubtedly, a theological understanding of marriage is grounded in its biblical interpretation. The biblical texts, either explicitly or implicitly pertaining to interfaith marriage, become primary references. For my purpose, it is necessary to elaborate on the discussion of the interpretation of the biblical texts. Therefore, in this regard, it is inevitable that we enter into the discussion around the biblical texts, particularly the texts that have commonly been used as the basis for arguments dealing with interfaith marriage.

Some questions can be raised in this regard such as do these texts explicitly prohibit interfaith marriage? How can a hermeneutical approach of the texts help us understand the way they relate to interfaith marriage? In order to answer these questions, we have to investigate the texts. In this section, we have to deal with these two questions. Furthermore, significant questions also emerge such as how do we understand those texts in our present context and circumstances? Are they still relevant for Indonesian churches struggling for their identity in a religiously plural context? If so, how can we use those texts as the basis for an argument to have an appropriate decision-making process, in terms of formulating the regulations upon this issue? Surely, we will not answer all those questions at once. I will come back to these questions in the next chapter.

Dealing with interfaith marriage from a biblical perspective, we must be aware that a biblical view cannot be formulated in the form of one single formulation. There is no single view of interfaith marriage in the Bible, because pro and contra stances exist. Hence, we cannot present a single biblical teaching on interfaith marriage. Although there are different views, together they can reflect the struggle of faithful communities to deal with this issue in their social-religious context and circumstances. There are some biblical texts that are, explicitly or implicitly, related to interfaith marriage. I do not intend to examine all such biblical texts by analyzing them literally and grammatically. I will investigate a selection of texts that explicitly speak about interfaith marriage. These selected texts are commonly used among Christians in the Indonesian churches as the primary argument against interfaith marriage. However, this common usage is not the main reason to discuss them here. These texts, both from the Old Testament and the New Testament, which explicitly speak about interfaith marriage, can serve as significant and pivotal input for going into a theological discussion of interfaith marriage. From these, we will adequately be able to discover the biblical perspectives of interfaith marriage prevalent in the context of Indonesian Christianity. Hence the investigation and interpretation of several scholars approaching these texts will be presented so that it helps us get a deeper and broader insight.

3.1. Interfaith Marriage in the Old Testament

Undoubtedly, interfaith marriages exist in the Old Testament. In the context of the Old Testament, in this regard, for the community of Israelites, interfaith marriage can also be characterized as 'mixed marriage' because it is constituted by both cultural and religious dimensions.[339] Mixed marriages between Israelites and foreigners, who were considered as unbelievers, occurred in the Old Testament period. A number of mixed marriage couples in the Old Testament can easily be mentioned. Esau, the son of Isaac chose his wives from among Canaanite women (Genesis 36). Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel, married Asnat, the daughter of a priest in Egypt (Genesis 41). Moses married Zipporah (Exodus 2) and an unnamed Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1). Gideon had a Shechemite woman (Judges 8). Samson had three lovers (a woman in Timnah, a woman in Gaza, and Delilah, a Philistine woman). Well-known is the story of Ruth (Moabite woman) and Boaz. David married Maacah (daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur), and Solomon married foreign wives among many others.

In spite of the practice of mixed marriages taking place among the Israelites, it by no means infers that mixed marriage was always accepted positively. There were also bitter stories as a result of mixed marriages. One of the fatal influences of foreign women is to be found in the story of Delilah, who brought Samson to his fall (Judges 16:4-22). The story of Ahab is another one. Among the kings of the Northern Kingdom (Israel), it is noteworthy to see Ahab. He married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon and priest of Astarte. Ahab was influenced by his wife Jezebel whom he allowed to build a temple dedicated to Baal in Samaria (I Kings 16:32). The true prophets were slain; altars of the Lord were torn down and Elijah was forced to flee for his life. The reign, marked by idolatry and the evil influence of Jezebel, affected generations with evil and was condemned by Hosea (1 Kings 1) and Micah (1 Kings 6). Here we see a picture of how mixed marriages had a bitter impact on the community of Israel.

The biblical texts that directly prohibit mixed marriages in the history of ancient Israel can be found in Exodus 34:11-16 and Deuteronomy 7:3-4.

Mixed Marriage in Exodus 34:10–16[340]

10 *Then the Lord said: I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The*

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[339] In this section, I use the term 'mixed marriage' in a broad sense that includes interfaith marriage.
[340] New International Version, Bible online; http://www.biblestudytools.com/exodus/34.html. All the biblical passages (English version) come from NIV.

people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you.

11 Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

12 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you.

13 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles.

14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

15 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices.

16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

The troubles connected to the union with foreign women, especially Canaanite women, are directly addressed in Exodus 34. The reason given is that Canaanite women would persuade their husbands to worship Canaanite gods. Thereby they would forsake the God of their fathers, Israel's Yahweh (vs. 16). The prohibition of mixed marriage is presented in connection with a warning against breaking the covenant by establishing a covenant relationship with the Canaanites (vs.15). Exodus 34 has to be understood in the context of the covenant relationship of Yahweh and the Israelites. In verse 11, God promises to drive out the foreign nations (the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites) before the Israelites, and to give the people of Israel the land. As a response, God demands fidelity from the people of Israel to obey His commandments. Fidelity is a pivotal element of the covenant relationship, for God is a jealous God and He will not tolerate worship of another god (v.14). So, the warning against mixed marriage is grounded on fidelity as an aspect of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites. Thus, the issue of mixed marriage and the covenant relationship with Yahweh is interwoven. Mixed marriage is seen as a threat that can destroy the covenant relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites, leading them to apostasy – the worship of other gods, as they "…*prostitute themselves to*

their gods" (v.16). Houtman concludes that the prohibition of mixed marriages in Exodus 34 is an effort of prevention.[341]

Departing from verse 10, Meyers' view is that this passage is placed under the context of the renewal of the covenant. The Israelites are invited to anticipate what lies in the future, in the promised homeland. The people are warned against interactions with the people of the land. What kind of contact is it that God prohibits? Meyers emphasizes the character of the text as an admonition rather than a prohibition. Although the text forbids an agreement with the local inhabitants, the agreement itself is not the issue. The problem lies in the interactions with the local people, who have their own gods and their own religious system, which will deliver the Israelites into the temptation of entering into the relationship of a political contract with them. Yahweh wants to take no chance that the Israelites will join in the religious lives of their neighbors. It could happen if they were allied by a treaty. Mixed marriage would have been a possible way for Israelite to enter into such an alliance. However, the admonition only concerns a marriage between an Israelite male and a local woman. In Meyers' opinion, the reason lies in the crucial roles of women in the household. It might be a great risk for the cultural-religious identity of Israel if local non-Israelite women become wives in the Yahwistic family. Meyers affirms that the focus of the admonition has to be understood in more general cultural terms.[342]

If we follow either Houtman, who says that the prohibition is an effort of prevention, or Meyers, who says that the prohibition is an admonition, in my opinion, the character of this passage cannot be conceived as a law. I can understand those kinds of interpretations because this passage is not followed by sanctions. The sanctions can be found in the repetition of this prohibition in the book of Deuteronomy, specifically in Deuteronomy 7.

Mixed Marriage in Deuteronomy 7:1-11

1 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—

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[341] See: Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus,* Historical Commentary on The Old Testament Volume 3, Peeters, Leuven, 2000, p. 723-724.
[342] See: Carol Meyers, *Exodus,* The New Cambridge Bible Commentary, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, p. 264.

2 and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.

3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons,

4 for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

5 This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire.

6 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

7 The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

8 But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

10 But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him.

11 Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees, and laws I give you today.

The warning against mixed marriage in Exodus is repeated in Deuteronomy 7:3. The same reason is given. The book of Deuteronomy has numerous laws of the covenant: no living area of the chosen people is outside the perspective of the covenant.[343] Deuteronomy 7:1-11 is a sermon that deals with the future relationship of Israel to the Canaanites. The relationship between Israel and the

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[343] It can also be seen as the theology of covenant. See: J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy,* Apollos Old Testament Commentary, IVP Academic, Illinois, 2002, p. 26.

Canaanites has to be understood in the context of the occupation of the land. God has fought against the nations for Israel (v.1). Therefore, Israelites may not make a treaty with them. To make a treaty with other nations would indicate a lack of faithfulness to God (v.2). The prohibition of mixed marriage, just as in Exodus, is also presented in connection with a warning against breaking the covenant (Deut.7:2, 9). Therefore, the prohibition of mixed marriages must be seen in the spirit of fidelity to the covenant relationship with God, their liberator. McConville considers intermarriage[344] as a potential factor in the mixing of cultures and religions in Israel's world.[345] In other words, the prohibition of intermarriage was the only path for the chosen people to protect their purity so that they could live faithfully before God. According to McConville, this understanding can also be used to read a similar text of prohibition of mixed marriages, i.e. Deuteronomy 21:10-14 and Deuteronomy 23:3-9.[346] In my opinion, compared with Deuteronomy 7:13, Deuteronomy 21:10-14 and Deuteronomy 23:3-9 are not about a prohibition of mixed marriage. Deuteronomy 21:10-14 is to be understood in the same context as Deuteronomy 7:3, but in the end, Israelites are permitted to marry foreign women after fulfilling some requirements. In Deuteronomy 21:10-14, an Israelite man may marry a Canaanite woman after he has fulfilled some requirements according to the procedure stipulated in Deuteronomy 21:12-13. Meanwhile, Deuteronomy 23:3-9 is not at all about mixed marriages, but rather it speaks about the assembly of the Lord in which Ammonites and Moabites cannot be admitted.

Wright is also of the opinion that Deuteronomy 7:3 is grounded on verses 1-2 in the context of the covenant relationship with God. Nonetheless, Wright says that the 'totally' in verse 2 should be conceived as a renouncing of things or people, a refusal to take any advantage from the nations. Thus, things or persons could be renounced without necessarily being destroyed. If the Canaanites must be destroyed, then verse 3 is unnecessary. Furthermore, in Wright's opinion, the prohibition of intermarriage in verse 3 is not based on ethnic grounds, because mixed marriage, in fact, has existed in the history of Israel. As stated in verses 4 and 5, mixed marriage, in this respect, is an intermarriage that involves the social bonding of families and joining in religious rituals. The marriage that would compromise the people with idolatry was banned in the critical days of the settlement in the land. Such intermarriage was perceived as a dangerous marriage to be avoided. In relation to verse 2, mixed marriage might also be forbidden as an adjunct to the making of treaties with the people of the land. According to Wright,

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[344] The term 'intermarriage' is also used by some scholars to address this issue, but I tend to use term 'mixed marriage' in this section.
[345] See: McConville, *Deuteronomy,* 2002, p. 152.
[346] See: McConville, *Deuteronomy,* 2002, pp. 329-330, 349.

this is similar to the motivation of the post-exilic resettlement period in Ezra.[347] In my opinion, we can see two things: first, the existence of mixed marriages is a fact in the history of Israel; and second, mixed marriage was forbidden because it was presumed to involve joining in another religious ritual. The question then is, how about a mixed marriage that by no means involves joining in another religious ritual? Such intermarriage, for instance, can be found in the story of Ruth.

Lemche states that a general theological line is emphasized in the Old Testament. He notes: "The idea of the twelve-tribe people was central to the notion of the Israelite nation as expressed by the Old Testament writers. Without this institution there would have been no reason for the claim that Israel was a special people, with a special history and with special claims that made it different from (and preferable to) any other people of this world. Israel would not have had a history of its own but would have been just one among many other ethnic groups and entities of ancient Palestine."[348] However, he offers a discussion to explain that the nationality of Israelites could not only be based on the common foundation of a myth, i.e. the exodus event, and a common religious organization with a common shrine, the tabernacle. According to Lemche, Israel should be understood as constituting a special ethnic identity, free from foreign interference although always ready to seek such relations, thereby breaking the law of its God. Furthermore, Lemche says, "the governing thesis is that the Israel of Palestine's past constituted a holy league ruled by God, and with a long history preceding its entry into the Promised Land. The model of the society of the past helped prove that Israel, in every aspect, possessed its own ethnic identity when it became the people of God in God's own country. It broke down, however, because it was not possible to maintain this identity in relation to the other inhabitants of the country."[349]

Concerning mixed marriage, Lemche uses the term 'common blood' to explain how this ancient tradition was strongly emphasized in the Old Testament. Blood is perceived as a pivotal element that keeps an ethnic union together. It always carries the connotation that it is part of the special relationship between Israel and its God. Therefore, the importance of keeping the blood clean from foreign influence means, at one and the same time, to keep the covenant with Yahweh. Only if the bloodline is kept free of foreigners would Israel be able to survive. Lemche

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[347] See: Christopher J.H. Wright, *Deuteronomy,* Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, Bakers Book, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 109.

[348] Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition*, Westminster John Knox Press, London, 1998, p. 107.

[349] Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition,* 1998, p. 106.

confirms that in the biblical context the idea of common blood has also been extended to include religion, "the question of the correct relationship with Israel's God is the same as keeping the pedigree immaculate. Not even after ten generations are the offspring of mixed marriage between Israelites and foreigners allowed entrance to the congregation of the Lord (Deut. 23:3). No wonder that Ezra had to clean the foreign element out of his Israel before the new Israel could have any hope of survival (Ezra 10)."[350] Nevertheless, as I stated above, the Old Testament also contains a side that seems to go into a direction different from this common theological line. We can find examples such as the story of Ruth, the ancestor of David. Lemche regards the story of Ruth as a fact of the history of Israel, proof that "it was not possible to maintain this identity in relation to the other inhabitants of the country."[351] Even more, Lemche shows in practical ordinances such as the law concerning women taken as prisoners of war and their rights when they became members of the household (Deut.21:10-14), the obligation to allow foreigners to live among the Israelites, to offer them a refuge from their enemies, *"do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt" (*Exodus 22:2*), "do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt" (*Exodus 23:9*),* "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God"* (Leviticus 19:33-34*), "And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt*" (Deut.10:19). The same goes for the prohibition against the extradition of slaves who have escaped from a foreign master, "*If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master. Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them"* (Deut.23:15-16). These provisions are stipulated with a reference to the status of the Israelites as foreigners in Egypt.

So far, we can note that mixed marriages occur in the Old Testament and apparently without objection, whereas in another time they appear to be a serious threat to the community, so the prohibition is followed by a sanction. I realize that occurrences of mixed marriage in the history of ancient Israel do not mean that mixed marriage was always permitted. The covenant with God, the maintenance of faithfulness before God, the struggle for their identity as the chosen people of God, and the need to keep themselves away from any apostasy or the

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[350] See: Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition,* 1998, p. 110.
[351] See: Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition*, 1998, p. 106.

chance to fall into worshiping other gods are some of the points surrounding the prohibition of mixed marriage in the history of ancient Israel.

Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9 – 10

As we have seen above, mixed marriage implied a fatal influence for Israel as a community. It also led to a critical situation for the chosen people in its history. A tragic action regarding mixed marriage, as recorded in the Bible, can be found in the period of return from exile, in the era of Ezra and Nehemiah. The biblical story of the exclusion in this era of foreign women because of mixed marriage clearly portrays the struggle for identity, on the one hand, and the struggle for fidelity to God, on the other hand. It is no wonder that this story is commonly conceived as an important theological reference in facing interfaith marriage from an Old Testament perspective.

The book of Ezra tells the story of the return from exile, from Babylon to Yehud, and the reconstruction of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. In the new Israel era, Ezra also carries out the restoration of the faithfulness of the Israelites to God. In Ezra 9, Ezra mourns and prays in response to the news that the people of Israel have intermarried with the women of the people of the land. It is noteworthy that many clergy and laymen married foreign wives. Ezra 10:18 – 44 has a list of them. Ezra finally lurches into action. The action taken seems rather extreme: the community is requested to separate from the foreign women and the foreign woman and children were expelled (Ezra 10:3). Apparently, this position is the reaffirmation of the law and the instruction of the prohibition against mixed marriage for Israelites (verse 3b). This tragic action stimulates the emergence of some questions: why is mixed marriage a significant issue to this extent? Why should these divorces and expulsions be seen as the best solution for dealing with mixed marriage? What is the idea behind this action?

Generally speaking, in the time of the return from exile, Ezra is restoring a life of faithfulness to God. Ezra tries to rescue the holy nation. Therefore, his opposition to mixed marriages took place in a specific situation where the community of Israel was in danger as a holy nation. Nehemiah's reaction was different from Ezra's. Ezra's handling of the problem was much more drastic than Nehemiah's.[352] Nehemiah did not go as far as Ezra who demanded a divorce (see Ezra 10). The Jewish community to which Ezra returned found themselves in an ambivalent situation, trapped between a political and religious sense of identity. Therefore, Ezra intended to encourage the development of a religious identity.

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[352] *Cf.* L.H. Brockington (ed.), *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther,* Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Nashville, 1969, p. 20.

Williamson says this could not be achieved without maintaining a distinctive self-identity and this was perceived to be threatened by mixed marriage. However, Williamson suggests that it is not necessary to accept this uncritically. In the view of Williamson, these chapters are descriptive. That does not automatically make them prescriptive for Christian faith.[353] Likewise, Nehemiah demanded an end to further mixed marriages (Neh.10:30). In Nehemiah 13:28, Nehemiah deals with mixed marriage, particularly regarding the son of Jehoiada who had a mixed marriage with the daughter of Sanballat. The reason was that the son of the high priest must follow the law of the high priest concerning marriage (Lev. 21:14-15). Nehemiah emphasized that such behavior should not be repeated, neither marriage with foreign men nor with foreign women. Williamson also says that this cannot be understood legalistically, because Nehemiah would rather present the law again in order to remind the people.[354]

It is necessary to add that the measures taken by Ezra against intermarriage were not successful. The concern of both Ezra and Nehemiah to exclude marriage with a foreign woman is understandable, but here the situation is much less clear since we do not know when and under what circumstances the emphasis on matrilineal descent originated. In Deuteronomy 7:3-4, the prohibition includes both sexes, whereas Leviticus 24:10-23 presents the case of an Israelite woman married to an Egyptian man. On the assumption that the mother has the greater influence on the child's religion, emphasis on excluding foreign woman as a marriage partner is readily understandable. On the other hand, the assumption would have probably been made, as it appears to have been among the Jews of Egypt, that a Jewish woman who married a foreign man also adopted his cult and therefore no longer belonged to the Jewish community.[355] The requirement that this is done according to the law is puzzling at first sight since Pentateuch law nowhere requires an Israelite to divorce his foreign wife. We must conclude that what is implied here is a particular interpretation of law, especially the interpretation of law from Deuteronomy forbidding marriage with the native population. Thus, this is one of several indications in the book of Ezra of the crucial importance of biblical interpretation as a factor in the struggle to determine the identity and character of the community. The kind of exclusion act by which the interpretation is implemented and imposed also takes us back to Deuteronomy 7:4, "*for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the*

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[353] See: H.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah,* Word Biblical Commentary Volume 16, Word Book Publisher, Texas, 1985, p. 161.

[354] See: Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah,* 1985, p. 334.

[355] *Cf.* Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra – Nehemiah*, Old Testament Library, SCM Press LTD, London, 1988, p. 177.

LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you." The NIV uses the word 'children', while the Hebrew text *'binka'* means 'son'. In the Indonesian Bible (TB-LAI) *'anak laki-laki'*, it is also 'son'. From Deut.7:4, Ezra regards that it was foreign women, not foreign men, who threatened the faithfulness of Israel before God. Therefore, for Ezra, the main problem is the presence of foreign women within the Israelites. Thus, the exclusion act of foreign women and their children is a result of the interpretation of Deuteronomy 7:4. Whereas Deuteronomy 29:9-14 speaks of 'breaking' a covenant that not only involves women and children, but also the men of Israel in which the curse is the operative element.[356]

Janzen has a different approach toward this text. He investigates this chapter with a socio-anthropological approach. He says that generally speaking, scholars explain that the issue at stake in this chapter is boundary maintenance. It is hardly surprising, since Ezra 9–10 is the story of the divorce and the expulsion of a particular group of women for redefining community boundaries to reject a particular group of people. Furthermore, Janzen divides the scholarly opinions on the motivation of the boundary maintenance into three basic categories:[357]

1. Ezra is simply enforcing the law in order to prevent apostasy. Janzen says that those who propose apostasy as an explanation – such as Mark Throntveit, D.J.A. Clines, and Jacob Myers – often believe that the presence of foreign women threatened to lead to widespread apostasy and syncretism and that the future of existence of YHWHism was at stake.

2. There is an issue of ethnic identity at stake that the divorces and bans were designed to address. Janzen refers to the view of Williamson who is of the opinion that the root of the divorces lies in the community's need for a 'distinctive self-identity'. While in the view of Daniel Smith-Christopher, the marriages to foreign women may have resulted from attempts on the part of males in the Jerusalem temple community to marry into a higher economic class. The divorces, then, were an attempt to re-create the ethnic purity of the society.

3. The motivating factor behind the social boundary maintenance was really an economic or political issue. Janzen points to the opinion of Jon Berquist who argues that the list of men who divorced women 'leans heavily toward the priest and leaders'. So, the divorces would have served the interests of the economic elite who would have been concerned that land and political control did not leave their circle. Janzen also puts in this category Harold Washington

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[356] *Cf.* Blenkinsopp, *Ezra – Nehemiah*, 1988, pp. 188-189.
[357] David Janzen, *Witch-hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries, The Expulsion of the Foreign Women in Ezra 9-10*, Journal for Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 350, Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, pp. 10-17.

who urges that intermarriage is related to the issue of inheritance. Washington concludes that the community saw marriage to foreign women as a problem because inheritance could lead to alienation of property from the community.

Janzen argues that all alternative explanations above are not mentioned in the text itself. He says that these scholars do not follow the rationale for the divorces and expulsion offered by Ezra 9-10. Janzen states that the text itself does indeed include a clear explanation of why the community imposes the expulsion of these women: they were impure.[358] The mixed marriage crisis begins with the report of an official of Yehud to Ezra that the people of Israel, the priest, and the Levites had not separated themselves from the peoples of the land (Ezra 9:1). Ezra's response to the message was to tear his garment and pull out some of the hair of his head and beard, the symbols of mourning. Then he begins his prayer of Ezra 9:6-15, which contains a number of interesting notions. He begins by noting his shame of iniquity and guilt due to the community members who had married women from peoples of the land. Ezra saw that it had brought the community into its dangerous situation. Ezra used a specific vocabulary to describe the peoples of the lands. He referred to them by speaking about the impurity of the peoples of the lands (Ezra 9:11). Janzen says that the term impurity ('*nidda*') used by Ezra to describe the foreign people has similar connotations with Leviticus 26:40*,* and that the impure are irreconcilably opposed to the holy, and they are dangerous to life (Lev.22:3).[359] This is purity language. Here, however, conversion is not envisioned as an option, and racial purity is pursued on religious grounds. At the end of Ezra's prayer, the spokesperson follows the idea of impurity within the community by saying, "*We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us*" (Ezra 10:2). That is a symbolic acceptance of their guilt, just as when Ezra claimed that the grace of God towards the community was threatened by the community's own guilt. The community recognized their culpability when he said, "*for now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all the women and their children*" (Ezra 10:2-3). For Janzen, from the narrative itself, the issue at stake here is clearly a separation from

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[358] See: Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 19.

[359] Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 40. See also: Leslie C. Allen & Timothy S. Laniak, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, Bakers Book, Grand Rapids, 2003, p. 72. The term '*nidda*' is used as the general theological term for infidelity to the God of the covenant linked with a need for confession. Even more, Leslie says that exclusion is a logical conclusion of Deuteronomy 23:2. Outsiders who belong to 'the peoples of the lands" have no place in the new Israel, as the narratives of Deut.4:1-4 and Deut.6:21 make clear. In the list of pagan nations in Deuteronomy 7:4, religion is the basis for exclusion. Consequently, only marriage inside the community is expedient and indeed necessary – so strong is the scent of spiritual danger.

impurity, and so it is no wonder that the solution is to force the women out. The text makes no claim that the women must be expelled because of things that they have done. It states that the community must be separated from the woman of the land because of their impure nature. However, Janzen argues that although Ezra appears to rely on Pentateuchal law, the rationale for enforcing the law in Ezra 9 – 10 is not the same as in Exodus and Deuteronomy that speak about apostasy. In his opinion, there is only little evidence in the texts themselves that can be used to say that such women had been involved in turning people away from YHWH. There may have been cases of apostasy in the community because of many sources through which foreign ideas and religion could enter Judah. If apostasy was a widespread phenomenon, or was at least perceived to be so, it might make more sense to blame other sources than the foreign women who represented a tiny percentage of the population. It is difficult to see how YHWHism could be threatened by about 100 women among a population of around 20,000.[360]

Using an anthropological approach, Janzen understands the action of divorce as an expulsion, a ritualized act of purification. He explains that in order to understand an action undertaken by a social group, we must be aware of the social composition, structure, and worldview of that group. Janzen believes that with full consideration of the social structure of the community, with emphasis on its external boundaries, its internal social integration, and its worldview, it should be possible to explain why this particular social group took this action and not any other. As mentioned above, Janzen pays much attention to the use of purity language in the narrative. In the narrative, Ezra and the community use the language of purity and morality to describe Israel's current state of very real danger. The language of purity and impurity illustrates the community's danger: foreign and impure contaminants threaten the community with destruction. Janzen says, "If it is the impurity that threatens the community's existence, the moral question regarding the culpability of those who caused them to dwell in the midst of the holy seed is also in question."[361] Janzen views this as a sort of anxiety that is caused by a lack of social cohesion[362] – a declining commitment to the moral order. A society with strong external boundaries will look for the foreign influences – the impure – that have contaminated the social body. Janzen defines the temple community in fifth century Yehud as a community 'with weak internal integration and strong external boundaries.' 'Weak internal integration' means that the members' adherence to the supposed social norms, morality, and worldview was

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[360] See: Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 13.
[361] Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 43.
[362] See: Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 43. Janzen explains social cohesion as a commitment to the moral order, and 'external boundaries' as an obsession with keeping pure from foreign influences.

loose; 'strong external boundaries' means that the community tended to fence off foreign influences from the community.[363] Therefore, Janzen comes to the statement that divorce and expulsion of the foreign women was the result of a 'witch-hunt'. In his opinion, 'witch-hunts' occur in societies with strong external boundaries. Societies with external boundaries obviously fear foreigners, which Janzen characterizes as an anti-social behavior. Thus, Janzen views purification rites as compelling the community to reject the foreign on behalf of the native social order. By the use of this social-anthropological approach, Janzen affirms that it is evident that the basis for understanding the idea behind the tragic action can be discovered within the text itself. It takes the purity language and high communal anxiety in Ezra 9 – 10 seriously, since we expect to hear such language from a community with strong external boundaries that is anxious that its social coherence is collapsing.[364]

Katherine Southwood is another scholar who uses an anthropological approach towards Ezra 9-10. Southwood analyzes Ezra's crisis regarding intermarriage through the lens of ethnicity. She mentions a number of issues that circle around the central problem of intermarriage in Ezra 9-10 such as ethnicity, religious identity, purity, land, kinship, and migration. These issues are explored in terms of their modern treatment within anthropology for understanding the chapters of Ezra, itself.

Southwood uses dimensions of migration, assimilation, and ethnicity to become significant factors for the analysis of Ezra's mixed marriage crisis. She explains that the Israelite community was facing the problem of identity in the pre-exile, exile, and post-exile eras, as well as regarding migration and returning migration.[365] Since Ezra 9 – 10 speaks of return from exile, it may be helpful to gain a better understanding of ethnicity and return migration. Southwood shows that mixed marriage is of fundamental importance for measuring the social distance between migrant communities with host societies and levels of assimilation. She says that migrants (individuals or groups) are impelled into a fresh confrontation with themselves that emerge into new expressions of exclusiveness and separateness with the host culture. Consequently, migrant culture often remains more traditional than the culture of the region of origin. The relationship between various generations of migrants must also be taken into account. First, second, or third generations of migrants are different in terms of their ethnic identities and their willingness to assimilate. Numerous factors must be taken into consideration

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[363] See: Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 22.
[364] See: Janzen, *Witch-hunts,* 2002, p. 43.
[365] See: Katherine Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10, An Anthropological Approach*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2012, pp. 41-44.

regarding the question of how immigrants assimilate successfully into their host society. Assimilation is conditioned by the degree to which groups native to the receiving society are willing to allow migrants to identify with them.

Return migration is another issue for consideration, as with Israel's return from exile. This process deals with terms such as reintegration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, re-acculturation, rebuilding, recovery, re-establishment, etc. The idea of the homeland will also play a role. Home is also a means of identity affirmation. Nevertheless, the idea of the homeland for the return migrants also brings reverse culture shock because they are experiencing changes and transformations outside the home, while the compatriots at home are doing things in a similar manner. As a result, returnees often discover that the place of return bears little resemblance to the imaginary pre-displacement homelands constructed in the course of exile. It can be said that return may be more traumatic than the experience of exile itself. The sense of estrangement is experienced even if the return is peaceful. There is a contradiction between the imagined homeland and the reality of return. Return migration is characterized by a considerable amount of ambivalence and hybridity. Southwood affirms that the issue of ethnicity has a place in Ezra's mixed marriage crisis. Furthermore, she says that the most powerful expression of ethnicity in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah occurs in the loaded self-description that introduces the intermarriage narrative: the holy seed (Ezra 9:2). Therefore, whereas Janzen uses the term 'ritualized act of purification' to refer to the action of divorce and expulsion, Southwood uses the term 'a ritualized ethnicity.'[366]

In my opinion, Janzen and Southwood have given a broader insight that helps us to answer the questions regarding the tragic action. Indeed, this was a tragic action in the post-exile history of Israel. Israel must deal with a great social struggle concerning its identity in a certain context. That is the way the Israelite community solved its thorny and complicated social problem in the context of a post-exile community. Unfortunately, as Janzen confirms, the solution is anti-social and immoral.

We discover that mixed marriage occurs in the Old Testament. Once again, we discover the struggle of the chosen people dealing with their identity in the new post-exilic era. The Israelites were challenged to formulate their conviction to God, expressed in their fidelity to God, and actualized into their lives with people of other faiths. We can see through our investigation that the prohibition of mixed marriages that took place in a particular time and situation was a means to realize their calling. Unfortunately, the solution is anti-social and unfair.

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[366] See: Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10,* 2012, pp. 45-56.

3.2. Interfaith Marriage in the New Testament

If we explore the whole New Testament, we will not discover a text in the Gospel, considered as the teaching of Jesus, which explicitly speaks about interfaith marriage. Surely Jesus spoke about marriage and divorce, but he did not speak about interfaith marriage at all. It means that we do not have a reference for what Jesus taught about this issue. The New Testament texts that explicitly speak about interfaith marriage can only be found in the first letter of Paul to Corinthians, namely 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. Nevertheless, there is another text that is commonly used as the basic argument to deal with this issue, namely 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. Therefore, I will address them both.

Interfaith Marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

12 To the rest, I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her.

13 And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

16 How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Scholars mostly agree that this passage is Paul's response (see 1 Cor. 7:1) to the questions regarding a number of issues raised by the Corinthian Christians which caused controversy within the congregation, such as marriage, remarriage, divorce, singleness, etc. The context of 1 Cor.7 is clearly not about marriage or family, but more about the place of sexuality in Christian life. We must notice that asceticism and libertinism were currently affecting the Corinthians. Ascetics stated that sexuality hampers someone from gaining spiritual excellence. They denied and repressed physical, worldly impulses and desire. While, contrary to that, libertines stated that spiritual existence was completely independent, free from the physical, and not concerned with morality. Opposing those views, Paul

argues that marriage is not sin (verse 28) – as a response to asceticism – and that sexual morality is a must in order to serve God with the whole body (verse 35) – in response to libertinism. In opposition to sexual immorality, Paul had warned before in 1 Cor.6:20: "*You were bought with a price, Glorify God in your body*."

In 1 Cor.7:2–7, Paul explains that marriage is not only a protection against immorality, because of the trend of prostitution in Corinth, but more deeply that intercourse is necessarily something for which each partner is obligated to the other (verse 3). This point of view of Paul could be connected to the ascetics who thought that the new life of Christians must preclude sexual union, even between husband and wife. Then Paul goes on to the issue of divorce. In verses 10-11, Paul says that there is no justification at all for Christian couples to divorce. For this argument, Paul affirms, his authority is from the Lord.

Hereafter, Paul gives his opinion concerning mixed marriages. In verse 12, Paul says, "*I say, not the Lord*." According to verses 12-13, for couples who live in a mixed marriage, the Christian partner should not take the initiative to divorce. If the unbelieving spouse insists on living together, divorce is prohibited. Apparently, in this case, mixed marriage does not imply that husband and wife belonged to different religions at the time of their wedding, but it regards marriages in which the spouse has become Christian afterwards. Paul affirms that the believing husband or wife should not initiate a divorce. His argument is stated in verses 12 – 16. The reason is given in verse 14; the unbelieving spouse is consecrated or sanctified through the believing spouse. Furnish summarizes Paul's argument in the form of a syllogism; holy children are produced by holy marriages. Mixed marriages produce holy children. Conclusion: mixed marriages are holy marriages. The next syllogism is that mixed marriages are holy marriages. Holy marriages should be maintained. Conclusion: Mixed marriages should be maintained.[367] The idea of maintaining mixed marriages refers to verse 15, *"But God has called us to live in peace*."

Until this point, the context of this passage is quite clear. However, for a deeper understanding of Paul's position on interfaith marriage, in my opinion, we need to answer some questions such as to what extent did Paul actually speak about mixed marriage? Did Paul approve or disapprove of mixed marriage? Is there any statement from Paul that shows he approves of mixed marriage? These are pivotal questions since this passage is frequently used as a foundational argument coming into the debate on two poles, approving or disapproving of mixed

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[367] See: Victor Paul Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1981, pp. 44-45, quoted in: Paul A.J. Waney, *Mixed Marriages, A Preliminary Inquiry Toward A Biblical, Historical, and Pastoral Approach*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, 2005, pp. 40-41.

marriages. Both positions use the same passage for support. In fact, in my view, there is no explicit statement of Paul approving or disapproving mixed marriages.

In 1 Cor. 7:39 Paul says: "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord". Even though the common opinion would take these words as proof that Paul definitely would not agree to a marriage between a Christian and non-Christian, Waney says that verse 39 is debatable and left open for different interpretations.[368] Major interpretations of verse 39 suggest that it cannot be seen as legalistic teaching. In the context of 1 Corinthians 7, we find various examples of Paul's pastoral guidance; some should remain single, others should marry. Some should maintain their marriages, others choose to separate. Some formerly married persons should remain unmarried, others may remarry. Therefore, in verse 39, Paul may be understood as offering advice that is not at all a legal procedure.[369]

Scholars have given various interpretations and explanations of 1 Corinthians 7 concerning mixed marriage. Gordon D. Fee explains that Paul affirms that mixed marriages are essentially Christian marriages. And, when well maintained, they offer an opportunity for the unbelieving partner to be saved. Thus, for Fee, mixed marriage is real, but not ideal; it is allowed, but not to be promoted.[370] Craig S Keener says that many Corinthians converted after their marriages, apparently wanting a more spiritual vision; therefore, they wanted to end their marriages on the ground of spiritual incompatibility. Hence Paul admonishes them not to break up with their spouses simply because they were unbelievers. In other words, mixed marriage is a committed marriage.[371] In the same argument, Maron L. Swards explains that Corinthian Christians form the first generation after conversion. Their religious background is mostly paganism and they might have a spouse who is a non-believer. Paul's teaching to their situation was simple and clear. Believers were to remain in their marriages if their non-believing partners agree. Paul's teaching excludes the possibility of the Christian member of the marriage initiating a divorce specifically because the spouse was an unbeliever.[372] Thus, it is quite clear that Paul did not speak about approval or disapproval of

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[368] See: Waney, *Mixed Marriages*, 2005, p. 42.

[369] See: James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1998, p. 698.

[370] See: Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* Eerdmans Publishing, (Revised Edition), Grand Rapids, 2014, pp. 329-330.

[371] See: Craig S. Keener, *1 – 2 Corinthians,* New Cambridge Bible Commentary, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 64-65.

[372] See: Maron L. Soards, *1 Corinthians,* New International Bible Commentary, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 2004, pp. 149-150.

mixed marriage; rather, Paul is interested in mixed marriage as a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Likewise, we find in this passage that there is no tension or problem of identity regarding cultural identities such as Gentiles and Jews, Greek and Roman, or religious identities such as Christian and non-Christian, etc.

In my opinion, 1 Cor.7:12 is followed by the reason, or explanation, in 1 Cor. 7:14. 1 Cor.7:14 cannot be separated from 1 Cor. 7:12 because 1 Cor.7:14 is the reason for the dissolution of mixed marriage. In other words, 1 Cor. 7:14 determines the meaning of 1 Cor. 7:12. What did Paul want to say in 1 Cor. 7:14? Jerome Murphy-O'Connor says that there are certain assumptions toward 1 Cor.7:14. The *first* assumption is that the Corinthians feared that a mixed marriage would make the Christian partner and the community unclean, but he argued that this assumption is too specific. All that can be affirmed is that some members of the community were in favor of the dissolution of mixed marriages. The reason for adopting this position is rather speculative. I concur with Murphy-O'Connor that there is no hint that Paul speaks about the influence of the unbeliever within the community, specifically in the Christian family, in terms of taking care of the children or religious cult. The *second* assumption is based on the fact that in 1 Cor. 7:14, Paul uses the term '*akathartos*' which means unclean or impure. So, Paul characterizes the unbeliever as *akatharsia*. In this opinion, it is assumed that Paul uses *akathartos* in a ritualistic legal sense. From this perspective, Paul would have taught the Corinthians that an unbeliever was unclean and could communicate their unclean state to a Christian. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor disagrees with this assumption because there is no hint that the ancient church was influenced by this attitude. Murphy-O'Connor argues that this is explicitly contradicted by the practice of the earliest Christian community, for instance: Peter who stayed many days in the house of Simon and entered the house of Cornelius. Murphy-O'Connor argues that Paul never used '*akathartos*' in a ritual sense, but that it always carries an ethical connotation. The *third* assumption is based on the fact that Paul uses the terms *hagiazo* (which means 'sanctify') and *hagios* (which means 'holy'). However, this raises the question as to what Paul understood by 'holiness'. Murphy-O'Connor examines Paul's concept of holiness and he concludes that 'holiness' in 1 Cor.7:14 is used in terms of ethical behavior. In his opinion, Paul predicates 'holy' of the unconverted partner in a mixed marriage, and of the Corinthians' children, not of their relationship to the Christian community, but of their comportment. They were acting as Paul would wish Christians to behave. It is not an automatic concomitant of belief. By consenting to live with the Christian, the unbeliever brings his/her behavior into line with the intention of the Christian concerning marriage including the intention to prohibit

divorce. In this regard, the behavior of the unbeliever is identical with the conduct that Paul expects of Christians. The conduct of the unbeliever is not simply a fact, but a consciously chosen pattern of behavior. This could also be relevant for children. Paul's basis here is the simple fact of experience that children assimilate to the behavior pattern of their parents. If the conduct of the parents is categorized as 'holy', then that of their children deserves the same qualification. More positively, the children whose conduct has been formed according to Christian standards grow naturally into the act of faith.[373] The interpretation of Murphy-O'Connor is very significant for us. In my view, at that moment, Paul highlights ethical matters rather than mixed marriage, itself. In other words, Paul is not interested at all to discuss whether mixed marriage is permitted or not. More positively, Paul accepts interfaith marriage as a reality within the congregation, and, more importantly, it must be well maintained.

This passage has challenged Biblical commentators to approach it from different perspectives. James D.G. Dunn has examined this passage from the perspective of pastoral nuance. He says that the community of Corinth was only in a process of developing its distinctively Christian character. The network of relations of its members crisscrossed the still ill-formed boundaries between church and society. The tension between the new loyalty to Christ and the continuing loyalties of the (unbelieving) spouse or master was evidently quite severe and stressful. In such circumstances, Paul could not simply dictate a theology of marriage unrelated to the actual situation. On the contrary, Paul should necessarily direct his counsel to reality, and stress the difficulties put to him by the Corinthians. By this background, we can begin to see more clearly how careful and sensitive the advice of Paul is. This stresses again that relationship in and to the Lord is primary.[374] In the case that one of the partners had not become a Christian, the continuation depended on the consent of the unbelieving partner. The priority, in this case, was the avoidance of bitter strife between partners and among the congregation, '*But God has called us to live in peace*' (7:15). The status of the children of such union within the realm of the holy (among the 'saints') was not a competing priority since it was unaffected by the unbelief of the unbelieving spouse (7.14). Paul speaks with a voice of pastoral care.[375]

Over the last decade, commentators have presented their works approaching this passage by using a social science point of view. A social science commentary draws insight from an array of social sciences such as anthropology, social

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[373] See: Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians, Revisiting the Major Issues,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, pp. 43-57.
[374] See: Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 1998, pp. 695-696.
[375] *Cf.* Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 1998, pp. 697-698.

psychology, socio-linguistics, and the like, in order to determine the most cultur-ally plausible interpretation of Paul's letter. From this perspective, Malina and Pilch call Paul the apostle a change agent of the Jesus-group. Paul was a member of the second generation of the Jesus-group. Paul did not actually know Jesus personally, he did not interact with Him, and he had not actually heard Him when He was on earth. For Malina and Pilch, the second generation of the Jesus-group largely was not concerned with what Jesus said and did. The story of the life of Jesus was not a primary focus for this generation. Their interest was focused, rather, on what the God of Israel did in Jesus of Nazareth's death and resurrection and on the fact that God confirmed Jesus' proclamation of the forthcoming the-ocracy, a kingdom of Israel.[376] As a change agent, Paul functions as a communi-cation link between two social systems; in this respect, it is the Corinthians and the authorized one who sent him. He insists that his authorization and commission come from the God of Israel by virtue of an altered state of consciousness of experience.[377] Dealing with this passage, Malina and Pilch argue that Paul brings up the purity concerns. Purity refers to social rules defining how, where, when, and why a person is in proper condition to interact with other people. Malina and Pilch suggest two principles that should govern the deliberation: 1) the time has grown short, the arrival of the kingdom of God is forthcoming (7:29), and 2) Paul urges Jesus-group members, whether married or unmarried, slave or free, to re-main in the social status in which God has called them. Therefore, in the same line, for the Jesus-group members who are married to outsiders, if they live in peace, there is no reason for divorce. Paul's solution derives from the teaching of Jesus; no divorce (Mark 10). His argument is that Jesus-group members sanctify, i.e. make pure and exclusive, those persons attached to them in marriage; their spouses and children are in proper condition to interact with other Jesus-group members and with God.[378] In my view, Malina and Pilch give a wonderful per-spective in terms of shaping identity as a Christian within a plural society. Mutual understanding and mutual acceptance in relationships are pivotal aspects of a peaceful plural society. For only if the Christian lives peacefully with others of a different identity, then diversity is a blessing.

Daniel Ho is another commentator who approaches this passage from a social perspective. He relates the mixed marriage addressed in 1 Cor. 7: 12- 16 to those who were already married when they converted to Christ, while their partner

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[376] See: Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letter of Paul*, For-tress Press, Minneapolis, 2006, p. 9.
[377] See: Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letter of Paul,* 2006, pp. 20-21.
[378] See: Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letter of Paul,* 2006, pp. 85-87.

remained an unbeliever.[379] In addition, Ho says that these verses still have to be understood in the context of divorce. Divorce is not an option. Divorce was a prohibition for Christians even though their partner was an unbeliever. According to Ho, the exhortation for maintaining marriage with a non-believer is still maintained by Paul in verses 25-40. Ho proposes that 1 Cor.7.25-40 is Paul's teaching to young single men and women in the church about the negative consequences for the believer to marry an unbeliever.[380] In verse 25 Paul states explicitly that the following teachings are addressed to the virgin. Ho interprets the term 'virgin' (verse 25) as referring to both young men and women (see verse 27). Unfortunately, he does not elaborate further on this argument. The word 'world' in 1 Corinthians, Ho argues, refers to the social world outside the church, the people who do not know God or Jesus Christ. The 'form of the world' in verse 31 does not refer to the physical world, but to the way of life in the world.[381] Thus, Ho affirms that 1 Cor.7.23-35 is discussing the consequences of mixed marriage for Christian youths, specifically when a young person wants to marry an unbeliever. Since divorce in not an option after marriage, Paul strongly reminds the young people before entering into a mixed marriage. In verses 36 – 38, Paul still stays on the same issue – marriage to an outsider. Paul discourages the young brother who is having a romantic relationship with an unbelieving woman from remaining in the relationship. Paul never implies that he wants a person to stay single for his or her whole life after coming to faith in Christ. Paul says simply that being single is better than being married to an unbeliever. Then, verses 39 – 40 are the summary statement of Paul's teaching about mixed marriage. Paul reaffirms his radical stance against divorce in an existing mixed marriage in verse 39. For the young brother and sister who want union with an unbelieving spouse, the marriage bond is life-long.[382]

Such an interpretation of 1 Cor.7:25-38, according to Ho, helps us see that Paul's stance towards mixed marriage is clear: once you have joined in a mixed marriage, there is no opportunity for insiders to escape from it, even though it costs you divided devotion to the Lord. According to Ho, Paul would say that mixed marriage is not preferable.[383] Further, he concludes that in Paul's teaching

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[379] See: Sin-pan Daniel Ho, *Paul and the Creation of a Counter-Cultural Community, A Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Cor.5.1-11.1 in Light of the Social Lives of the Corinthians,* Bloomsbury - T&T Clark, New York, 2015, p. 186.

[380] See: Ho, *Paul and the Creation,* 2015, p. 185.

[381] Ho proposes to compare with 1 Cor.1:20-21, 27-28; 2:12; 3:19; 4:9,13; 5:10; 6:2; 8:4; 11:32. For these texts, the word 'world' refers to the social group in opposition to God or the society that does not acknowledge the lordship of God and Jesus Christ.

[382] See: Ho, *Paul and the Creation,* 2015, p. 186.

[383] See: Ho, *Paul and the Creation,* 2015, p. 187.

about mixed marriage in 1 Cor. 7:12-38, he seemingly disapproves of mixed marriage. Through the narrative of this chapter, Ho discovers that the purpose of marriage as formulated by Paul is threefold: (1) building sexual morality in marital union (1 Cor.7:1-9), (2) establishing a life-long bodily union (1 Cor.7:10-16), and (3) to help the believer to love the Lord without distraction (1 Cor.7:32-35). According to Ho, Paul's disapproval of mixed marriage is related to the third purpose of marriage. Ho affirms that Paul's disapproval of mixed marriage is counter-cultural. In the context of a polytheistic society, there is a need to protect a Christian spouse from distraction in their devotion to the Lord. Thus, take the opportunity to avoid it before entering into it.[384]

In my view, Ho's interpretation of this passage is very interesting because he shows that verses 12-16 are interwoven with verses 25-40. It means that Ho shows that 1 Cor. 7 is united, in spite of the fact that it deals with several issues. But I do disagree with his conclusion. Ho comes to the conclusion that Paul disapproves of mixed marriage: 'stay away from mixed marriage.' In my opinion, we can agree with this conclusion to the extent that Paul's disapproval of mixed marriage is used to embody the third purpose of marriage. It seems to me that Ho assumes that mixed marriage will distract the Christian spouse from worshiping God. In the context of Corinth, that is understandable. Nevertheless, in my view, Paul does not say anything about syncretism and apostasy in this respect, his concern is rather on how to maintain 'what God has called us' to do, namely living together in peace. In the context of Indonesia, Ho's assumption has commonly been used to refuse mixed marriage for the sake of protecting the Christian spouse from the distraction of their devotion to Christ. I regard such objection as rather prejudiced because it is not impossible for a couple to manifest the spirit of love, mutual understanding, and mutual respect in their mixed marriage so that the Christian spouse is in no way distracted from their devotion to Christ.

Our investigation into this passage helps us assess the significant points; *first*, interfaith marriage is a reality within the congregation of Corinth's plural society. The Corinthian Christians are challenged to maintain the bond of mixed marriage according to the Christian concerns regarding marriage. S*econd*, however, we can understand that Paul gives a warning to Christians who enter into mixed marriage. There is no reason for divorce. To be married or not married must become a responsible decision, also when it regards an unbeliever. In other words, mixed marriage is not as such an obstacle to be able to serve the partner and the Lord at once without distraction. *Third*, giving protection to a Christian spouse from any distraction is pivotal for being devoted to Christ: the relationship in and to the

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[384] See: Ho, *Paul and the Creation,* 2015, p. 188.

Lord is primary. Therefore, for the sake of fidelity to the Lord, one should take every opportunity to avoid every kind of distraction before entering into a mixed marriage.

I do affirm that mixed marriage is not ideal. However, in the context of a plural world such as the context of Corinthians, mixed marriage is a possibility. In Paul's exhortation to young people, I conceive that Paul addresses the context properly. Paul is very well aware of the context and circumstances of Corinth. The important point here is that in a (culturally or religiously) plural context, mixed marriage is an undeniable reality. And if Christians do so, the basic Christian faith regarding marriage, namely the prohibition of divorce, must be held because 'God has called us to live in peace', a peaceful family life and a peaceful community life in diversity. The mixed marriage bond is a committed marriage. I believe, by this affirmation, that Paul would argue that a mixed marriage is legitimate.

Interfaith Marriage in 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1

16:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

17 Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

18 And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

7:1 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

The common usage of the New Testament text for dealing with mixed marriage also refers to this passage in 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1. It can be easily understood

because in this passage, Paul explicitly speaks about a prohibition for having an alliance with an unbeliever. However, this passage also raises some questions such as in what sense does Paul speak about 'light and darkness'? Who is the unbeliever Paul talks about? Does Paul speak about interfaith marriage, indeed?

Before we answer those questions, firstly we have to deal with the place and origin of this passage. There has been a debate about the Pauline authenticity and placement of this passage. Some commentators, such as H.J. Klauck, V.P. Furnish and R.P Martin, state that this text is non-Pauline or an interpolation.[385] But if so, how did it arrive here? And is it really so inappropriate here? According to Gorman, a growing number of interpreters find that this text is thoroughly Pauline, that it has a rhetorical function within the letter as a whole, and that the text belongs where it is, because Paul put it here.[386] The objections concerning the Pauline authenticity of this passage are based either on the language and style of this passage or on the suggestion that the passage contains an influence of Essene ideas. Murphy-O'Connor disagrees with the idea that this passage would be a post-Pauline interpolation instead of Pauline digression. He is convinced that nothing in language or style of this passage constitutes a convincing argument against Pauline authenticity. He affirms that in terms of vocabulary and content, the whole interrelated complex of ideas finds its best parallel in Hellenistic Judaism.[387] Malina and Pilch, using a social-science approach, note, 'This discussion need not deter us here, since as it stands, the passage is an insertion that makes a plea for in-group purity, a significant dimension of the social identity. Purity, of course, refers to the system of social boundaries that marks off one group from another.'[388] Their view is that in the context of Paul's interaction with the Corinthians, this passage urges the Corinthians as members of the Jesus-group to keep their social boundaries clear and to live socially and harmoniously within the in-group. There must be no contamination from outside through cooperation, agreement, sharing, or partnerships. As a plea for in-group purity, the passage provides motivation for social identity. Such social identity would have Jesus-group members at Corinth stay aware that they are fellow members of the same category, share the same emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves (by means of love or group attachment), and achieve some degree of social

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[385] *Cf.* Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to Second Corinthians,* 2010, pp. 121-122.

[386] See: Michael G. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord, A Theological Introduction to Paul and the Letters,* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2004, p. 310.

[387] See: Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to Second Corinthians*, 2010, pp. 121-126. Murphy-O'Connor attests deeply and broadly that the passage contains a significant number of Pauline elements. There are no pieces of evidence that the most striking ideas from Qumran or Essene influence this passage. In this respect, Murphy-O'Connor strongly refers to the thought of Philo of Alexandria.

[388] Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letter of Paul,* 2006, p. 148.

consensus about the way they evaluate their group and their membership in it. The boundary markers (list of 2 Cor.6:14-16) are evaluating labels, the positive value of Jesus-group membership, against the negative qualities of the out-group. The question is who are the outsiders? The list of negative outsider labels points to persons who do not accept the gospel of God proclaimed by Paul. In the Corinthian context, it concerns Paul's opponents and their followers who have gathered to take a stance against the message that Paul has proclaimed. The term 'unbeliever' refers to those who have heard the gospel, and then have rejected the gospel. These unbelievers would not be non-Israelites since non-Israelites were ignorant of the gospel of God of Israel as proclaimed by Paul. In summary, according to Malina and Pilch, whether the passage derives from Paul himself or was inserted by some later scribe, it does admirably fit Paul's insistence on in-group unity that distances them from out-group.[389]

Gorman recognizes that in popular usage, 2 Cor. 6:14 -7:1 has often been cited as an argument against marriage between a believer and non-believer, unequally yoked. He argues that whatever the value of this interpretation may be, there is no evidence from the content or context that the text focuses on this issue. His interpretation sees the passage as a warning against associating with Paul's opponent, particularly the false apostle who will be castigated in Chapters 10 – 13. If this interpretation is correct, then the point of the passage is to call the Corinthians to disassociate from the false apostle (v.14) and thus to live in holiness. This admonition is shaped as a series of rhetorical questions about the antithesis between the ways of God and the ways of Satan and idolatry. [390] Gorman says, "As God's temple, the Corinthian church must reestablish its reconciliation with Paul by severing all ties with his satanic opponents, the false apostle. Though Paul does not dwell on this here, he will return to it, in full force, in Chapters 10 – 13."[391]

The reference to Paul's opponent also becomes a focus of Scott, who says that the context of this passage is Paul's defense of the legitimacy of his apostleship. For Scott, Paul exhorts the Corinthians in this passage to live in the light of the new covenant and to dissociate from the opponents (cf. 5:12). Paul demands the Corinthians to completely separate themselves from his rivals. The term 'yoked together' is derived from the verb '*heterozygein*'. Scott interprets the verb '*heterozygein*' as 'being allied'.[392] Meanwhile, Keener states that '*heterozugein*' can be translated into 'mismated' or 'yoked with another species.' He says that in

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[389] See: Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letter of Paul,* 2006, pp. 148-149.
[390] See: Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 2004, pp. 309-310.
[391] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 2004, p. 310-311.
[392] See: James M. Scott, *2 Corinthians*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1998, p. 150.

Greek words that could mean 'yoking' are often used with reference to marriage or sexual union. Latin expressions cognate to 'yoke' also are used for marriage, although relevant to some other close partnerships, as well. Keener confirms, however, that Paul is thinking of his rivals. The Corinthians' openness to Paul's rivals has compelled him to defend his ministry, but then he demands the Corinthians to choose.[393] Keener states that Paul uses a soteriological antithesis in this passage. While God enlightened His people, Satan blinded the people. The Corinthian Christians, as God's people, must choose between these options. They will be like a perishing world which rejected Paul's message, or they must be reconciled with Paul, trusting him and his teaching. If the Corinthians must be reconciled with Paul, which also means be reconciled with God, they must reject the opponents. Keener explains that the conflict between Christ and Belial appears in the conflict between Christ's ambassadors and the servants of Satan.[394] Keener also agrees that this passage is authentically Pauline, nothing contrary to it.

For Scott, in this case, Paul exhorts the Corinthians not to be allied with unbelievers. Concerning 'unbelievers' with whom Paul does not allow an alliance, Scott argues that because the term is used as a general technical term, it can refer to relationships through marriage, business partnerships, table fellowships, and the like. For Scott, Paul is talking about specific people who allied against God and Christ, who are also his opponents in Corinth. For Paul, the Corinthians, by siding with the rivals against him, risk to forfeit their salvation (cf. *6:1-2*). In Scott's opinion, this is a black and white position for Paul. Paul describes his opponents as 'false apostles', who ally with Belial. Hence, Paul admonishes the Corinthians that if they take the opponents' side and deny the legitimacy of his apostleship, they will deny their own salvation, for it is through Paul that they have received the message of God's grace and salvation. So, it is clear that the 'unbeliever' in this context refers to Paul's opponents, who are classified as allies of Belial, ministers of Satan. The Corinthians who ally with God and belong to Christ should actually separate from those who oppose Christ. Paul describes it by using the metaphor 'light and darkness'.[395] Thus, Paul did not at all speak about rejection of the interfaith marriage.

Quast has the same opinion, as he points to Pauls' opponents, by saying that the context of this passage is apologetic for Paul. The unbelievers Paul wants the Corinthians to avoid may be those who denigrate servants of the Lord like him.

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[393] See: Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 2005, p. 192.
[394] See: Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, pp. 192-195.
[395] *Cf.* Scott, *2 Corinthians*, 1998, pp. 150-153.

To be reconciled with Paul means breaking away from these unrighteous critics. This does not mean, of course, that Christians were not to have any contact with unbelievers. Rather, it warns against joining with an unbeliever in a working relationship that requires close partnership, harmonious agreements, and the sharing of resources. Judging from v.16, for Quast, Paul may be concerned particularly with the participation of Christians in idol worship.[396] Martin also states that the context of this passage is the avoidance of idolatry and immoral behavior.[397]

Compared with the interpretations above, a different interpretation is presented by Murphy-O'Connor. Murphy-O'Connor argues that Paul's usage of the term 'unbeliever', derived from the Greek word '*apistoi*', refers to the false apostle. The term '*apistoi*' also appears in this letter in 2 Cor.4:4 and, in his view, is equivalent to *apollymenoi* – destroyed or perished, in 2 Cor.4:3. The reference is unambiguously about unbelievers. Murphy-O'Connor argues that the commentators who maintain the Pauline authenticity of this passage interpret '*apistoi*' as meaning 'things associated with pagan', for instance, idolatry, moral defilement, and cultic meals. For Murphy-O'Connor, the clue to Paul's meaning is to be found in the verb *heterozygein*. By using this term, Paul consciously intends to evoke the law of diverse kinds found in Leviticus 19:19 or Deuteronomy 22:9-11. Paul formally articulates the underlying principles of prohibition. Therefore, in this respect, Murphy-O'Connor disagrees with Scott who says that '*apistoi*' refers to Paul's opponents. If we take '*apistoi*' as a reference to Judaizing opponents, then Paul is suggesting that the church should separate from the world. But then, this is not compatible with 1 Cor.10:27, where Paul takes for granted that a Christian would accept invitations to meals in the homes of unbelievers. Moreover, Corinthian readers would also have been fully aware that when the question of a believer-unbeliever's marriage is raised, Paul defends the union and insists on maintaining contact with the unbelieving partner (1 Cor.7:12-16). In this regard, Murphy-O'Connor refers to his commentary on 1 Cor.7:12-16. He consistently stands his ground. He urges that Paul considers the unbelieving partner to be 'holy' because he or she is, in fact, observing both the divine plan for marriage and the dominical prohibition of divorce. This demands a distinction between theory and reality. While theoretically '*apistoi*', the individuals in question were in reality '*pistoi*' (believers); likewise, the children are at the same time in theory *akatharta* and in reality *hagia*.[398] Moreover, Murphy-O'Connor affirms that by

[396] See: Kevin Quast, *Reading the Corinthian Correspondence, an Introduction*, Paulist Press, New York, 1994, pp. 131-133.
[397] See: Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians,* Word Biblical Commentary, Word Books Publisher Texas, 1986, p. 197.
[398] See: Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to Second Corinthians*, 2010, pp. 134-135.

this passage Paul is urging the Corinthians to eradicate the 'unbelieving' side of their personalities, because it is incompatible with the 'believing' side. He notes that 'No matter what the believing Corinthians professed theoretically, their behavior was that of '*apistoi*.'[399]

To sum up, now we can answer our initial questions: in what sense does Paul speak about 'light and darkness' in this passage? Who is the unbeliever Paul talks about? Does Paul speak about interfaith marriage? Thus, if we follow the interpretation that '*apistoi*' refers to the false apostle, then we understand that this passage is an apology in favor of Paul's apostleship, whereas if we take the opinion of Murphy-O'Connor, then we find that Paul speaks about Christian morality and behavior. I think both constitute helpful input. From Murphy-O'Connor, I acquire good insight to deal with the phrase 'light and darkness'. The phrase 'light and darkness' is used by Paul to describe a different moral quality instead of a different religion. Paul would say that Christians must have an exclusive relationship with Christ so that they exude good moral behavior and righteousness. "*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers*" (verse 14) should not be understood as a prohibition to have a relationship between a Christian and a non-Christian. It is in no way related to mixed marriage. It warns that living in Christ must be characterized by excellent moral behavior, more than that of those who do not believe in Christ. Paul warns against compromising the integrity of faith (morality and behavior). Unfortunately, this phrase is used as the primary reference by many Indonesian Christians who strongly oppose interfaith marriage by saying that to pair the Christian with the non-Christian is absolutely irreconcilable, because of the different religion. For the current context of Indonesia, where religion is simply seen as a civil identity or social status, religion does not determine one's quality of moral behavior. We can no more state that the '*light*' always refers to Christians, with good moral behavior, and the other side, '*darkness*', always refers to non-Christians with immoral behavior. Thus, using this passage as grounds to refuse interfaith marriage is not an appropriate argument.

3.3. Conclusions

There is no single formulation about interfaith marriage in the teaching of the Bible. We cannot expect that from the biblical text we can get a kind of rule to choose 'approve' or 'disapprove' with regard to mixed marriage. The biblical text challenges Christians in the current situation to reinterpret and then re-actualize the message of the Bible. From an Old Testament perspective, we discover that:

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[399] See: Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to Second Corinthians,* 2010, p. 138.

1. Undoubtedly, mixed marriages exist in the Old Testament, whereas the prohibition also exists.
2. In the Old Testament, we see the struggle of the chosen people in dealing with their identity. The covenant with God, keeping fidelity before God, a struggle with regard to their identity as the chosen people of God, keeping away from apostasy or the chance to fall into worshiping other gods, shaping their identity in relation to the people of a different religious identity – those are some of the points surrounding the prohibition of mixed marriage in the history of ancient Israel.
3. The subject of interfaith marriage is a crucial problem in the context of social change that challenges the people of God. We can see through our investigation that the prohibition of mixed marriages that takes place in a particular time and under certain circumstance is a means to realize their calling. Unfortunately, the solution is anti-social and unfair.

From a New Testament perspective, in this regard particularly the ideas of Paul, we remark:
1. Interfaith marriage is a reality. It could not be denied in a pluralistic society.
2. Paul did not give any kind of recipe to choose a stance towards 'approval' or 'disapproval' regarding this issue; he rather warned the Christians to implement the virtue and value of Christian marriage in daily life within a pluralistic society. The bond of mixed marriage is a committed marriage.
3. Mixed marriage itself is not an obstacle to serve the partner and the Lord at the same time without distraction. However, giving protection to a Christian spouse from any distraction from their devotion to Christ is pivotal. The relationship in and to the Lord is primary. Therefore, for the sake of fidelity to the Lord, take every opportunity to avoid that distraction before entering into a mixed marriage.
4. Paul exhorts that Christians must have an exclusive relationship with Christ so that they exude good moral behavior and righteousness. "*Do not become partners with those who do not believe*" should not be understood as a prohibition to have a relationship between Christians and non-Christians. Being '*apistoi*' or '*pistoi*' depends on your moral behavior, not at all on what your religion is.

The Christian community in the current situation is challenged to formulate a stance regarding interfaith marriage in its own context. Christians in Indonesia face the same challenge in its religiously plural context. A stance of openness

towards the context and responding to the challenge for the sake of bringing justice, sincerity, and honesty upon human dignity, that is the challenge for the churches in Indonesia. Otherwise, it will be anti-social.

I believe that the biblical texts about interfaith marriage remain relevant for the Christian community in the current context, in the sense that the biblical text provides theological deliberations dealing with this issue. Therefore, I will present a theological review upon this issue in the next chapter. Some of the points that will be brought to the surface include how to struggle for religious identity among the people of other faiths, where is the place for religion and faith in encounters with other faiths, and how to bring religious aspects into daily life matters in a pluralistic community.

4.   Theological Understanding of Interfaith Marriage

In the previous part, we explored both the biblical interpretation and the stance of the Church towards interfaith marriage. In this part, we will move forward to construct a theological understanding of interfaith marriage. However, the theological understanding of interfaith marriage cannot be separated from the theological basis of marriage. Therefore, I begin by elaborating on the theological basis of marriage and afterward construct the theological understanding of interfaith marriage.

4.1. The Theological Basis of Marriage

Generally speaking, there are three major teachings in the Christian tradition about marriage, namely as belonging to the order of creation, as a sign of the intimate relationship between Christ and the church, and as an embodiment of Divine love. The theological understanding of Christian marriage is basically grounded in the order of creation. It begins with the Biblical affirmation in Genesis 2 that God unites man and woman in faithful love and in helping each other. Because it is not good to be alone, God's act of love has provided a way not to be alone. Luther and Calvin affirm that marriage is instituted by God. It is a holy ordinance of God. The union of man and woman, which is blessed and celebrated in marriage, is a sign of the love of God. Thus, marriage is a gift for all people. However, marriage is not merely a human matter. The Bible affirms in the order of creation that God Himself established both the partnership and the faithful love of married life. Christ the Lord refers to the order of creation when he answers the question about the dissolubility of marriage in the Gospel of Matthew 19:4-6, "Haven't you read," he replies, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother

and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'. So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate." This obviously affirms that marriage is not merely a human matter. Marriage is instituted by God. God has defined His will in the essence of marriage, namely that the union of marriage is indissoluble. However, in Christ's teaching of marriage, he raises the exceptional case in verse 9, "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." This implies that divorce is not totally excluded. Moreover, in another teaching, Jesus warns his disciples that familial bonds may need to be forsaken in following him (Mat.19:29). Nonetheless, the most pivotal here is that by referring to the order of creation, Jesus reaffirms the one-flesh unity of marriage and upholds it through his condemnation of divorce.

Apart from the creation motive regarding Christian marriage, Paul the Apostle placed the dignity of marriage in high esteem by affirming that the faithful-mutual love of the couple symbolizes the union of Christ and His Church. Therefore, the bond of marriage is a permanent bond, an indissoluble union. The relationship of husband and wife should be like the committed love and fidelity of Christ to his Church. The most important aspects of marriage in the light of Divine love are a 'committed and faithful' love, a lifelong, deep union in heart, body, and mind with a spouse. As a mutual gift of two persons in Christian marriage, the intimate union and total fidelity of the couple becomes a pillar of the unbreakable oneness of the family. The family of the Christian marriage, which reflects the covenant love of Christ with his Church, will manifest the presence of Christ to the people in the world and manifest the genuine nature of the Church. The family will manifest this by the mutual love of the spouses, by their generous fruitfulness, their solidarity, faithfulness, and by the loving way in which all members of the family assist one another.

The Christian marriage as an embodiment of Divine love is the third teaching about Christian marriage. I believe the theology of marriage with insistence upon God and His divine act of love is pivotal here. God does not simply love as an abstract noun, but He is the Divine Lover who actively calls His people out and offers a loving relationship. God encourages the people to form loving relationships with other people as reflections and icons of God's divine love. Marriage is an active love by the couple, as a manifestation of God's love, to fulfill the aspiration of loving one another in which the source of happiness and well-being is found. In marriage, this Divine love is embodied and performed by the true love of the couple. There God is present. The theological understanding of marriage in the Christian tradition affirms that marriage is a fulfillment of the human

existence, as the image of God, in which God is involved within the intimate relationship of the couple by His will and His love. Marriage is the embodiment of the belief of faith that the love of the couple represents the love of Christ. Understanding the meaning of Christian marriage as belonging to the order of creation, as a sign of the intimate relationship between Christ and the church, and as an embodiment of Divine love, leads us to see that Christian marriage contains the values of sacramentality, redemption, and justice.

The Sacramental Character of Marriage

Waters states that the common convictions about marriage among the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches are, at least potentially, more striking than the differences separating them over its formal sacramental status. They are bound together by a theological tradition that insists that marriage is not a merely human contrivance, but an institution established and ordained by God as part of good created order. Consequently, it is a basic form of the human association whose regulation and ordering is entrusted to the Church and secular government.[400] Moreover, Waters insists that although Protestant churches do not regard marriage as a sacrament, many retain what may be characterized as an implicit sacramentality. He says, "Marriage is something more than a contract or special friendship. This is reflected in the wedding vows that are exchanged and in the imagery of the relationship between Christ and the Church that is often invoked. As emphasized more in Church history, marriage is affirmed as an institution that was created and ordained by God."[401]

The value of the sacramentality of marriage lies in the fact that God is intimately involved in the partnership of the couple. The involvement of God in the covenant of marriage happens when spouses consent and commit themselves to create a life of equal and intimate partnership in loyal and steadfast love. In marriage, the spouses commit themselves to explore together the religious depth of their married life and to respond to that depth in the light of their mutual love. By this, marriage is not simply a social affair, but a sacred religious thing as well, which is exhaustively grasped in religious belief. The presence of God and His love are appreciated and embodied by the union and love of the couple. Therefore, the sacramentality of marriage is not added, but it is already experienced by the couple when they seriously take into account their intimate partnership in the entire life of the marital relationship. The sacramentality of marriage constitutes

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[400] See: Brent Waters, *Marriage*, in: Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015, p. 523.
[401] Waters, *Marriage*, 2015, p. 523.

an equal and loving partnership to be lived for the whole life. The total and mutual self-giving partnership of the couple symbolizes God's self-giving in Christ. There Christ's grace is present.

Paul the Apostle elaborates the self-giving partnership of the couple in his letter to Ephesians 5:22-31. In accordance with the long tradition of the church's teaching, this passage has become a theological basis of the sacramentality of marriage. In dealing with this text, Cooke reminds that it is important to bear in mind the purpose and the social background of this letter. The patriarchal culture is the social background of the letter. In a patriarchal culture, all authority is vested in the husband-father. As so often in Pauline letters, it was neither to challenge nor to vindicate the prevailing structures of human society as they then existed. The passage in Ephesians takes for granted the commonly accepted patriarchal structures of family authority without defending or rejecting them. According to Cooke, Ephesians insists that in a Christian family this authority structure must be understood and lived in an entirely new way. The relation between Christ and His Church must be the example for a loving relationship between the Christian couple. Mutual giving of oneself to the other in love, not only in marital intercourse, but also in the many other ways of sharing that make up an enduring and maturing love relationship, is used in this passage as a way of understanding what Jesus has done in His death and resurrection. He has given Himself to those He loves. Christ's self-giving to the Church is more than the model by which a couple should understand and live out their love. The love, concern, and self-giving that each has for the other is an expression of Christ's love for each of them. The faithfulness of each to their love is a sign that concretely makes credible their Christian hope in Christ's faithfulness. In loving and being loved, the couple learns that honest self-appreciation is the psychological grounding for believing the incredible gospel of God's love for humankind. In their relationship to each other, and the more that relationship truly translates Christ's own self-giving, the couple embodies the sacramental relationship. In the Christian marriage, a Christian man and woman express and make present the uncreated grace that is God's creative self-giving. A Christian couple are truly 'grace' to each other. That is a sacramental relationship. It can be an indefinite description to describe how a Christian couple is 'giving grace' to each other because the contribution to each other's life of grace involves the whole of the couple's life together.[402]

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[402] See: Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality,* Twenty-Third Publications, New London, 1994, pp. 87-89.

Redemptive Value of Marriage

The essence of God's work of redemption is the action of God's self-giving. That is true love in action. God's work of redemption in Christ constitutes God's self-giving love. When it is properly understood and accepted, it replaces our alienated and estranged condition with a loving relationship; and it restores our ability to love others in Christ. Alienation and estrangement are sinful conditions. The condition of sin, namely the feeling of unacceptability, abandonment among individuals and from oneself and from God, will render someone incapable of loving others. Therefore, the core of redemptive grace is reconciliation, acceptance. To be redeemed is to be reconciled with a redemptive love. The mutual love of two human lovers in Christian marriage is characterized by the sacrificial love of Christ. As Christ gives sacrificial love to the Church, His bride, so mutual sacrificial love should be manifested in marriage. The sacrificial love of the couple will overcome each shortcoming of the spouse. By appreciating the mutuality of sacrificial love, husband and wife are always warned of their responsibility to one another. Therefore, Paul the Apostle in 1 Cor. 7:16 says, "How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" Thus marriage – the union between two human lovers in heart, body, and mind – contains a redemptive value. Marriage is the place where sacrificial love is manifested in the spirit of acceptance, inseparability, and embrace.

Christian marriages and families are a kind of school for love in which 'committed and faithful love' is embodied. Establishing a relationship of love with another person with a different personality is not an easy task. The sacrificial love of Christ culminates in the cross. The couple will be wounded in their efforts to love and be loved, to be accepted and accepting. Christian marriage is characterized by redemptive love, namely self-giving and self-sacrificing love. The redemptive value of marriage makes us aware that we are loved and accepted by God unconditionally, and this is the standard of conduct for loving others.

Justice Value of Marriage

Mutuality is a pivotal aspect of Christian marriage. The Christian marriage must be a mutual relationship, not a dominant relationship. The couple who respects each other as equal partners can build a relationship of mutual love that is based on cooperation rather than competition. In a relationship that is characterized by competition, it will be very difficult to overcome that situation and not to see the spouse as a competitor. Establishing mutuality is part of the obligations of the couple. The insistence on mutuality as a criterion of the validity of a Christian marriage does not mean that the partners must become identical personalities and

make identical contributions to the marriage. In an equal relationship, each person is unique and has a specific role based upon each personal preference. An equal relationship does not always mean 50-50, but implies the recognition that the partner who may have different abilities contributes to the relationship in other ways. Two individuals with widely diverse personalities and abilities can establish a mutual relationship in which each of the partners contributes according to his or her abilities. In other words, the partners do not need to be mirror images of each other in order to have a mutual love in marriage.

The mutual relationship of Christian marriage is not merely a contract, but a covenant that is based on God's covenant of love. God's commitment to love does not depend on the people of God. A covenant marriage is not just a contract which is worded 'if you do A, I will do B; and if you fail to do A, I am not obligated to do B.' That is not a valid characteristic of Christian marriage. A covenant as the appropriate foundation for a Christian marriage should be, 'I will do A and you will do B. If you do not do A, I am not released from my obligation to do B.' Under the covenant relationship, the two persons are dependent on each other. In my view, this is the justice value of marriage in the spirit of Christianity, the unconditional love. If Christian marriage is a kind of school of love, it is also a school of justice. The experience of living intimately with another human being whose needs, wishes, and preferences daily confront and conflict with one's own, gives practical experience in dealing with other decisions and conflicts on a larger scale. So, marriage is not only an icon of justice, it is also a means of justice. The mere fact of working out an equitable partnership between two adults with different needs, wants, abilities and gifts, brings to the home the Christian principle: from each, according to ability; to each according to the need (*cf.* Acts 4:34-36).

While from the point of view of the larger society marriage is primarily a contract relationship, Christian marriage is a covenant relationship between two equal persons who manifest the value of sacramentality, God's redemption, and God's justice. By this, Christian marriage is a sign of grace and a means of grace. When marriage is properly understood as being primarily for intimate partnership, then its grace is operative equally for the two persons who wish to enter into a covenant relationship.

4.2. Constructing a Theological Understanding of Interfaith Marriage

Ariarajah addresses the issue of interfaith marriage by asking the question: is that a problem or a promise? He affirms that interfaith marriages are on the rise, not because persons are less committed to their faith, but because there is a new

human reality in which old barriers are breaking down. In addition, he urges that every religious tradition should revisit its attitude and approach to the human reality across the fence.[403] He says, "Many of the formal arguments against inter-religious marriages are quasi-theological and call for a more thorough theological re-evaluation."[404] He refers to the objection to inter-religious marriages in questions such as, "How can we hold a marriage ceremony between a Christian and a Hindu when we know that the Hindu does not have the same understanding of God as we do?" or "We cannot be part of a Buddhist ceremony because Buddhists do not have an explicit belief in God". For Ariarajah, that is a matter of the theology of religions and of understanding the relativity of religious language and symbolic systems and the like. According to him, this is the thinking of traditional missiology.[405] Therefore, Ariarajah states: *"We need a theology that does not turn the Christian faith into a fortress. We need a theology that can interact with other ways of believing and being. More than anything else, we need a theology that makes us hospitable. An inhospitable theology cannot produce hospitable people."*[406]

Ariarajah has provided room for theology that develops hospitability although he does not give further elaboration of what he means with such a kind of theology. However, the keyword of Ariarajah's statement is 'hospitable' theology. We will come back to this later on.

A negative stance toward interfaith marriage is connected with an attitude of looking at the religions as mutually exclusive. There is an attitude of emphasizing what is distinctive and different from others and on what separates them rather than focusing on the common values. There is a certain paradigm of mission behind such an attitude. Sumartana says that "the heritage of the past theological and missiological thought still has strong roots. Opposition and rivalry between the religions are still regarded as valid and natural. Accepting one's neighbor as a brother or sister in God must be stressed, and his or her religious conviction must be theologically accepted and respected, as well. Theological honesty and integrity are at stake, without which inter-religious relations are just a matter of good manners or a tactic to cover up a religious mission that is based on exclusivist assumptions."[407]

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[403] See: S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour, Issues in Interfaith Relations,* WCC Publications, Geneva, 1999, p. 95.
[404] Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour*, 1999, p. 96.
[405] See: Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour*, 1999, pp. 97-99.
[406] Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour*, 1999, p. 98.
[407] See: Th. Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads,* 1991, pp. 342-343.

The stance toward interfaith marriage is also determined by the ecclesiological basis of the Church in which it deals with the theological discourse the Biblical interpretation, the theology of religions, and social theology.

Regarding the Biblical interpretation, Singgih gives an example of how the text can be read in an exclusive way. In his interpretation of Isaiah 19:18-25, Singgih concludes that Israel shall be the third beside Egypt and Assyria. The text obviously points to the positive attitude of Yahweh to Egypt and Assyria, as visible in Isaiah 19:23-25, "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance'." Singgih points to the different interpretation between two versions of the Indonesian Bible. In one version of the Indonesian Bible (TB-LAI) verse 24 reads: "*Pada waktu itu Israel akan menjadi yang ketiga di samping Mesir dan di samping Asyur, suatu berkat di atas bumi*" ('at that time Israel shall be the third, besides Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on earth'). Meanwhile the other version of Indonesian Bible (TB-BIS), a more recent version, reads, "*Pada waktu itu Israel akan sama kedudukannya dengan Mesir dan Asyur, dan ketiga bangsa itu akan menjadi berkat bagi seluruh dunia*" ('at that time Israel will be in the same position with Egypt and Assyria, the three of them will become a blessing for the whole world'). There is an ambiguous meaning of the Hebrew term *syelisyiah;* should it be translated as 'the third' or as 'the three (of them)'? Singgih says that the passage has become the dream of Jewish people in Jerusalem, a dream of their victory in the future where they are dominant, number one. He prefers to TB-LAI rather than TB-BIS. For Singgih, this is a triumphalistic mentality in the reading of the text. He suspects that such a triumphalistic approach in Biblical interpretation still exists among Christian communities in their relationships with people of other faiths. In the Indonesian context, the issue of minority and majority plays a role.[408] In my opinion, the triumphalistic interpretation of the text is one of the decisive factors of the stance towards other religious believers. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, the stance toward interfaith marriage is influenced by the Biblical interpretation including the terms 'dark and light' in 2 Corinthians 6. The triumphalistic approach is commonly used for this text. Those with this kind of mentality will say that Christianity is always number

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[408] See: Emmanuel Gerrit Singgih, *Israel Shall be the Third, A Contextual Interpretation of Isaiah 19:24-25,* in: Freek L. Bakker and Jan Sihar Aritonang (eds.) *On the Edge of Many Worlds,* Uitgeverij Meinema, Zoetermeer, 2006, pp. 181-187.

one and others may be number two or three. For them, it is impossible for Christianity to become the third. The triumphalistic mentality will become a barrier to see the same position of religious believers. Eventually, the people of other faiths are always seen as the enemy.

Ariarajah introduces the need for a theology that produces hospitable people. With regard to interfaith marriage, I view that hospitable theology will be related to the stance towards other religions. Openness and acceptance towards people of other faiths are prerequisites for interfaith marriage. In the discourse of theology of religions, the stance of Christianity toward other religions is commonly categorized into three types, as mentioned by Lane, namely exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.[409] Paul Knitter uses a similar typology, but he distinguishes four models, namely the replacement model (only one true religion), the fulfillment model (the one fulfills the many), the mutuality model (many true religions called to dialogue), and the acceptance model (many true religions: so be it).[410]

For exclusivists, Christianity is the one true religion and all others are in error. Exclusivists claim that salvation is only available in Jesus Christ that comes from hearing the Gospel of Christ. There is a strong emphasis that Christianity is the only true religion. This emphasis can be found in the statement 'outside the Church there is no salvation'. Exclusivism ends up with excluding others, without realizing that otherness is an important ingredient in the creation of human identity. Knitter names this type as the replacement model (only one true religion).

For inclusivism, Christ is the unique, absolute and universal Savior of the world. Nonetheless, salvation is also available outside Christianity. Inclusivists appeal to the universality of God's grace in the world to justify their position; salvation in Christ through grace is offered to all and is present implicitly in other religions. Inclusivism runs the risk of reducing the other in practice to a mirror image of oneself, even though inclusivism, in theory, claims to be open to other religions. Knitter names this type as the fulfillment model (the one fulfills the many).

Pluralism argues that salvation is available equally among all religions and that basically all religions relatively have the same goal of introducing human beings into the Real and offering them salvation. Knitter names this type as the acceptance model (many true religions; So Be It).[411]

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[409] See: Dermot A. Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions, A Christian Theology of Inter-Religious Dialogue,* Veritas, Dublin, 2011, pp. 99.

[410] See: Paul F. Knitter, *Theology of Religions,* Orbis Books, New York, 2002, pp. 19-237. Knitter broadly elaborates four types and the variant of each.

[411] *Cf.* Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 2011, p. 107.

Besides the three typologies of Lane, Knitter gives one more approach to the other religions namely the mutuality model.[412] The basic thinking of mutualists is the uniqueness of religion and the equality of religions. The Christian mutualists propose the uniqueness of Christ among other religious figures. The uniqueness of Christ can only be announced in dialogue with the uniqueness of Buddha, Khrisna, or Muhammad. The statement of mutualists is 'many true religions are called to dialogue.' For the sake of dialogue, mutualists formulate Christology and their view of Christ in order to enter into dialogue with Buddha or Khrisna or Muhammad. Mutualists strive to form the common ground and common rule for all religions. Knitter criticises this model stating that it will come to a kind of imperialism and relativism. For Knitter, this mutuality model is not very mutual at all. He says, "The central concern to promote *mutuality* often leads its proponents to neglect, or even violate, *diversity*. Christians who follow this approach are so focused on dialogue and on getting along with others that they don't see how different each of the others really is."[413] This model is convinced that some kind of common ground is necessary for dialogue. However, the mutualists cannot open their minds to the fact that the religions are really so diverse that there is no existing common ground between them. Referring to the view of William Placher, Knitter says, "...by excluding exclusive claims from the dialogue, they themselves become exclusive." Imposing the common ground, for Knitter, is a kind of imperialism, as well. Mutualists intend to get everyone to agree on what they call the common ground without any possibility of really disagreeing about what makes the religions different. For Knitter, the common ground that they propose becomes soft and shifting. That is the kind of common ground in which relativism grows and thrives. I do agree with Knitter that the interreligious dialogue with the mutuality approach will be unfair and dishonest because the participants of dialogue impose their own views on others because all of them are looking at the others through their own religious experience and beliefs.

I concur with Lane that over the last three decades this typology has helped to sharpen the focus on approaches to the other religions. However, regarding interfaith marriage, we need to go beyond this stage. Furthermore, which type will be needed for dealing with interfaith marriage? As I mentioned above, openness and acceptance are attitudes that are needed for dealing with the interfaith marriage issue. At a glance, pluralism is the appropriate type that we are looking for. However, pluralism itself contains some shortcomings. Moyaert helps us to understand them. The critiques of pluralism are:

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[412] See: Knitter, *Theology of Religions*, 2002, pp. 150-169.
[413] Knitter, *Theology of Religions,* 2002, p. 157.

1. Pluralists are insufficiently aware of the fact that they too speak and write confessionally. Even more, pluralism proclaims a message of salvation urging people to convert to the pluralist reinterpretation of religious plurality. Only those who convert can and may participate in interreligious dialogue. From a certain understandable perspective, pluralism can be understood as 'exclusivist'.[414]

2. From a pluralist perspective, religions are never fundamentally different; all religions point in the same direction. Pluralism tolerates difference only to the extent that it is relative, that is related to common ground. The pluralist hypothesis amounts to a form of hermeneutical closedness.[415]

3. Pluralism is so concerned with the value of openness that it overlooks the ways in which religious attachments function in the lives of believers. Hence, pluralists ignore one of the defining characteristics of religion, namely its concrete engagement or commitment. In the pluralist model, the concrete religious elements are the clothes that people wear on the way to the Real. Pluralism does not intend to undermine faith commitment. The metaphor of clothes reflects the 'expressivity theory' of religious pluralism. Religions express the experience of the religious object. That also means that religions are replaceable and exchangeable. People can take their clothes off and put them in the closet. Whereas the concrete elements of religion such as ritual, prayer, etc., are meaningful. The believers are, in a certain sense, strongly bound to these concrete elements. Pluralists ignore this. [416]

With regard to interfaith marriage, we can critically implement the pluralism model. Even more, in my view, all three types may be deliberated as long as they are applied without any judgment to the other party. All three typologies contain grains of truth and do not necessarily distort each other. For example, it should be recognized that all religions, not just Christianity, see themselves as unique, exclusive, and superior to other religions; they would hardly exist otherwise. Equally, religions regard themselves as different. All three types will be able to build mutual acceptance by working together to deal with crucial problems within society such as poverty, violence, injustice, etc. As Knitter says, "I trust that Christians in all the four models we have reviewed would be able to affirm that such working together with other believers for the sake of peace, justice, and the integrity of creation is a form of interreligious encounter that is permissible,

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[414] See: Marianne Moyaert, *Fragile Identities, Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality,* Rodopi, Amsterdam*,* 2011, pp. 85.
[415] See: Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 2011, p. 86.
[416] See: Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 2011, pp. 104-105, 120.

pressing, and primary."[417] I do believe that only without judgment and without degrading one another a hospitable theology can be embodied.

For constructing a hospitable theology, in my opinion, we cannot abandon the socio-religious historical context. In the Indonesian context, the historical and socio-religious perspective of the Christian – Islam relationship must be seriously taken into account for doing theology. Mojau examines the Protestant theological struggle with the Politic of Islam in Indonesia in the 1970-1990s. Mojau divides his characteristic of social theology among the Protestant theologians into three lines of thought: social theology in a modernism model, social theology in the liberation model, and social theology in a pluralism model. He explores and gives a critical assessment to the context and character of each line represented by some theologians. With regard to the Christian-Islam relationship in Indonesia, in particular, but also with regard to the relationship with other religions, Mojau recognizes that the Protestant Churches in Indonesia have been aware of the importance of taking the religious plural context into serious account when doing theology. However, he urges that from an ecclesiological perspective, Indonesian churches not only need social theology, pluralism theology, liberation theology, or transformation spirituality, but a synthesis of those theologies; he calls it a social theology that is pluralistic, transformative, and reconciliative. He has strongly emphasized the perspective of reconciliation in social theology. Mojau assesses that the model of modernism in social theology that emphasizes and promotes the national development program and the ideology of *Pancasila*[418] reflects the political interest of the 'New Order' era.[419] Meanwhile, in the Indonesian context, the model of liberation social theology will not satisfy because it excludes from its deliberations the reconciliative potential of the religions and the local wisdom. For Mojau, the model of pluralism and social theology does not pay much attention to the importance of reconciliation, as well.[420] He insists that from a historical perspective, the relationship of Christianity and Islam in Indonesia has been colored by the tension of colonial identity. [421] I think that there is the burden of history in the Christian – Islam relationship in Indonesia that cannot be abandoned; namely, the fact that Christianity came to Indonesia in the 'boat' of colonialism. Historically, the relationship of Christianity and Islam in Indonesia has been

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[417] Knitter, *Theology of Religions*, 2002, p. 245.

[418] *Pancasila* is the state ideology, namely the Five Principles.

[419] The 'New Order Era' is the era of Suharto's regime, 1966-1998.

[420] See: Julianus Mojau, *Meniadakan atau Merangkul?Pergulatan Teologis Protestan Dengan Islam Politik di Indonesia* (*Negating or Embracing? Theological Struggle of Protestants with Political Islam in Indonesia*), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2012, pp. 378-384.

[421] See: Mojau, *Meniadakan atau Merangkul?,* 2012, pp. 1-5.

colored by violence and conflicts. At this point, I agree with Mojau that doing social theology must take into account the aspect of reconciliation; otherwise the wound of history will not be cured. I do agree with him that in dealing with the heritage of theology, missiology, and history in the past, the reconciliation perspective is significant for the Christian community in building human community. Humans are humans.

It cannot be ignored that interfaith marriage contains some problems such as the religious education, the practice of religion at home, and so on. In my opinion, that is a challenge for religious communities in working together for counselling and guiding the interfaith family concerning the realities of interfaith married life. This demands serious attention for religious communities. Ariarajah urges:

> *They are insoluble problems only if the communities see themselves as rival communities, rather than as the one human community with different stories to tell of their encounter with reality. They are not the same story, nor do they cancel one another out. Religious communities owe this to the future generations. Otherwise, a whole new group within the human community, the increasing number of interfaith couples and their children, will have to continue to fend for themselves.*
>
> *If, however, religious traditions find ways to deal with the phenomenon creatively, they may well be exploring ways of handling their own future. For a while the fortress mentality is still alive and well in all religions...[422]*

I do agree with Ariarajah, we need a spirit of building a bridge of brotherhood, not a fortress. For the theological understanding of interfaith marriage, we need a theology that develops sincere goodwill among religious communities and tears down the fortress of separation and ignorance in the name of the human community.

So far, we have discussed some points that are related to interfaith marriage. How can we theologically understand interfaith marriage? In the previous chapter, from a Biblical perspective, we have concluded that interfaith marriage is a legitimate, Christian marriage. In my view, this is the point from which we construct the theological understanding of interfaith marriage. I have presented the values of Christian marriage namely: sacramentality, redemption, and justice. We will use them as the foundation of our understanding of interfaith marriage.

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[422] Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour*, 1999, p. 99.

Interfaith Marriage is a Sacramental Marriage

As we have discovered, Biblical interpretation is one of the factors that influences decision making in the stance of the Church toward the issue of interfaith marriage, specifically the interpretation of the Biblical text(s) that is/are commonly used to address it. In the previous part, we examined the biblical texts that are commonly used to reject interfaith marriage. We have discovered that the text actually shows how the faithful address the pluralistic reality. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul the Apostle precisely helps us to see more clearly the issue of interfaith marriage. Interfaith marriage is a reality in the pluralistic society. In the plural context (culturally and religiously), interfaith marriage is an undeniable reality. The stance of opposing interfaith marriage in a pluralistic society is unrealistic. Our challenge as a Christian community concerning the possibility of interfaith marriage in this context is to maintain the bond of marriage in accordance with the Christian concerns regarding marriage. The bond of marriage is an indissoluble union. There is no reason for divorce. The suspicion that interfaith marriage will produce apostasy is an unreasonable anxiety. Interfaith marriage is not an obstacle to serve the partner and the Lord at once without distraction. Protection of a Christian spouse from any distraction is pivotal for being devoted to Christ. For the sake of fidelity to the Lord, one should take every opportunity to avoid that distraction before entering an interfaith marriage. In encounters with people of other faiths, it is unnecessary to become either exclusive or, on the contrary, to sacrifice belief. Indeed, it is a challenge to struggle for religious identity among the people of other faiths.

From a Biblical perspective, we have concluded that interfaith marriage is a truly legitimate and Christian marriage. If we believe that Christian marriage is sacramental, interfaith marriage is, as well. If we believe that the value of sacramental marriage lies in the conviction that God is intimately involved in the intimate partnership of the couple, so we must believe that God is also involved in the intimate and committed partnership of an interfaith couple. The value of sacramental marriage does not at all depend on the couple having the same religion, but it is all about an equal and loving partnership to be lived for the whole life, in the total mutual self-giving of the couple that symbolizes God's self-giving in Christ. There, Christ's grace is present. The grace of God, the source of happiness, and the well-being of the couple are present. The dimensions of religion and faith exist in interfaith marriages. Paul's teaching excludes the possibility of the Christian member of the marriage initiating a divorce, especially if the spouse were an unbeliever. In other words, interfaith marriage is a committed marriage. Thus, it is clear that Paul did not speak about approval or disapproval of interfaith

marriage; rather, Paul is interested in interfaith marriage as a reality within a congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way.

Interfaith marriage is a sacramental marriage because the Christian and the spouse who belongs to another faith consent and commit themselves to create a life of equal and intimate partnership in loyal and steadfast love. When the couple that belongs to different religions commit themselves to explore the religious depth of their married life together and to respond to that depth in the light of their mutual love, God is present. The presence of God and His love is appreciated and embodied by the indissoluble union and committed love for the whole life of the interfaith couple. Therefore, I do believe that the total and mutual self-giving partnership of the interfaith couple can also be acknowledged as symbolizing God's self-giving in Christ. There Christ's grace is also present. The value of sacramental marriage does not at all depend on the couple professing the same religion.

Interfaith Marriage Expresses Redemptive Value.
The Israelites in the era of Ezra interpreted Deuteronomy in such a way that the encounter with 'the other' ends sadly. That is the way the Israelites protected and maintained their identity. Will the Indonesian Christians follow the same way of building their identity by forcing boundaries and alienating others? In my opinion, the politics of identity, such as defending your own religion in a pluralistic community, is very risky and harmful. Do we need such a kind of politics of identity? What is the meaning of being a chosen people among the nations as a means in God's hand to declare *shalom*? I do oppose that casting out those who are foreign or with a different identity is the appropriate way of obeying God. If 'the other' is a partner in dialogue, so 'the other' is also a partner in learning. The Christian spouse is also able to learn from his or her spouse concerning spirituality, and the other way around. Singgih has examined the shift of paradigm of mission and dialogue as a means of communication in the Indonesian context, from the paradigm of religious freedom to the paradigm of religious pluralism. He views that all religions must be seen as equal, each with surpluses and shortcomings. They need to learn from each other and at the same time, they also need to teach one another.[423] In a similar vein, Thelle says: "[t]he experience of dialogue leads to change. One may be committed to one's own tradition, faithful to the precious insight of the creed, eager also to share one's faith with the others.

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[423] See: Emmanuel Gerrit Singgih, *Mission and Dialogue as Means of Communication, A Paradigm Shift in Indonesian Context,* in: Volker Küster and Robert Setio (eds.), *Muslim-Christian Relations Observed, Comparative Studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands,* Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig, 2014, pp. 353-366.

We tend to regard identity as something essentially unchanging in one's personality or in one's tradition. Identity is nothing static, but is maintained in a continuous process of change and integration. We often tend to forget that religions also change in similar ways. Christianity has changed in the encounter with new cultures and religious traditions, changing identity. There are many Christianities, and in similar ways, there are many Islams and Buddhisms and Hinduisms. And it would be strange to expect that the experiences from interreligious dialogue should not contribute to changes in the understanding of one's faith. A Christian who has met the Buddha is not the same as before. A Buddhist who has met the Christ is not the same."[424] Thelle adds that meaningful dialogue is the way of relating that aims at establishing trust, mutual respect, tolerance, or, one might hope, love. There is no other purpose of dialogue than for a trusting relationship. There can be different types of dialogue, as Thelle distinguishes dialogue in 4 levels: 1) dialogue at the level of theology and philosophy, 2) dialogue at the level of spirituality, often less interested in theoretical exchange than in sharing of spiritual practice such as prayer, 3) dialogue at the level of social cooperation about common concerns such as poverty, discrimination, injustice, conflict, the environment, ect., and 4) everyday dialogue in daily life.[425] I think the everyday dialogue includes interfaith marriage as the dialogue of life.

I do agree with Southwood when she says that "the other's configurations of human relationships, or understanding, or appropriate worship, rather than being a source of threat resulting in boundaries and alienation, might be better viewed as a source of wonder, interest, dialogue, and sometimes, maybe, change."[426] I think that is true because trying to understand the motivations and practices of those who are unfamiliar can provide rich insights into how human beings operate in different contexts. This is the application of what Jesus says, 'love your neighbor as yourself'. In the present situation, religion has separated human community, whereas love is a universal value of human existence. I refer to the study guide of WCC about interreligious dialogue, "people who engage in dialogue will feel that their own faith is challenged and deepened by the new dimensions of religious life which they have observed, and many find in religious encounters a new impetus for doing theology and reviving spirituality. Communities in dialogue function as the leaven in the larger community, facilitating the creation of

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[424] Notto Thelle, *Interreligious Dialogue: Theory and Experience,* in: Viggo Mortensen (ed.), *Theology and The Religious, A Dialogue,* Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2003, p. 132.
[425] See: Thelle, 2003, pp. 129-131.
[426] Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10,* 2012, p. 219.

society transcending religious barriers."[427] Rather than emphasising 'separation' from those who appear to be foreign, why not to choose tolerance and mercy so that 'the other' does not feel hopelessly ignored? In my opinion, interfaith marriage is a concrete form of living together in diversity. If in intercultural theology discourse the cultures and religions of 'the other' are seen as a partner in dialogue[428], the real dialogue is embodied concretely in the daily life of interfaith marriage. Therefore, interfaith marriage can be seen as a marker for whether dialogue is performed honestly and equally without degrading each other and any intention to convert the other. Does the different religion reveal the spirit of embrace or rather rejection? A joint study of WCC and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue about interreligious marriage recognizes this respect, "In the field of interreligious relations, reference is often made to 'the dialogue of life'. By that is meant all those daily encounters between people of different religions, in the neighborhood and the work-place, in school and in leisure activities, which are lived in a positive manner and so are conducive to understanding, harmony and peace. One particular form of encounter is interreligious marriage which brings into the closest relationship a man and a woman belonging to different religions."[429] 'Committed and faithful love' is a must in the interfaith marriage so that the different religion is really valued. Interfaith marriage performs a spirit of reconciliation in which the interfaith couple is a reconciler. This is the redemptive value of the interfaith marriage.

Interfaith Marriage Expresses the Value of Justice
Mutual understanding and mutual acceptance in the relationship are pivotal aspects of a peaceful plural society. Only if the Christian lives with others with a different identity, peacefully, then diversity is a blessing. Unfortunately, the claim of exclusive excellence of Christians among other religions and beliefs still exists

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[427] *My Neighbour's Faith – And Mine, Theological Discoveries Through Interfaith Dialogue,* A Study Guide, WCC, Geneva, 1986, p. viii.

[428] *Cf.* Frans Wijsen*, Apa Makna Interkulturalisasi dalam Teologi Interkultural? (What is the meaning of Interculturalization in the Intercultural Theology?),* in: Kees de Jong and Yusak Tridarmanto (eds.), *Teologi dalam Silang Budaya, Menguak Maka Teologi Interkultural serta Peranannya Bagi Upaya Berolah Teologi di Tengah-tengah Pluralisme Maryarakat Indonesia (Theology in the Cross Culture, Unfold the Meaning of Intercultural Theology and Its Role for Doing Theology Amids of the Pluralism of Indonesian Society),* TPK & Fakultas Teologi Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Yogyakarta, 2015, pp. 11-20. *Cf.* Robert Setio, *Menimbang Posisi Teologi Interkultural (Weighing the Position of Intercultural Theology),* in: Kees de Jong and Yusak Tridarmanto (eds.), 2015, p. 226-229.

[429] *Reflection on Interreligious Marriage, A Joint Study Document*, Pro Dialogo, Bulletin 96, 1997/3, p. 325.

in Indonesia. Ariarajah says that such an attitude or view is mainly missionary in nature.[430]

In this respect, interfaith marriage has a justice value for the couple who are of different religions. In the previous chapter about the Biblical perspective, we discovered that from the interpretation of the letter of Paul, moral quality is more important than differences in religion. The phrase 'light and darkness' (2 Corinthians 6:14) is commonly used in terms of justice and injustice. This phrase is used as the primary reference by many Indonesian Christians who strongly oppose interfaith marriage by saying that to pair the Christian with the non-Christian is absolutely irreconcilable, because of the different religions. In that, religion is simply seen as a civil identity or social status so that such religion does not determine one's quality of moral behavior anymore. We can no more state that the '*light*' always refers to Christians with good moral behavior and that the other side, '*darkness*', always refers to non-Christians with immoral behavior. The phrase 'light and darkness' is used by Paul to describe a different moral quality instead of a different religion. Paul would say that Christians must have an exclusive relationship with Christ so that they perform good moral behavior and righteousness. "*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers*" (verse 14) should not be understood as a prohibition to have a relationship between a Christian and a non-Christian. It warns that living in Christ must be characterized by an excellent moral behavior, more than that of those who do not believe in Christ. Paul warns against compromising the integrity of faith (morality and behavior).

Interfaith marriage is a Christian marriage because it is a covenant relationship between two equal persons. Their equality is performed in their intent to maintain their intimate union by avoiding injustice towards one another. Both the Christian and non-Christian spouses are called to perform God's justice by having good moral behavior in their union. Mutual understanding and mutual acceptance in the relationship are significant aspects of a peaceful Christian marriage and of interfaith marriage, too. As I mentioned before, mutuality is a pivotal aspect of Christian marriage. When the interfaith couple that respect each other as equal partners build a relationship of mutual love based on cooperation and not on competition, they have fulfilled the obligation of Christian marriage. Mutual partnership is one of the basic characters of Christian marriage. In the spirit of dialogue of life, interfaith marriage manifests the mutual partnership, not a dominant relationship. Interfaith marriage is characterized by equal partnership in which the spouse is not seen as a competitor.

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[430] See: Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour*, 1999, p. 97.

4.3. Final Remarks

As Ariarajah says, many objections to interfaith marriage in the Church are based on theological reasons that need to be re-examined. Theological discourses about interreligious dialogue, theology of religions, human rights, etc., have been developed very well by the Indonesian Christian community. However, when all those thoughts have to be implemented concretely in the relationship among communities of humankind, particularly regarding interfaith marriage, many churches are doubtful and, even more, oppose it. There is a discontinuity between openness for dialogue and interfaith discourse (theoretically) on the one hand and the stance of the Church (practically) toward the reality in the pluralistic society, on the other hand. The theological understanding of Christian marriage that is based on the three values of Christian marriage (sacramentality, redemption, and justice) can be used to help us in constructing a theological understanding of the interfaith marriage. I acknowledge that there are some pastoral issues for consideration concerning interfaith marriage, before and after the wedding. The aforementioned joint study of WCC and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Relations about interreligious marriage also recognizes some issues for consideration surrounding interfaith marriage such as religious freedom, religious education in the family and at school, etc. Religious differences can be seen as a source of conflict, but also as enrichment.[431] Interfaith marriage is a human reality and nowadays it is on the rise. Although interfaith marriage is not an ideal, and in some respects must be deliberated, it does not mean that the Church has to close the door on this human reality. However, it is necessary to establish definite regulations concerning such matters. The study document states, "Churches therefore are called upon to revise their attitude, if necessary, and to give adequate pastoral care."[432] Church regulations for interfaith marriage are part of this study. We will come to this aspect in the next chapter.

5.   Indonesian Contextual Church Polity

5.1. Indonesian Churches in the Changing Situation of the Reformation Era and Beyond.

May 1998 was an important moment in the history of Indonesia. President Suharto's authoritarian dictatorship ended. The New Order regime collapsed amid economic and political chaos. The New Order of Suharto had succeeded in

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[431] *Reflection on Interreligious Marriage, A Joint Study Document*, Pro Dialogo, 1997, pp. 332-337.

[432] *Reflection on Interreligious Marriage, A Joint Study Document*, Pro Dialogo, 1997, p. 337.

reinvigorating the Indonesian economy and encouraging foreign investment. However, his government was essentially an authoritarian regime with military power embedded throughout both the government and economy. Wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of his elite cronies, including the military. Finally, on 21 May 1998 the unimaginable moment happened, President Suharto resigned after 32 years.

The era after Suharto stepped down is called the Reformation Era. This term is still used today, although the spirit of reformation that drove democratization continues to struggle to find its best form. Over the years after Suharto's fall, elite survivors and civil society leaders negotiated a new democratic system. It drew on persistent aspirations for the rule of law, human rights, and open politics reflected in business and public discourse with a diverse new range of voices. New institutions, such as the Constitutional Court and the Corruption Eradication Commission, were established to combat the repression and corruption that characterized the Suharto regime.

How is the situation after 20 years? Most Indonesian civil society activists view that *the Reformation Era* ended a decade ago. Despite this, a new label to define the post-Reformation Era has not yet emerged. This reflects the uncertainty among Indonesians about recent social and political change and where the country is heading. Some prominent government critics claim that while electoral democracy seems entrenched, democracy is under the threat of populism and renewed conservatism. Lindsey views that the recent political and social changes in the post-reformation era raise questions: where will Indonesia land? Will liberal democracy bounce back? Will Indonesia concede its political privileges to Islam and institutionalize intolerance? For Lindsey, uncertainty dominates Indonesian domestic social politics.[433]

The Reformation Era brought a breath of fresh air for democratization in Indonesia. A direct system of general election for president was held in 2004, the first time[434] after Suharto's fall. However, tensions arose before the general election because of black campaigns, fake news, and hoaxes. Moreover, identity politics based in religious sentiments was used for political interests. The democratic idealism at the beginning of reformation had become uncontrollable. In the Reformation Era, freedom was not only 'opened', but also 'broadened'. This also

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[433]https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/20-years-after-soeharto-is-indonesia-s-era-reformasi-over. Accessed on 23 October 2018.

[434] A general election to elect a legislature was held in Indonesia in 1955 for the first time. The Indonesian people did not elect a president until 2004. Since then, the Indonesian people have elected the president and vice president, members of the People's Representative Council, and the members of the Regional Representative Council in a direct general election system.

opened opportunities for extremist groups to use violence. There was an awakening of religion in society in the Reformation Era, accompanied by the emergence of radicalism. The fundamentalist groups and radical extremists suppressed under the New Order are now coming to the surface. Diversity, specifically involving social minorities and related to religious affiliation and ethnicity, faces major challenges from rising religious intolerance. The so-called *conservative turn* – the growing influence of Islamist hardliners – is fracturing the national consensus on pluralism. The fall of the New Order, and the rise of the reformation era encouraging democratization, substantively gave freedom to the citizens to express their own aspirations and political ideologies. Under the New Order, authorities put a lot of pressure on the citizens to comply with their regulations, while under the Reformation Era, citizens have more freedom to express their opinions and ideologies. The Reformation Era is both a milestone in saving the nation and a challenge to maintain. The political participation of citizens is widely open and gives a way for various political parties, including religious parties, to exert more influence.

Radicalism and intolerance have become hot issues in the post-Reformation Era. Many religious tensions and conflicts occur towards minority religious groups; expulsion, violence, and repression such as the burning and closing of several churches due to the permit given for building a house of worship (the case of GKI Yasmin in Bogor and HKBP Philadelfia in Jakarta) and repression against Ahmadiyya. Regus, in his study of the implementation of human rights in the Reformation Era, states that the problem faced by Indonesia is that the majority and minority relationship triggers many questions and issues about the implementation of religious rights. The main issues regarding the current majority and minority tensions in Indonesia are related to the building of houses of worship, interfaith marriage, and religious conversion. All of them are parts of religious freedom.[435] Enforcing the law and protecting human rights are important factors in securing rights for both the majority and minorities. The emergence of intolerant radical groups is, of course, not democracy. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the emergence of intolerant radical groups is not only visible among the Muslim community, as the emergence of radical Muslims seems to provoke the emergence of militant Christian groups. Militant Christian groups see Muslim extremists as threats, and likewise on the contrary. For example, for militant Christians, the implementation of Sharia law is a threat against Christian interests, while for

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[435] M. Regus, *Understanding Human Rights Culture in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Ahmadiyya Minority Group*, Proefschrift, Tilburg University, Tilburg, 2017, p. 74.

some in the Muslim community, the effort to stop the implementation of Sharia law is a threat against Muslim authority. [436]

The era of freedom has led to conflicts and disputes in society in various aspects including politics, economy, ethnicity, and religion. Religious sentiment is used for political interests. Politics of identity used for public interests has become a virus endangering national integration. Massive rallies led by Islamist groups have led to the electoral defeat and the imprisonment of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), the governor of Jakarta. The case of religious blasphemy involving Ahok, a Christian of Chinese descendant, provoked a massive Islamic movement and was misused by political interests in Jakarta's gubernatorial election due to his popularity, despite the fact that he belongs to a double minority. National integration becomes the challenge of the post-Reformation Era.

The Pancasila ideology that is filled with the values of harmony and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) now faces another ideology striving to grow in Indonesia. Religious sentiment easily provokes polemics and violent conflicts. Sending Christmas greetings or wearing a Santa Claus hat during the Christmas season caused polemics before Christmas, because some groups stated that it was *haram* (forbidden) to do those two things. Pluralist activists now face very intolerant behavior. In such a situation, religion reveals a visage of unfriendliness as it incites violence against other parties. Harmonious life amid diversity faces a significant challenge.

Talking about how churches in Indonesia do theology in the Reformation Era, it is important to also see how Protestant churches performed theology under the New Order. Systematizing more than 30 years of theological views, especially the social theology of churches in Indonesia, is not an easy task. However, paying more attention to the relationship with Islam, Mojau, in his research, describes the pattern of social theology of Protestant churches under the New Order. Mojau mentions some central themes that were presented in various conferences, documents, and statements from PGI such as solidarity with the poor, inter-religious cooperation and dialogue, human rights, ecological and gender problems, etc. One of the PGI documents from the time of the fall of Suharto is *Pokok-pokok Tugas dan Panggilan Bersama*/PTPB (The Essentials of Shared Tasks and Vocation) 1994 – 1999. PTPB 1994 – 1999 states, "In the effort to carry out the church's calling to be a witness among plural societies, churches, in their openness, should build and maintain relationship and cooperation with all groups, including religious and belief groups (1 Cor. 9: 19-23; Col. 3: 11). The relationship and cooperation would be developed in accordance with the foundation and soul

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[436] See: Suhadi, *I Come from Pancasila Family*, 2014, pp. 200-202.

of Pancasila, as the manifestation of the shared responsibility of religious and belief groups in carrying out the national development program."[437] Building co-operation with believers of other religions in the spirit of nationalism and the politic of national development was the attitude of Protestant churches under the New Order. Churches recognized believers of other religions as fellow citizens and parts of society acknowledged in the foundation of community life, Pancasila. Cooperation with and respect for believers of other religions was not a theological motive based on the understanding that the Church is the inclusive body of Christ. Mojau argues that such cooperation was just a matter of practical politics. According to him, the idea of cooperation with believers of other religions still emerged from the understanding of the church as the triumphal people of God. [438]

I concur with Mojau that during the New Order, the Protestant churches in Indonesia, did not accept other believers for who they were as Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc., even though they spoke about cooperation with other religions. This tendency was quite obvious that the basic reason for cooperation was simply because they were fellow citizens, part of society, and shared the same citizenship. The question is why they did not accept other believers for who they were, as they were. In my opinion, this attitude preserved the view that Christians are different from Muslims and different means that they cannot be united. Islam was regarded as a separate entity that could only be occasionally worked with for particular projects. Cooperation seemed to be a good idea, but it actually could result in greater separation since churches bore their own interests above cooperation. It is not surprising that being different is not considered ideal. If people of other religions are not accepted as they are, as the universal people of God, cooperation will be far from sincere and Christianization prejudice will always be present. It cannot be denied that the spirit of nationalism among churches was merely an ideological instrument to fight for their own interests.

Mojau suggests that entering the new era, the Reformation Era, churches must determine a new direction of their self-understanding, a new ecclesiological direction. Mojau proposes a central theme for theological reflection that needs to be developed, i.e. to encourage an orientation of church life reflecting the spirit of pluralism, transformation, and reconciliation in society.[439] This new direction

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[437] PGI, *Dalam Kemantapan Kebersamaan Menapaki Dekade Penuh Harapan: Lima Dokumen Keesaan Gereja* (In the Steadiness of Togetherness Walking into the Decade of Hope: Five Documents of the Oneness of the Church), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 1990, p. 41.

[438] See: Mojau, *Meniadakan atau Merangkul?*, 2012, pp. 358-362.

[439] See: Mojau, *Meniadakan atau Merangkul?*, 2012, p. 384.

would lead to the following characteristics in the life of the Church:[440] (1) an open and dialogic life. Churches in Indonesia after the New Order have to realize and get rid of prejudice against people from other religions. Meanwhile, a dialogue has to be nurtured with the courage to pass over one's religious experience and humbly give room for other beliefs as fellow pilgrims of faith on the earth. (2) A prophetic role for each church that lives up to transformative spirituality. The social relationship between churches in Indonesia and other religions post-New Order has to be based on the shared concern to fight for the poor, the weak, and those who are marginalized by hegemonic power. (3) A reconciling life. Churches are to bring healing to social wounds by breaking the chain of hatred and hard feelings.

Encouraged by the above view, entering the Reformation Era, churches in Indonesia are challenged to place others as the same. The other is often referred to as neighbor, other people who are not exactly the same, but human beings in different states. The pressure of neighborliness lies in otherness. Familiarity needs to be developed from diversity, not uniformity. Faith, life, and happiness need to be nurtured through practice among otherness.

The 'other', as neighbors in the holy teaching of religions, is recognized as brothers and sisters, the fellow image of God. However, in history, the social construction is not as holy and great as in the teaching. According to post-colonial discourse, it is because a human relationship is a conquest relationship. The other is placed as a rival, a competitor, and an enemy.[441] Therefore, the other is an individual or a group of people who are regarded as different, not parts of the group, which tends to be underestimated. I see God in the other. Coming to God will be meaningful if it initially is understood as coming to the other. In such an encounter, the two parties are learners and pilgrims who seek a truth that is open, tolerant, vast, and not soul binding. This togetherness encounter celebrates otherness because others are different in many ways; they cannot be enfolded or even subdued.

By developing such a kind of spiritualism, churches in Indonesia could bring a new spirit of interreligious hospitality. Moyaert has pointed out that as long as self-identity and otherness are understood as contradictory, openness towards others and foreigners remains difficult. One can be open toward the other's foreignness only if foreignness in self-identity is recognized. Confirming interreligious hospitality, Moyaert reminds that the differences in others or foreigners are

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[440] See: Mojau, *Meniadakan atau Merangkul?*, 2012, pp. 385-402.
[441] See: Muji Sutrisno, *Diri dan the Other* (Oneself and The Other)*, in: Muji Sutrisno & Hendar Putranto (ed.), *Hermeneutika Pascakolonial* (Post-Colonial Hermeneutic)*, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 2004, p. 27.

not weaknesses, but strengths because religious others have their own pride, belief, faith commitment, and religious tradition. The others do not present themselves as the poor (that need to be helped), but as the rich who have things to share. In this case, the others ask us to friendly accept them by understanding them.[442]

I believe that this attitude and doing theology in this spiritualism is needed by churches in Indonesia in entering the new era. I agree with Singgih that Protestant churches in Indonesia tend to develop their theology based on ideology. Even though the aim is to develop a contextual theology, in the end, there is no contextual theology.[443] In manifesting Christian interests, churches practice 'Christian politics' similar to political Islam.[444] As a result, the cooperation that is developed is in the interests of Christians. Islam and political Islam are seen as a threat to Christian interests. Entering the reformation era, Singgih is optimistic that there is still hope for Protestant churches in Indonesia. Singgih has clearly stated his opinion about what needs to be done by churches in Indonesia, "The most urgent need is to construct a theological concept of the 'other' which is biblically responsible. A healthy and realistic life in a religiously pluralistic society such as in Indonesia demands that we cease to generalize people of other faiths as opponents of a national-state, and thus, opponents of Christianity. We must learn to regard and appreciate non-Christians as people who adhere to a certain living religion, and not be content in describing them just as fellow citizens or fellow nationals. To live in a national-state does not mean ignorance about the significance of other religions adhered to by its members. What is lacking is that 'the other' is still an embarrassment for us. Without a Christian Theology of religious pluralism, Christians and churches will always misread the parable of the Samaritan, in which Jesus expressly asked people to love their enemies. To build a kind of theology it is important for Christians to live with others in a neighborly way, and not to live separately in so-called 'Christian enclaves'. This is an interreligious theology of friendship."[445]

If such spiritualism were to be developed, I am also optimistic that churches would view interfaith marriage more positively. Many Protestant churches in Indonesia have a negative and close-minded view of interfaith marriage, while only a few have a positive view of interfaith marriage. The attitude of churches is also influenced by the government's political attitude toward interfaith marriage. In my opinion, interfaith marriage is a concrete manifestation in developing a

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[442] Moyaert, *Fragile Identities,* 2011, p. 265.
[443] See: Singgih, *Doing Theology in Indonesia,* 2003, p. 111.
[444] Singgih, *Doing Theology in Indonesia*, 2003, p. 116.
[445] Singgih, *Doing Theology in Indonesia*, 2003, p. 119.

spirituality of the other. It is through an interfaith marriage that neighbors' otherness is recognized in daily life. In an interfaith marriage, living together in diversity is manifested. For a more humane Indonesia that places the human being as the image of God, sincere life amid otherness is manifested in an interfaith marriage. Interfaith marriage is the manifestation of interreligious theology of friendship. Positively accepting interfaith marriage will make the spirit to live together in otherness a good seed for a more peaceful life of the human family.

As mentioned above, a sincere acceptance and cooperative relationship with people of other religions can only be achieved by using the theological basis that the Church is the inclusive body of Christ and the people of other religions are recognized as the universal people of God. Hence, being a church community as an inclusive body of Christ is a challenge for the churches in Indonesia at present. The understanding of the Church as the inclusive body of Christ can be found in the Epistle to the Colossians. In Colossians 1:18a, "And he is the head of the body, the church…" Paul uses a metaphor that Christ is the head of the body; the church. This metaphor can also be found in other letters of Paul such as in Romans 12:4, 5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. According to Hukubun, regarding the meaning of that metaphor, there is a different emphasis between the Letter to the Colossians on the one hand with the Letter to the Romans and the Letter to the Corinthians on the other hand. In Romans and Corinthians, no impression of a contrast between the head and body appears. Paul speaks about the idea of the Church as the body of Christ, as a community that gathers in a certain place, it is a model of the congregation in which relation and interaction are rather equal and not structural. They need each other; they are interdependent and mutually support one another in the spirit of the equal relationship as members of the church. Also, those who are weak and poor must be placed in the most honored positions. There is a different emphasis in Colossians 1:18a. In Col.1:18a, the author emphasizes that Christ is the head of the body of the Church.

In this regard, there appears a contrast between the head and the body. The relationship between the head and the body is rather structural-hierarchical. In this context, Christ is described as having a higher position than His congregations and universal authority is over everything. Hukubun emphasizes that such a metaphor shows a development of the type of ecclesiological thought in the post-Paul the Apostle era. In that context, the structural-hierarchical model of congregation was considered as the appropriate and relevant model (*cf.* Eph.1:22, 23; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 25, 27, 29, 32). It is a logical argument because house churches and local churches were growing fast in various places, requiring that ideas, patterns, and forms could unite, manage, and drive the congregation towards church

growth without ignoring the identity and local context from which they emerged. In these conditions, consideration by the author of the Epistle of Colossians to choose a universal institutional and structural-hierarchical model for the congregation and the church seems the right choice and relevant. Hence, the author is trying to build a more meaningful, universal and structural-hierarchical ecclesiological concept, from the perspective of the Church as the body of Christ. The Church as the body of Christ is not only the community of the believers of Christ, but also the community of all creation.[446] This emphasis can be found again in Col. 3:11, "Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all." "Christ all and in all" becomes the basis for understanding that the church as the body of Christ is not an exclusive community, but an open community for all, beyond borders, as the instrument for the universal grace of God. By this, the church community should be open to any community, because in Christ all humans are brothers and sisters. The church does not exist for itself. The church is there to reach out to society and everyone. The fundamental characteristic of the church is not only in social life, but it is about how to share the love and grace of God, the love and mercy of Christ. The grace of Christ is not only provided for an exclusive group, but universally covers all people, therefore, it is sensible to seek cooperation and respect for believers of other religions as fellow people of God who are also graced by God.

I concur with Singgih. We will misread the parable of the Good Samaritan if we ignore the people of other faiths as fellow people of God. Moreover, they are often seen as an enemy. The parable of the Good Samaritan is an answer when the expert in the law asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" It surely surprises and rather shocks them when they have to learn and even follow the example of the Samaritan. They were strongly taught in their tradition that Samaritans were not the people of God, Samaritans were enemies, and Samaritans must be ignored. This was not only for the experts in the law, but also for the apostles. By this, the apostles were no longer able to consider that they were the only people of God. The disciples were taught how to deepen the community of believers in existence alongside others. The parable also shows that freeing and saving victims from the shackles of powerlessness are the main focuses of work in the community of believers, regardless of religion, race, or nationality. It means that the community

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[446] Monike Hukubun, *Nuhu-Met Sebagai Tubuh Kristus-Kosmis, Perjumpaan Makna Kolose 1:15-20 Dengan Budaya Sasi Umum Di Kei-Maluku Melalui Hermeneutik Kosmis* (*Nuhu Met* as the Body of the Cosmic Christ; The Encounter of Meaning of Colossians 1:15-20 with the Tradition of *Sasi Umum* in Kei-Moluccas Through Cosmic Hermeneutic), Dissertation, Faculty of Theology - Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta, 2018, pp. 128-129.

of believers of the body of Christ must fight against exclusivism, particularism, and apathy. Samaritans are often classified as a marginalized group, not part of God's people, but here a Samaritan becomes a symbol for openness and the hospitality of faith. An inclusive church community should bring the people to obey the God of humanity, justice, love, and universal brotherhood. God also works outside the church to save humans from destruction.

We inherit the metaphor 'church as the body of Christ' and from there we get the meaning of *koinonia*. However, *koinonia* should not be solely understood as institutional fellowship. *Koinonia* should also be understood as a fellowship which concretely carries out the spirit of love, the restoration of His communion with the world, and emits the mercy of God for all people beyond boundaries. In this way, the Church should see the people who belong to other religions as fellows of God's people in a pilgrimage of faith on earth. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV), a document of WCC (World Council of Churches), says, "The noun *koinonia* (communion, participation, fellowship, sharing), which derives from a verb meaning 'to have something in common,' 'to share,' 'to participate,' 'to have part in' or 'to act together,' appears in passages recounting the sharing in the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-17), the reconciliation of Paul with Peter, James and John (cf. Gal. 2:7-10), the collection for the poor (cf. Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:3-4), and the experience and witness of the Church (cf. Acts 2:42-45). As a divinely established communion, the Church belongs to God and does not exist for itself. It is by its very nature missionary, called, and sent to witness in its own life to that communion which God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom."[447]

5.2. Towards a Theology of Family in the Indonesian Context

The world is changing, and so are the lives of human beings. Systems of relation and attachment between one individual and another will always be influenced by the changing contexts. Nowadays, human beings must share the world with people from various ideologies, religions, and cultures. To respond to such changes, it is not enough for an individual to simplify problems by embracing the principle of 'as long as no one disturbs one another'. Such an attitude will only create alienation. Like it or not, the changes require a review and revitalization of values that used to be believed and of structures that used to be valid. This also applies to how people view families. A family is an entity in a human being's life that bears many value dimensions, not only the socio-cultural and economic

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[447] https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision, par.13. Accessed on 25 April 2020.

dimensions, but also theological dimensions. The family should be the subject, not the object, of change. It is the subject of life's future because each family has a close attachment to the birth of new generations of human beings. Therefore, a family is not only influenced by society, but it also influences the environment of society, itself, through the shaping of better future generations. Christian families in Indonesian society have the typical challenges as Christian families compared with other parts of the world.

It is commonly and traditionally understood that a family is a bond of marriage and blood relations consisting of a husband, a wife, and one or more children living in one house, in Indonesian usually called *somah*.[448] Nowadays, the concept of a family has changed. A family does not have to be as explained above. A family can be formed without marriage or blood relations (e.g., child adoption). Also, a family does not have to include a husband and a wife, like in the case in a *single-parent* family. The concept of living in *somah* also fades; some families need to live separately due to some reason. The existing social bond becomes weak because of distance. The changes in the present family structure pattern influence the traditional understanding of families, including Christian families. Hence, the changes need to be responded to more openly and comprehensively.

Religious plurality is part of the reality of Indonesian society. Interaction is no longer limited to same-religion. The extended families of my mother and my father are Christian families. All of them were Christians, but later, my mother's brother converted to another religion because of his marriage. If a family embraces the same religion, faith becomes more exclusive as the family passes on a particular religion. Nevertheless, at present, my extended family consists of different religious believers. The spirit of family life can no longer be exclusive; it needs to be inclusive by accepting not just brothers/sisters, but brothers/sisters of different religions. Indonesia consists of various ethnicities and religions. Human interaction in the context of ethnic and cultural diversities is inevitable. It opens the possibility for more heterogeneous interactions. A family may consist of various ethnicities. My mother is from Java, my father is from Sangihe, and I married a person from Minahasa. Consequently, my daughter bears in her Javanese, Sangihe, and Minahasa blood. If in the future my daughter marries an Indonesian of a different ethnicity, or even a non-Indonesian, my family will be more multicultural. The purport of identity becomes more open. The tradition of the monocultural family needs to be adjusted to the multicultural reality.

The changes are not only in the background, but also in the complexity of life's problems. Some families are without children, or with adopted children,

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[448] *Somah* literally means nuclear family.

with only one parent because of divorce, etc. At present, divorce has become a crucial problem for struggling families. Today's family faces a new phenomenon, including/leading to a new understanding of what a family is. It would mean that a family is beyond biological boundaries with a focus on role and function. Some people play roles as parents and others play the roles as children to those with no biological bond. Today's family also struggles to face the social changes influencing it.

The church is obliged and responsible for providing pastoral care to the congregation. The church can no longer see itself as an exclusive, reticent, and conservative institution since the social context rapidly changes. In this case, constructive theology, a dynamic and living theology, is needed. It needs to continuously change to face the rapid social changes. It does not mean that the church is cast adrift by this condition. There are principles and values to hold on to, from which a relevant constructive theology can be developed. This needs to begin with the understanding that Christian families are the subject of change. Christian families need to keep changing, not be static, reticent, and rigid. The church can no longer talk in one way, by monologues, with a rigid dogmatic approach.

I do not intend to successfully offer a ready-to-use theology of the family. Therefore, I will expound some main ideas that need continuous review by churches in Indonesia in each socio-cultural context. Through this effort, at least, there is a willingness to develop a relevant and contextual constructive theology of family. It is impossible to formulate a theology of family that applies to all places and times.

Utomo, in his study of developing a theology of family for GPIB, proposes four directions for a theology of family:[449]

1. Develop the construction of GPIB's theology of family that internalizes equality. In this part, Utomo mentions the importance of building a relationship that is based on the relations within the Triune God. Developing the construction of a theology of family by emphasizing equality and respect in a marital relationship is absolutely needed in Christian families. In such families, there is no willingness to overpower, subdue, exploit, and suppress, but to develop an atmosphere that creates happiness, to be present for, to know, complete, and empower each other.

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[449] Dinka P. Utomo, *Membangun Sebuah Teologi Keluarga Bagi GPIB: Mendialogkan teologi keluarga Jack O. Balswick dan Judith K. Balswick dengan pemikiran GPIB mengenai Keluarga* (Developing A Theology of Family For GPIB: A Discussion on Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick's Theology of Family and GPIB's View of Family), Master Thesis – Duta Wacana Christian University,Yogyakarta, 2019, pp. 133-160.

2. Develop the construction of GPIB's theology of family that internalizes the initiative in love and self-sacrifice. The spirit to educate, embrace, guide, accompany, maintain, respect, notice, and forgive can be found in this theology of family. This is the manifestation of love and willingness to self-sacrifice as demonstrated in a family's daily encounters.

3. Develop a splendid GPIB theology of family. The splendor of family relations will be obvious when loyalty to God, to the spouse, and to the family are seriously maintained and when the family embraces the perspective of grace and empowers each other.

4. Develop the construction of GPIB's theology of family that has positive-constructive public implications amidst the Indonesian context. In this part, Utomo proposes the effort to develop a theology of family that is not only relevant, but also presents positive-constructive implications for the public sphere. It means that this theology of family is not aimed to be narrow and exclusive.

Eminyan views that the experience of unity and sharing, which are characteristics of daily family life, is the basic source and main contribution to society demonstrated in mutual respect of dignity, acceptance, service, and solidarity. Therefore, a family is the main school for social life and becomes a role model and stimulus to reach wider society.[450] Every family is a school, every parent is a teacher. A family is the most effective means to humanize and personalize the society, to offer wisdom and values, as well as to respect personal rights and dignity that are important for the society. A family, as the main and basic educational community, is a special means for continuing life and cultural values that help someone acquire an identity. An established family that is based on love and openness to the grace of life bears the future of society and provides effective support for a future of peace. A family is an intimate life of fellowship and love. Total love is self-giving for life. God created men and women in His image. They are called to form a life fellowship forever, where both reflect the essence of God. Amid ongoing changes, the family life value that remains the same is companionship. The theology of family that needs to be developed is a companionship theology of family.

As explained in the previous part, churches in Indonesia are struggling to develop a theology of relations with friendliness, openness, and courage to pass over their own religious experience and give a room for other religions. That is an urgent need for churches in Indonesia. In my opinion, these characteristics are

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[450] Maurice Eminyan, *Teologi Keluarga* (Theology of Family), Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 2001, p. 13.

also needed in developing a theology of family that is not only based on traditional understandings. When a family is understood traditionally, the family will be seen as a shared life of which the relations within are very domestic, exclusive, and narrow. What kind of theology of family understanding needs to be developed? I want to, firstly, refer to the narration in Matthew 12:46–50. The passage tells that Jesus' mother and brother went to see Him. Someone told Jesus about this (verse 47). His answer is interesting, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" This verse neither denies the bond between Jesus and His family nor neglects family bonds. In the next part, Jesus reconstructs the traditional understanding into a new understanding, "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." A family goes beyond biological or genealogical boundaries. A family is not a sacred and unchangeable institution. Sublime and noble works of humanity can be a choice and a strong reason for family members to focus on and to dedicate their efforts. It means that we should not be imprisoned by a narrow understanding of family. This may happen if Christian life values are absent and the family lives an oppressed, lonely, suppressed, and alienated life. A family is not a place for an individual to grow in reticence, judgment, ignorance, and alienation. Some directions for a theology of family to develop are:

1. Towards a graceful family theology

   Often, the family relationship is filled with tension and intolerance to differences. Interpersonal relations are filled with egoism. Every family needs a relation pattern grounded in commitment and intimacy. This basis fits in with the aspect of loyalty as it emphasizes and serves as the moral foundation for society's moral life. The main emphasis here is loyalty in developing family relationships that are like God's covenant of His faithfulness to His people. Family relationships will be filled with joy if the family maintains its loyalty to God, the spouses to each other, and each member to the family itself. A family relationship, as God desires, is living in a gracious atmosphere, not simply in law or in a legal-formal atmosphere. A family life that learns from the commitment of God's covenant to human beings will help people utilize the perspective of grace, magnanimity, and willingness to build a relationship that enables every individual to respond responsibly to grace. Building a relationship from the perspective of grace leads to a family relationship built in the spirit of God's mercy, a spirituality of God's generosity. This spirituality should be the basis of the effort to develop a theology of family demonstrating the love of God through its involvement in loving neighbors. This manifests

an atmosphere of warm brotherhood. Every family is expected to nurture a gracious and merciful atmosphere showing the warmth of God's love to His people in its relationships. Warmth in a family relationship builds a strong bond and brings joy to the family. Utomo describes such beauty and joy in a form of rotation dance (*perichoresis*), a communal and repeated dance in a rhythmical movement.[451] Moving along with the beautiful rhythm while hugging, releasing, holding, and releasing again each other. Every person involved in the dance will dance in unity while they do their own roles. Joy is manifested when they deepen into the graceful movements. There is no intention to overpower, subdue, exploit, and suppress each other, but to be present for, to know, complete, and empower each other. Every family will perform the dance of family relations in diversity, but with joy and tolerance. This will answer the challenge in the context of Indonesian diversity and protect families from the spirit of reticence and rigidity, and from attacking each other. An interfaith family would be given space in this understanding and would even become the manifestation of a family that brings joy in diversity. An interfaith family is an actual manifestation of the dance of beauty in rhythmical movement and unity of joy without trying to diminish each other.

2. Towards a liberative family theology
   Prevailing cultural traditions always need to be reviewed. There may be oppression in a cultural tradition. Relationships of men and women in the biblical tradition are also not free from various forms of oppression, denying equality. Therefore, a theological construction of family relationship that is supportive and that emphasizes equality is needed. A theology of family is needed that brings as its mainstream the value of unselfishly self-giving, giving to each other and giving beyond expectation. The aim is not to maintain influence and power, but to empower each other through the relationship. Gender-biased relationships, in the form of a relationship gap or an unequal relationship, are often present in Indonesian culture. In a family, relationships have an important role because they directly influence the family's atmosphere. The family relationship also impacts how every individual in the family builds social relationships. One of the concepts commonly existing in society is the concept that a father is the leader of the family. Utomo criticizes that as a form of gender-biased leadership. Leadership should be the result of a formation process; thus, leadership cannot be identified with gender since it involves capacity, willingness, and commitment. Gender-biased leadership often maintains

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[451] Utomo, *Membangun Sebuah Teologi Keluarga Bagi GPIB*, 2019, p. 134.

injustice and oppression in a family relationship.[452] Unraveling it, and dealing with the problem of injustice in a family, not only requires courage, but also cultural intelligence because such problems in a cultural setting are often seen as a family's affair to cover up. In this condition, the church is often passive, not trying to liberate, hiding behind the statement that "What has been united by God must not be separated by human beings." It is the same as letting the family struggle alone amidst the problem of injustice. The pastoral work is often not enough or inappropriate because it deals only with the surface of the problem, not tackling the essence of the injustice. Domestic violence is gradually forgotten without any solution or it is sometimes lightly referred to without offering justice for the victim. In many cases, the church is even unable to deal with the gender-biased culture, so that families are neglected, ignored, and forced to struggle alone. Such context requires a theology of family that develops the spirit of liberation. I see the relevance of Eminyan's statement suggesting that a family is the main school for social life, a role model and stimulus to reach the wider society. Every family is a school, every parent is a teacher. A family is the most effective means to humanize and personalize society, to offer wisdom and values, as well as to respect personal rights and dignity that are important for society. Jesus also said, "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Hence, a liberative theology of family needs to be implemented in every family as the members humbly talk about forgiving and embracing love while, simultaneously, lovingly talking about justice and anti-violence.

3. Towards a redemptive theology of family

Various judgments are inevitable amidst living in social reality. Nevertheless, social judgment is not always appropriate since it often comes in a form of stigma and unfair presumptions from a particular perspective. An example is how families deal with their family members suffering from a mental disorder. Having a family member with a mental disorder is often embarrassing for the family because the person often goes on rampages and disturbs other people. As a result, a person with a mental disorder is inhumanely treated by his/her own family. Even in the current time, many people with mental disorders are shackled. There has been limited holistic and humane acceptance of disabled members of a family. This is only one example from many social realities where a person is alienated because of society's judgment. Families face many struggles such as the struggle with homosexuality, celibacy, different-faith

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[452] See: Utomo, *Membangun Sebuah Teologi Keluarga Bagi GPIB*, 2019, p. 139.

spouse, and divorce. Society generally judges, excommunicates, or ignores those things. Christian families, through a healthy theological construction, should adopt a positive-constructive attitude towards those issues. In the Indonesian context, discrimination is still experienced by those who are regarded as 'different' from other 'normal' human beings. Common responses to differences are the displacement of, bullying, and physical and criminal threats against LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people. They are discriminated against, not only by society in general, but also by some Christians. Similar judgmental treatment and views are also experienced by those who are celibate or divorced. In this case, developing an anti-discrimination and redemptive family theology is a must. A redemptive theology of family offers a holistic theological basis to accept and treat all people equally regardless of their condition as fellow objects of God's love that saves, instead of punishes, them. Such a theology of family will reflect God's hospitality. Christian families have to be a place to learn and grow, in which every individual's mindset and character is developed and shaped to embrace and love those who are different. As a result, a redemptive theology of family nurtured in every Christian family will lead them to seek, embrace, and empower their alienated neighbors, holistically, and to fully maintain their values of life and rights.

5.3. Towards a Theology of Marriage in the Indonesian Context

When we speak about family, we cannot leave marriage out of consideration. If a family is a destination, then marriage is the way to get there. Even so, in the previous description, we have been reminded that there are families which are not formed by marriage. Marriage is a part of human life that has faced changes in human civilizations. When we speak about marriage, we also speak about topics around it: the position of men and women, procreation (continuation of lineage), sexuality (e.g. adultery and its consequences), the nature of marriage relations (e.g. monogamy, indissolubility), and the legal status of marriage. The discussions about marriage and topics around it are not stagnant. They are moving through challenges and changes in human life. Wijaya gives an example: the bond of marriage as a unity of husband and wife based on the couple's love for each other is something that has newly emerged. In many parts of the world, marriage is originally an economical bond, a transaction between two families, between parents from both sides; therefore, the concept of dowry was created. The growth

of industries and technologies, as well as the government's interventions regarding marriage, has surely brought changes into the concept of marriage.[453]

In some parts of the Bible, we can read descriptions and dimensions of the reality of marriage. Those descriptions contain non-singular social-economy-cultural ideas. For example, the concepts of monogamy and divorce are not the same in different parts of the Bible. The changes in the concept of marriage happened along with the history of human civilization, from the biblical era until the current post-modern era. In the previous chapter, we also explored how changes happened in the church's tradition regarding the formulation for understanding of marriage. We must always be aware that the social context around the emergence of an understanding of marriage as a sacrament, or the context of the understanding of marriage by Luther and Calvin, is completely different from the context of the church in this post-modern era. Social changes are a continuous process that cannot be prevented and cannot be ignored. The world's society is moving in a context that is different from the principles that were set in certain traditions in the past. These social changes include the concept of marriage. The Church that is called to spread the Good News should always be aware of these changes of situation. So, the church's services and attitudes toward marriage should be relevant for today's context. For this, the church needs to keep an open mind to be able to play its role as the bearer of Good News for humankind. If the Church's fails to deal with these changes, it will mean that the Church fails to take pastoral steps for congregations in the context of these changes.

An aspect of social change that has to be considered thoroughly by the church is that at present, our society is a plural society. The congregation must share this world with their neighbors from different religions, ethnicities, races, and cultures. The struggle about this context of plurality cannot be ignored by continuing to uphold the church's teaching of marriage that is completely different from the context of today's social changes. The principles upheld by the Israelites in Ezra's era cannot be blindly used as the foundations of the church's view about interfaith marriage in the current situation. The ancient Israelite's concepts of maintaining land of ancestors and the principles of holiness by maintaining purity of the descendants are not necessarily relevant in the context of today's post-modern society.

Although marriage has been a classical topic along with church history, marriage is not a theme that attracts many theologians to explore in detail. When

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[453] See: Yahya Wijaya, *Apakah Keluarga?* (What is family?) in: Tabita Kartika Christiani (Ed.), *Lajang? Nikah? Nikah Lagi? Cerai? Sebuah Alternatif Pembinaan* (Single? Married? Remarry? Divorce? An Alternative of Coaching), TPK, Yogyakarta, 2019, pp. 4-5.

talking about marriage, the conversations are mostly about ethical issues (e.g. divorce, monogamy, celibacy, etc.). Witte has successfully written a very comprehensive description of the journey of theological thinking about marriage, but it does not mean that the theological understanding of marriage has already been established. In fact, the theology of marriage will never be completely done and established. According to Groenen, there is no comprehensive and satisfying theological formula regarding marriage. Instead, there are efforts to recycle previous official documents and teachings. That is why the debates around the understanding of marriage as a sacrament continue to keep modern theologians busy until now.[454] Groenen's thinking reminds us and also raises our awareness that marriage is a reality in human life, both for Christians and non-Christians that is still happening and will continue to happen throughout the history of human beings. The main purpose of pastoral care toward those who are married is to help them find complete and true wellbeing. If the church's pastoral care, which is a part of the church's work, is to play a very important role, it would be too bad if this reality were not given an appropriate portion in the theological discourses.

Groenen also says that the Bible has never troubled itself with the concept of marriage as an institution. The institution of marriage has been established and accepted as a socio-anthropological reality. The Bible only speaks about those who are married, how faithful people live their marriage.[455] I concur with Groenen that marriage as a human reality can be approached from different perspectives. There is no Christian marriage in terms of exclusive criteria of marriage, because marriage is a human reality. Instead, there are Christians who live their Christianity in their marriage, Christians who display themselves together with Christ in their marriage. It means that we are called to build a marriage order that reflects and embodies the values of Christianity. The dogmatic traditions and the interpretations of the Bible that have always been applied are our theological foundation for continuous dialogue with the real context, in order to create a type of pastoral care by the Church which is relevant and appropriate, and that brings true wellbeing and Good News to all humankind. By holding to those understandings, we will not fall into close-mindedness toward the social developments and changes that the church must deal with. The construction of a theology of marriage that needs to be developed is a theological construction that allows Christian values to be embodied in a marriage. In this matter, I am aware that it is impossible to present an established theological thinking that is relevant for all. Even

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[454] See: C. Groenen, *Perkawinan Sakramental, Anthropologi dan Sejarah Teologi, Sistematik, Spiritualitas, Pastoral (Sacramental Marriage, Anthropology, and History of Theology, Systematic, Spirituality),* Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1993, p. 294.
[455] See: Groenen, *Perkawinan Sakramental*, 1993, p. 296.

so, in my opinion, the construction of the theology of marriage that is relevant for the Indonesian context is a theology of marriage that reaches the concrete human's struggle in the reality of marriage.

In our discussion about the theological understanding of marriage, we have discussed the theological basis of marriage which covers its sacramental character, its redemptive character, and its justice character. From that chapter, we have also found a theological understanding of interfaith marriage. Our next task is to apply this in the framework of building the construction of the theology of marriage that is relevant for the Indonesian context. In this regard, it is necessary to re-emphasize what has been said by Ariarajah, "We need a theology that makes us hospitable. An inhospitable theology cannot produce hospitable people."[456] In my opinion, hospitality can only be realized when there is full recognition of the existence of others as fellows who have the same position in the presence of God. Thus, our understanding about marriage is also based on the true recognition that the union of two persons as husband and wife concerns two equal persons, with equal value and dignity, created by God in God's image. In the presence of God, the reality of marriage is not only a social reality with all cultural traditions, but it has the meaning of unification between a man and a woman which has a divine dimension where God sees each person who is married as a whole and equal personality, which must be respected and valued beyond the social barriers. In this regard, I base myself on the order of creation. Let us see the way Jesus answered the question, "is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" (Mathew 19:3). In my opinion, it is interesting that Jesus did not immediately give a direct answer to that question. The questioner, whose real intention was to frame Jesus, was allowed to decide for himself, based not only on law, but also on something deeper. Instead, Jesus answered the question by referring to the order of creation, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female" (Mat.19:4). Jesus' answer refers to Genesis 1: 27. When speaking about divorce and questioning the reality of divorce, we must first answer the question of 'what is marriage?' About that, Jesus gave the foundation to understand marriage by referring to the existence of men, the two persons who decide to live together, which were created by God in His image in such a way that both need to unite.

It is commonly understood that a human being is the image of God. However, in his commentary on Genesis 1:27, Singgih views that we also may say that the image of God is a human being consisting of man (*zakar*) and woman

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[456] See: Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour,* 1999, p. 98.

(*nekebah*).[457] The details of the creation of man and woman can be found in Genesis 2:18-24. The woman was created in order to give a helper suitable for a man. Seeking a helper suitable for man is attached to the story of creation and of the naming of animals which were created in the same way with the man from the dust of the ground. According to Singgih, because man could not find any suitable helper from animals, God creates a woman who is taken from part of the man's body.[458] The relation between man and woman obtains its foundation in this verse; both are equal as the image of God. Therefore, all kinds of discrimination and distinctive status of man and woman both as a tradition and as a social stipulation should be rejected. Wijaya insists that Biblical verses that lower the position of a woman are no longer relevant and should be reinterpreted because they were influenced by the social construction around.[459]

After awaking from his sleep, the man was very excited about finding a woman suitable for him. He expressed his happiness in Gen.2: 23, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman (*isyah*), for she was taken out of man (*isy).*" Singgih describes it as love poetry of *isy* (husband) to *isyah* (wife).[460] Although there has not been yet an explicit reference about an institution of marriage in this verse, the reference to marriage can be found in verse 24 where the man is united with his wife. In my opinion, the union of husband and wife is stipulated in verse 24, but the love poetry in verse 23 has become a fundamental basis. This love poetry is a proclamation, 'this is an equal helper', the human, who is not found in other creations. Through this love poetry, the man honors his equality in the union with his wife, and the equality of this union lies in humanity. If I may say so, the fundament of the union of man and woman in equality is grounded on humanity. At this point, the union of the man and the woman must be fully respected, and it should be equal. By this, the value of the union of man and woman is based on humanity, not on anything else. In my view, this is a relevant basis for our understanding of marriage. The union of a man and a woman in marriage becomes a dignified union because of humanity. In other words, that marriage, the union of a man and a woman, is the manifestation of the ennobling of human dignity. Human dignity in marriage overcomes all differences between man and woman. A theology of marriage should be based on this love poetry that points to the marriage as ennobling human existence. It means that marriage is supposed to continue the spirit of the existence of man and

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[457] Emanuel Gerrit Singgih, *Dari Eden ke Babel, Sebuah Tafsir Kejadian 1 – 11* (From Eden to Babel, A Commentary of Genesis 1 – 11), Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 2011, pp. 68-69.
[458] See: Singgih, *Dari Eden ke Babel*, 2011, p. 94.
[459] See: Wijaya, *Apakah Keluarga?,* 2019, pp. 8-9.
[460] See: Singgih, *Dari Eden ke Babel*, 2011, p. 96.

woman as in the order of creation, namely ennobling humans, above all provisions, traditions, and differences.

Love poetry also shows the greatness of human love. Such greatness of love unites humanity without being curtailed by the divergence of identity. Love is universal, beyond boundaries. The love poetry only refers to humanity in itself, rather than to other human attributes. It becomes a proclamation of the universality of human love. A marriage must fundamentally ennoble human beings as men and women, without being burdened by status or identity. Thus, the basis of marriage from the order of creation does not require anything but the union of man and women that must uphold human dignity. That means that the quality of marriage does not lie in a sameness of identity, but in the embodiment of the greatness of the love which ennobles human beings.

Back to speaking about divorce in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus does not completely deny the possibility of divorce. However, the chance of divorce is just made possible because of the problems of sexual immorality (Mat.19: 9). A barrier of the possibility of the union is not located in status or identity, but rather in moral behavior. This is just as it is delivered by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:14: the point of distinction between Christian and non-Christian does not depend on identity, but on moral behavior. As we have discussed in the part on Biblical interpretations, both in 2 Cor. 6:14 and 1 Cor. 7, Paul affirms that by the union of man and woman God wills that man and woman shall live in love and peace, behave in good morality, as dignified human beings, as the image of God. As we have found in the chapter on Biblical interpretation of interfaith marriage, in the context of plurality, Paul warns that interfaith marriage is a reality. The quality of marriage is not diminished by the difference of faith as long as every interfaith couple imposes on itself the essential principle of union, namely to uphold the principle of peace, "But God has called us to live in peace" (1 Cor. 7: 15).

In the previous chapter, we have seen that interfaith marriage has values of sacramentality, redemption, and justice, because interfaith couples commit themselves in building an intimate and equal partnership in loyalty and steadfast love, in committed love. This is in line with the spirit of marriage as ennobling human dignity. In such a marriage, God's mercy is present. Among churches in Indonesia, marriage is commonly understood in a rather exclusive way. Only those who have been baptized can receive a marriage blessing. A Christian is unable to receive marriage blessing if the spouse belongs to a different faith.

If the spirit of interfaith marriage is built as a covenant relationship between two equal persons, then such an interfaith marriage is a Christian marriage. Both of them maintain the equality of relationships by avoiding oppression,

discrimination, and all kinds of injustice towards one another. By understanding and accepting each other with mutual committed love, the spirit of marriage honoring human dignity can be embodied. Marriage is a gift for humanity. However, along with the developments of social changes in human civilization, marriage is prone to be a room of humanitarian condescendence, the destruction of personality, neglecting the recognition of human freedom which should be held in high esteem. A theology of marriage that ennobles the dignity of humanity is a very important Biblical message. Such a theology of marriage will encourage a man and a woman who are united in marriage to fully realize that there is a responsibility of faith towards the spouse, children, and family, and to guarantee that their human dignity is fully honored.

5.4. The Relevance of a Contextual Study of Church Polity

For decades, interfaith marriage has been an issue among Protestant churches in Indonesia. Even today, this topic is a hot issue in Indonesia, since it is a sensitive topic both in interfaith theology discourse and in the public sphere. Even though most Protestant churches in Indonesia realize the consequences of living amid various religions, churches in Indonesia variously respond to the reality of interfaith marriage. Despite the pros and cons position to stance the reality of interfaith marriage exist among churches in Indonesia, in my opinion, that is the efforts of Indonesian churches to respond the concrete situations and struggles in the Indonesian context. A stance to refuse interfaith marriage is also a consciously chosen firm position which should be appreciated. Nevertheless, openness toward an argumentative discussion on each stance is expected to develop a healthy dialogue among churches in Indonesia, leading to openness and to a process of building one another up. As we found, both the pros and cons of interfaith marriage are based on theological arguments. The arguments are, of course, developed through the struggles faced by each church. Therefore, an open dialogue is needed, in order that there will be more dynamic and constructive shared action.

Theological studies on this topic have also been done from various perspectives. Since this issue is so sensitive in the context of pluralism, as it deals with other religions, the common approach usually used is the doctrinal approach, from the perspective of the question: can interfaith marriage blessings be conducted? This question, of course, cannot be answered briefly. The answer to the question results in vast consequences. The study of interfaith marriage from a church polity perspective has suggested an intersection with ecclesiology, since the answer to the above question must be dealt with ecclesiastically.

The study of interfaith marriage from a church polity perspective has depicted how churches in Indonesia struggle with this issue and how they ground contextual theology in concrete daily life aspects. Besides, this study has offered relevant principles for churches in Indonesia. I note some relevant important principles of our study.

Developing a wider ecumenical openness
Ecumenical openness is crucial. Our study has shown that the theological understanding of marriage dynamically moves along the history of church and ecclesiology. Every new theological understanding is born from the evaluation of previous teaching and the effort to make it more relevant and actual. At the other hand, the heritage of a teaching tradition never stands on its own. Different or even contradictory teaching traditions often emerge. Tensions often occur during the emergence of a different teaching tradition. This is caused by a teaching or catechetical heritage that views other denominations as false teachings. Reticence is a big challenge to develop a healthy ecclesiology. Indonesian churches, which are plural in themselves, are challenged to develop a process of learning from each other. The result of research published by PGI[461] provides a clear description of this diversity. It means that in the context of Indonesia, churches can no longer take into account only the theological heritage of missionaries who came and spread the Gospel, and set an ecclesiological foundation influenced by their origin churches, as if it were unchangeable. Churches in Indonesia have to develop an open ecclesiological identity to other denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church. It means that it is time to stop viewing other denominations as doctrinally going the wrong way or heretic. In contrast, wider ecumenical openness is an enriching opportunity for churches to better understand their contexts and challenges as they are exposed to various perspectives. Our acceptance of each other will not work well with the presumption that a particular understanding is regarded wrong. To be open can help solve our ecclesiological problems. Once this is set, we can move to a wider ecumenical understanding in a form of dialogue with other religions, including local religions, in the context of churches in Indonesia. By widening the horizons, contextual church polity serves as the driving force for the manifestation of ecumenical-dialogic ecclesiology.

Opening a new ecclesiological direction
Since the study of contextual church polity is part of ecclesiology, it has a close link with the contextual ecclesiological study. It means that the study of

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[461] See: Sutanto, *Potret dan Tantangan Gerakan Oikumene,* 2015, pp. 47-60.

contextual church polity and the emergence of a new ecclesiological direction influence each other. Church polity has become a theological discipline continuously providing tools for church office-bearers to provide more relevant, contextual, and actual services. Doing contextual theology implies to carry out contextual ecclesiology.

Ecclesiological reconstruction is inevitable and unavoidable. The era is changing, and so are human cultures. Advancement in science and technology explaining the mystery of life and nature so that it can be more acceptable and understandable by modern society has rapidly developed. All of those things influence social changes. Churches are also expected to change themselves in order to answer their realities along with the rapid development and changes in human cultures. Ecclesiological reconstruction is imperative; it cannot be otherwise, for churches to positively contribute to human lives and the world.

A missiological approach in formulating the models of contextual theology still dominates churches in Indonesia, so the equality of religions does not appear. However, this could be overcome by Knitter who rather pays attention to the equality of religions, as we see in four models of interreligious dialogue of Knitter namely: the replacement model, the fulfillment model, the mutuality model and the acceptance model.[462] The stance of churches in Indonesia towards interfaith marriage shows that there is still no acceptance of equality of religions. There is positive recognition of other religions, but this does not extend to heartfelt acceptance of people of other faiths. Addressing interfaith marriage requires an ecclesiology that makes the Church hospitable to the adherents of other religions. Constructing a hospitable ecclesiology needs openness and acceptance. Interfaith couples, and of course also interfaith families, should be sincerely accepted as an integral part of the Church. In fact, there are churches that do not allow someone to be nominated as an elder or deacon if the spouse is non-Christian.

In this regard, I only want to say how vast areas church polity contextual study and ecclesiology are, and how they will remain actual for churches. Churches will face unending problems of human beings and the world. Take for example how, now that lately the notion of eco-theology flourishes, this notion should not only be a matter of discourse but also of how to be manifested in green ecclesiology. Panikkar has suggested a new and meaningful notion, i.e. the need for human beings to have a vision and manifest cosmotheandric praxis, a perspective viewing all realities as the interaction of three poles: cosmic, divine and human.[463]

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[462] See: my explanation of these models above, pp. 209-211.
[463] Raimundo Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1998, pp. 24, 72.

Knitter has reflected that this is something that can only be unfolded through experiences. Once it is experienced, it will show us something very real about the world and ourselves. Knitter says, "As an experience, it imbues us with a sense of being at-oned, connected, united, part of. And that with which we are at-oned is not only divine or transcendent Mystery; it's a mystery that is also immanent, right here, part of the finite world [. . .] so there are three components to the mystical experience and to what is revealed in such experience: the Divine (*theos*), the human (*aner*) and the world (*cosmos*). All three are so interrelated that they have their very being in each other; they can't exist without being related to each other."[464] If the experiences and awareness have crystallized in eco-theology, the discourse should not be only a discourse. The next step is how to manifest the theological discourse in the congregation's life order and how to reflect it in the ministerial order of the church. This is where contextual church polity study is needed most.

Learning from Pannikar and Knitter, just as religions, churches are also called to serve the world with earnestly take into account the three poles above more comprehensive. A religious plurality remains a threat for life. However, suffering of human and environment cannot be neglected by religions. Therefore, the thoughts of Pannikar and Knitter above affirm that human and environment welfare becomes a universal criterion for religions, including for churches.[465] The reality of suffering and injustice experienced by human and environmental cannot be simply recorded and discussed but how every single decision of religions, including of the churches, provides fully consideration by giving a room and hearing mourning those who directly experience the suffering and injustice in any reality of human life. By human welfare as universal criteria then any ecclesial decision will be challenged realize the manifestation of justice and fully respect for human rights. This will be very relevant for contextual study of church polity. Interfaith marriage is just a small issue in the problems of human beings and the world. Marriage is one of the many manifestations of human life reality. However, the formulation of and administering of the blessing of ecclesial marriage must be dynamic because it is influenced by changes in human civilization. The study of contextual church polity is highly needed to develop the work of churches in responding to challenges. Once more, church polity study will always be contextual. The contextual church polity study is needed for the church ministry to be more relevant, contextual, and actual. The contextual study of church

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[464] See: Knitter, *Theology of Religions,* 2002, p. 127.
[465] See: Paul F. Knitter, *Satu Bumi Banyak Agama, Dialog Multi-Agama dan TanggungJawab Global,* (One Earth Many religions: Multifaith Dialogue & Global Responsibility), BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, 2003, p. 180.

polity should become a driving force for churches being critical upon every ecclesial decision and regulation for the sake of uphold human dignity and welfare. Every single ecclesial decision and regulation should ennoble humanity.

A new direction of family pastoral care

As revealed in the previous part, the subject of marriage and family has been a part of theological discussion throughout church history. Although the view that marriage is based in the order of creation has a long history in theology, this view does not necessarily contradict the fact that marriage – and its theological understanding! – has developed through history, due to sociocultural factors. Unfortunately, this area is not interesting for many theologians, including theologians in churches in Indonesia. In the last ten years, the attention of churches in Indonesia to the problem of marriage and family has increased. This is obvious in various forms of pastoral care for husband and wife, and in the implementation of the 'Family Month'. This big attention has, however, not encouraged the presence of a thorough and contextual explanation of marriage and family. This is reflected by the limited number of protestant theological articles on marriage and family. Even if these topics are discussed in some articles, the discussion is usually only on ethical problems occurring in marriage and family. Therefore, it is not surprising if churches' care toward families is still very traditional, and they even make families the object of church doctrine. In the context of churches in Indonesia, the family's loyalty to the church is undoubted. A strong religious feeling is an stimulus for families' loyalty to the church. However, in the future, churches in Indonesia will face a big challenge in managing different generations, searching for a format for intergenerational care, and even searching for a form of fellowship that goes beyond the traditional understanding of family. The cultural approach remains very helpful for churches to care for families. Nevertheless, the development of the family's way of life has become totally different from the traditional understanding. Family care can no longer be done using the traditional style where family aspects are understood traditionally. Family's struggle in the plural and multicultural context has become the agenda of churches in caring for families. The big changes in human civilization have mostly impacted families. Nowadays, a theological discussion on forms of church like liquid church or solid church occurs. This is a challenge for churches in the modern and technological era. Family members live separately. Church membership will be liquid. Young families require a closer and more intensive approach, instead of a huge institution that does not deal with their concrete struggles. Modern young families are families with a loose bond that influence church conventional structure because they no longer want to be bothered by church membership administration.

Modern young families no longer pay attention to territorial and doctrinal boundaries. Churches in Indonesia are still very traditional in caring for these matters. A contextual study of church polity is highly needed by churches to anticipate the future.

5.5. Towards a Transformative and Empowering Church Order

The Church is the people of God which pilgrim on earth. Essentially the Church, as the body of Christ, has spiritual, as well as material aspects. For that reason, the structure of the Church must always be revitalized in accordance with the Bible, but it must also be rooted in the situation and the local conditions. Regulations are needed so that they serve as a form of social engineering to prevent bad people from doing evil, prevent good people from going astray, and make bad persons behave well. A contextual church order is an essential instrument to give direction for church ministry to be relevant and actual. When a church order is unable to respond to basic human problems, it is time for it to be revitalized. A contextual church order should have a transformative character. That character in turn becomes an instrument for building a transformative church. A contextual church order should give more room for openness, and freedom should be in dialogue with orderliness and not disputed. A church order is a product of the awareness of a church in doing theology. Therefore, it should continue to grow and should be authentic.

Since a church order is part of the church identity, such identity should be built in the spirit of openness in order to enrich, to deepen, and to widen understanding. A contextual church order should accommodate diversity and give more room for mutual enrichment and complementarity. The expected church order should be ecumenical, contextual, and pastoral, as well as a regulation to maintain order and discipline. The congregation's life constantly changes and moves in such a complex and problematic context. Therefore, it is impossible for any church order to cover all the complexities of congregational problems that to all times and circumstances.

A church order will empower people when it is considered as a partner for dialogue. The church order will empower church life when it is not used as a tool to beat guilty persons, but rather to guide guilty persons in order to realize their mistakes and to be consciously willing to correct mistakes. In order to become like that, a church order must open the door for dialogue as wide as possible and not close it. Further complicating matters is that it is a challenge for the churches in Indonesia to develop a church order that is able to accommodate diversity and even to provide space for local theology.

Such an awareness emerged in the 2015 GKJ Church Order amendment process so that the term 'transformative pastoral approach' arose. The transformative pastoral approach contains all forms of pastoral care which are carried out equally and they reform each other for the realization of recovery, empowerment, and renewal of life as the image of God. The spirit that has grown is that the Church order gives the widest room for the process of learning together through higher respect for differences. A transformation will occur when open and sincere dialogue broadly takes place.

A church order in this transformative spirit also means a church order that is able to empower the congregation. The congregation is always given an open opportunity for doing theology. The real contextual theologian is the congregation. The church order should open the shackles of the people in theology. In this way, the church order will empower people for doing theology independently without annoying or blaming each other.

Churches in Indonesia need the means to make sure that ecclesial life becomes more agile in responding to human problems so that they find a way in concrete, relevant, and actual steps. The context of church life in Indonesia in the future requires the Church's openness to dealing with the problems of humanity, including intolerance. A church order must be an instrument to assist in opening the door to critical dialogue so that it produces thoughts that are self-critical as well. As revealed in our study, discussion about sensitive issues like interfaith marriage also encourages a self-critical attitude of the church. Therefore, the churches in Indonesia are challenged to renew and carry out sustainable studies of the theological formulations they have. Regarding marriage and interfaith marriage, I present two theological points that can help churches in Indonesia, namely:

1. Christian marriage is a sacramental relationship. God is intimately involved in the intimate partnership of the couple. The involvement of God in the covenant of marriage happens when spouses consent and commit themselves to create a life of equal and intimate partnership in loyal and steadfast love. The presence of God and His love is appreciated and embodied by the union and love of the couple. In Christian marriage, a couple, man and woman, express and make present the uncreated grace that is God's creative self-giving. A Christian couple is true 'grace' to each other.

   The mutual love in Christian marriage is characterized by the sacrificial love of Christ. As Christ gives sacrificial love to the Church, His bride, so the mutual sacrificial love must be manifested in marriage (see. Ephesus 5: 22-33). This means that Christian marriage is a sign of grace and a means of grace. Christian marriage is characterized by two main principles namely commitment (indissoluble) and loyal partnership (monogamous).

2. The understanding for the acceptance of interfaith marriage is based on 1 Corinthians 7:12-14, "If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy." Paul, the Apostle, teaches that interfaith marriage is a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Paul's teaching excludes the possibility of the Christian member of the marriage initiating a divorce especially because the spouse is an unbeliever. It is quite clear that Paul did not speak about approval or disapproval of interfaith marriage, but rather Paul is interested in interfaith marriage as a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Likewise, we find in this passage that there is no tension or problem of identity regarding cultural identities such as Gentiles and Jews, Greek and Roman, or religious identities such as Christian and non-Christian, etc. It means that interfaith marriage is a reality in the plural society, it could not be denied. Interfaith marriage is a committed marriage therefore it should be maintained. Paul affirms, "But God has called us to live in peace" (1 Cor.7:15).

Churches need to pay attention to the following principles during their efforts to regulate the acceptance of interfaith marriage in the church order or another ecclesiastical document:

1. Marriage is a gift that has been given by God to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Interfaith marriage is a reality in a religiously plural society. The value of sacramental marriage lies in the conviction that God is intimately involved in the intimate partnership of the couple, so God is also involved in the intimate and committed partnership of an interfaith couple. The value of sacramental marriage is not at all depending on the same religion of the couple, but it is all about an equal and loving partnership, the mutual sacrificial love to be lived for the whole life in the total mutual self-giving of the couple which symbolizes God's self-giving in Christ. There, Christ's grace is present. Paul, the Apostle, teaches that interfaith marriage is a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Paul's teaching excludes the possibility of the Christian member of the marriage initiating a divorce especially because the spouse is an unbeliever

(see. 1 Corinthians 7:12–13). Interfaith marriage is a committed marriage. Interfaith marriage is a Christian marriage.

2. Interfaith marriage is not an obstacle to serving the partner and the Lord at once without distraction. The minister of the congregation shall conduct interfaith marriage after the Church board decides to do so. However, protecting a Christian spouse from any distraction from devotion to Christ is pivotal. Therefore, for the sake of fidelity to the Lord, it is necessary to take every opportunity for avoiding that distraction before entering into an interfaith marriage.

3. Marriage is an equal and intimate partnership that must be based on the independent decision of individuals who are appreciated. Therefore, the church must spearhead efforts to make marriages that are not as domination over another.

4. The church does not foster interfaith marriage, but if it is inevitable, it is the Church's responsibility to help every church member who intends to marry someone of a different faith, at least to have a legal marriage, strengthening rather than questioning the faith of the couple in entering their marriage.

5. Interfaith marriage is a Christian marriage blessed by the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the church conducts matrimonial services for couples of different religions by using the special liturgy prepared by the church board.

6. Living a married life with different religions is not easy, therefore the church board must continue to provide assistance so that the marriage truly ennobles humanity and gives them happiness.

7. The church council must ensure that the non-Christian spouse can freely worship according to his/her faith without any obstacles from any party.

8. As a consequence of the acceptance of interfaith marriages, the Church has the opportunity to dialogue and open up in encounters with religious adherents and other religious leaders.

Based on the points above, I will present a proposed design of the church order or regulation regarding interfaith marriage. Because there are structural differences between the churches in terms of arrangements regarding marriages, especially interfaith marriages, I will present a description of the proposals for each church.

GKI

The stance of GKI towards interfaith marriage can be found in the church order of GKI in Article 31 point 2c. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, although GKI has accepted interfaith marriages, in my opinion, church order Article

31 point 2.c still needs to be added with a detailed description in the guidelines. GKI also still needs implementation guidelines, as well as pre-wedding pastoral guidelines, specifically for interfaith marriages. Since the phenomenon of interfaith marriage is a reality of Indonesian society, I propose that interfaith marriage be included as a separate article in the Church Order GKI, just like the existing separate article on ecumenical marriage (Article 30). By providing a separate article for interfaith marriage, it will provide an impetus to the churches of GKI in preparing the interfaith marriage services seriously. The proposed design for the article on interfaith marriages is as follows:

Article 31
INTERFAITH MARRIAGE

a. Definition

Interfaith marriage is a marriage between a confessing member and a person of other faith in which the non-Christian spouse will remain in his/her faith.

b. Preparing for Interfaith Marriage

If an interfaith couple meets the requirements of the civil administration where they intend to marry, they may apply to the Church board for matrimonial service. A couple requesting a service of interfaith marriage shall receive instruction from the minister about the purposes and essential aspects of marriage so that the couple demonstrates sufficient understanding of the nature of marriage and the commitment to living their lives together according to the values in Christian marriage. As a result of an adequate investigation, interfaith marriage may be conducted as long as it doesn't endanger the faithfulness of faith of a Christian spouse. The Church council decides to carry out the matrimonial service.

c. Implementation

The Church council, and particularly the minister of the congregation, must pay careful attention to the following points:

1. The Christian party has to declare that he or she is prepared to remove the dangers of defecting from the faith.

2. Both parties are guided to be aware of the consequences of interfaith marriage so that they commit themselves to maintain valuable dialogue to avoid disappointment. The minister of the congregation guides them to achieve an agreement about religious education for their children.

3. Both parties must declare to accept the principles of Christian marriage to maintain an intimate and committed partnership.

4. Further procedures are in accordance with the church order of GKI article 29 points 2 – 8.

The Indonesian version would read as follows:

Article 31
PERKAWINAN BEDA AGAMA

a. Pengertian

Perkawinan beda agama adalah perkawinan antara anggota Sidi dengan seseorang yang beriman lain dimana pasangan yang bukan Kristen akan tetap pada imannya.

b. Persiapan Perkawinan Beda Agama

Jika pasangan beda agama telah memenuhi persyaratan administrasi Catatan Sipil, mereka boleh mengajukan permohonan Ibadah pemberkatan perkawinan kepada Majelis Gereja. Pasangan yang mengajukan permohonan tersebut akan mendapat pendampingan dari Pendeta jemaat tentang tujuan dan hakekat perkawinan sehingga pasangan tersebut memiliki pemahaman yang cukup tentang makna perkawinan serta berkomitmen untuk hidup bersama sesuai dengan nilai-nilai perkawinan kristiani. Sebagai hasil dari pemeriksaan yang memadai maka perkawinan beda agama boleh dilayankan sepanjang tidak membahayakan iman bagi pihak mempelai Kristen. Majelis Gereja membuat keputusan untuk melaksanakan Ibadah pemberkatan perkawinan.

c. Pelaksanaan

Majelis Gereja, dalam hal ini Pendeta jemaat, harus memberi perhatian secara sungguh-sungguh pada hal-hal berikut ini:

1. Pihak mempelai Kristen harus menyatakan bahwa ia menyiapkan diri untuk menghindari bahaya pengingkaran iman.

2. Kedua pihak dibimbing agar memiliki kesadaran terhadap konsekuensi dari perkawinan beda agama sehingga mereka berkomitmen untuk mengelola dialog yang baik guna menghindari hal-hal yang tidak diinginkan. Pendeta juga memimbing kedua pihak untuk mencapai kesepakatan mengenai pendidikan agama anak-anak mereka.

3. Kedua pihak harus menyatakan untuk mematuhi prinsip perkawinan kristiani yakni memelihara persekutuan yang berkomitmen dan intimitas.

    4. Prosedur selanjutnya sesuai dengan Tata Gereja GKI pasal 29 butir 2 – 8.

GKJ

Although there is openness and acceptance of interfaith marriages, GKJ still faces challenges because of accusations of Christianization within the acceptance of interfaith marriages. To reduce the tension that arises because of this, GKJ needs to confirm independence for the non-Christian spouse to be able to carry out his/her worship in accordance with their faith. Besides, GKJ needs to provide details and clear procedures, as well to confirm the basis for accepting interfaith marriages.

In the church order 2015, GKJ separates the church order from the guidelines. The Guidelines of GKJ 2015 contain operational matters. A regulation regarding interfaith marriage is stipulated in the Guidelines of GKJ 2015, under the section of the Affirmation and Blessing of Marriage.[466] For a clear description, I propose that the regulation for interfaith marriage is reformulated in separate points under the section on the Affirmation and Blessing of Marriage. With reference to the principle of accepting interfaith marriage in the Guidelines chapter II point E, I propose a specific description of interfaith marriages as follows:

I.E.1 INTERFAITH MARRIAGE
a. Definition

    Interfaith marriage is a marriage between a confessing member and someone of another faith in which the non-Christian spouse will remain in his/her faith.

b. Requirements

    The requirements are in accordance with the Guidelines of GKJ 2015 chapter II.E.2, namely:

    1. The applicant is a confessing member.

    2. The applicant has attended the pre-marriage catechism that is held by the church council.

    3. The applicant has met the administrative requirements needed by the church.

    4. The applicant has met the administrative requirements needed for the civil registry.

c. Implementation

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[466] See Chapter 3, under the subtitle 'GKJ and Interfaith Marriage', pp. 126–128.

The implementation of interfaith marriage is the same as for GKI above, with this additional no. 4:

4. Further procedures are in accordance with the Guidelines of GKJ 2015 chapter II.E.3 point a - e.

The Indonesian version would read as follows:

I.E.7 Perkawinan Beda Agama

1. Pengertian

   Perkawinan beda agama adalah sebuah perkawinan antara warga dewasa yang telah mengaku percaya dengan orang yang berbeda iman, yang mana pasangan yang non Kristen akan tetap dalam imannya.

2. Syarat

   Persyaratan perkawinan beda agama sesuai dengan Pedoman-pedoman II.E.2, yaitu:

   1. Calon mempelai adalah warga gereja dewasa.
   2. Telah mengikuti Katekisasi Pra-Nikah yang diselenggarakan oleh majelis gereja.
   3. Telah melengkapi syarat-syarat administratif yang dibutuhkan oleh gereja.
   4. Telah melengkapi syarat-syarat adminitratif yang dibutuhkan untuk pencatatan sipil.

3. Pelaksanaan

   Pelaksanaan pemberkatan beda agama sama dengan yang sudah tertera di GKI di atas, dengan penambahan pada butir no. 4:

   4. Prosedur selanjutnya sesuai dengan buku Pedoman-pedoman GKJ 2015 pada bagian II.E.3 butir a - e.

GKPB

A regulation regarding interfaith marriage in GKPB is stipulated in the Church Order of GKPB chapter V Article 36 point 1 and the Act of GKPB chapter VI. As we saw in Chapter 2 on GKPB and interfaith marriage, the Act of GKPB is an official GKPB document containing GKPB's attitude towards some cases. The church order of GKPB chapter V Article 36 point 1 only contains a basic statement, while the details are in the Act of GKPB. From our investigation of GKPB, we find two important things, namely: (1) there is a need to provide a clear theological basis for the stance of GKPB accepting the interfaith marriage. Even though GKPB's Act of Church has already mentioned the verse as a reference, it is necessary to have an adequate interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7. (2) GKPB

needs to explicitly emphasize that GKPB will give freedom to the non-Christian spouse to stay and worship according to their faith. This is necessary so that accusations of Christianization through marriage can be broken. GKPB's Act of Church containing interfaith marriages is already quite applicable. However, I propose an addition to the Act of GKPB chapter VI, as follows:

IV Interfaith Marriage
a. Issue
    GKPB accepts the interfaith marriage which means that GKPB will conduct the marriage of a couple belonging to different religions, whereby each of them consents to live in his/her religion.

b. Theological Understanding
    (The two theological points that I have presented above[467] can be used to answer the need for the theological basis of GKPB to accept the interfaith marriage.)

c. The Principles of Solution
    (The principles that I have mentioned above can be applied here.)

d. The Guidance of Implementation
    The implementation of interfaith marriage in GKPB is the same as the implementation of GKI point 1 - 3, with additions as follows:
    4.1 The applicant applies to the church council with the attached administrative requirements, including a statement that he/she has attended the pre-marriage catechism.
    4.2 Based on the application letter, the church council will hold a pastoral conversation. The church council will decide on the application. If the church council approves, the holy matrimony plan is announced twice in a row.
    4.3 If there is an objection from the congregation regarding the marriage plan, the church council will have a follow up conversation, and if necessary, it will cancel the marriage plan.
    4.4 The service of marriage blessing is carried out using the Liturgy and the formula for the marriage blessing of GKPB. The church council issues the Marriage Blessing Letter and registers the marriage in the book of the congregation.

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[467] See pp. 247-248.

The Indonesian version would read as follows:

IV. PERKAWINAN BEDA AGAMA
a. Permasalahan

GKPB dapat memberkati perkawinan beda agama, artinya GKPB akan melayani perkawinan dari calon mempelai yang berbeda agama, dimana masing-masing berjanji akan hidup berdasarkan iman masing-masing.

b. Pemahaman Teologis

(Dua pokok pemikiran teologis yang sudah saya sebutkan di atas[468] digunakan di sini untuk menjawab kebutuhan adanya dasar teologis GKPB dalam menerima perkawinan beda agama.)

c. Prinsip Penyelesaian

(Prinsip-prinsip penerimaan perkawinan beda agama yang sudah saya sebutkan di atas di gunakan di sini.)

d. Petunjuk Pelaksanaan

Pelaksanaan perkawinan beda agama di GKPB sama dengan pelaksanaan di GKI butir 1 – 3, dengan penambahan sebagai berikut:

1. Calon mempelai mengajukan permohonan kepada majelis gereja dengan dilampiri persyaratan administratif, termasuk keterangan telah mengikuti katekisasi.
2. Calon mempelai harus memenuhi persyaratan administrative untuk pencatatan perkawinan di Catatan Sipil.
3. Berdasarkan surat permohonan tersebut pada no.1 Majelis akan menyelenggarakan percakapan pastoral. Majelis akan membuat keputusan mengenai permohonan tersebut. Jika Majelis menyetujui maka rencana pemberkatan nikah diwartakan dua kali berturut-turut.
4. Jika terdapat keberatan dari jemaat mengenai rencana perkawinan tersebut maka Majelis akan melakukan percakapan ulang dan penundaan jika diperlukan.
5. Ibadah pemberkatan perkawinan dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan Liturgi dan formula pemberkatan perkawinan GKPB. Majelis menerbitkan Surat Pemberkatan Perkawinan, dan mencatat perkawinan tersebut pada buku jemaat.

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[468] Lihat hal. 247-248.

HKBP

As we know from the previous chapter, the official view of HKBP towards inter-
faith marriage can be found in *Ruhut Parmahanion Dohot Paminsangon* 1987
(literally meaning: the Rules of Pastorate and Admonition, RPP 1987), points l
and q chapter IV. RPP HKBP 1987 is a Church discipline regulation. That means
that in the understanding of HKBP, interfaith marriage is already in the category
of violations of faith so that people who do so must accept ecclesiastical disci-
pline. For more clarity, I rewrite it here:

> m. Those who marry without HKBP's agreement are no longer regarded as
> congregational members. In any case, the official decision will be an-
> nounced in a congregational announcement. The announcement will ex-
> plain that the person is put under church discipline because his/her mar-
> riage is only approved by the Civil registrar, or he/she has married a non-
> Christian (see 1 Corinthians 7:12-13+39). However, the person can be ac-
> cepted again as a member of the congregation after the church board ap-
> proves him/her, and after the person takes part in the confession of sin cat-
> echesis.

> r. A man or a woman who loves a woman or a man who is a non-Christian
> can have a marriage blessing only if the woman/man is willing to be bap-
> tized. However, the person must sign an agreement that he/she is willing
> to continue catechesis after they receive the marriage blessing.

Interfaith marriages which are categorized as part of the ecclesiastical discipline
show very clearly the position of HKBP's rejection of interfaith marriage. How-
ever, in my opinion, this is not in line with the spirit of HKBP stated in the vision
and mission of HKBP. The vision and mission of HKBP confirm the open identity
and dialogic spirit of HKBP in the plural society. HKBP's vision and mission
should be a strong incentive to accept interfaith marriages. HKBP's vision and
mission as stipulated in the Preamble of the Church order of HKBP,[469] is as fol-
lows:

> *Vision*
> HKBP has developed into an inclusive, dialogic, and open church, capable
> and powerful to develop a quality life in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ,

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[469] *Aturan Dohot Paraturan* (Orders and Regulations), 2002, pp. 111-112.

together with all people in a global society, especially Christian communities, for the glory of God the almighty Father.

Mission

HKBP seeks to improve the quality of all members of the community, especially the members of HKBP, through qualified church services to be able to carry out the mandate of the Lord Jesus in all aspects of personal life behavior, family life, as well as the life of the whole human society at the local and national levels, at the regional level and global level, in facing the challenges of the 21st Century.

With this spirit of vision and mission, there is a clear basis for HKBP to exclude interfaith marriages from the RPP. However, from the practical aspect, the HKBP will still be dealing with cultural issues. As the analysis in Chapter 2 shows, Batak culture is an open culture, but there seems to be a problem of ethnicity which is why the interrelation between customs and religion cannot be a transformative force for the community. This should be a great force for HKBP to be present in a plural society, exemplifying the spirit of openness and acceptance of differences.

The formulation of the vision and mission of HKBP reveals an open and dialogic picture of the church. However, this is not fully apparent in practical daily life. HKBP very strongly refuses to accept interfaith marriage. The RPP of HKBP confirms that someone married outside the church or with a partner who belongs to a different faith is excommunicated. In my opinion, an open and dialogical spirit of the HKBP does not exist. The RPP regards those who marry people of different faith as having abandoned the Christian faith. Moreover, the HKBP needs to know that Civil Administration Law 23/2006 has opened the door to the possibility of interfaith marriage. If there is a member of the congregation who intends to have a marriage with someone of another religion, but the Christian partner still holds fast to the Christian faith while the non-Christian still holds their faith, what will HKBP do? With the spirit of the vision and mission of HKBP, HKBP should immediately open up. HKBP must answer that challenge that is increasingly unstoppable. The rejection of interfaith marriage is based on 1 Corinthians 7: 12, 13, 19, but these verses are not explained. The attitude of objection to interfaith marriage is very strong in HKBP. To arrive at the full acceptance of interfaith marriage requires a large and powerful change for HKBP. To reach this full acceptance, the most likely step to take at the beginning is to encourage the openness of the HKBP not to excommunicate those who are

married to someone of a different faith while still living in the Christian faith. Therefore, what we can do is to review RPP chapter IV point l, as follows:

The stance of the Church toward those who marry people of other faiths

a. Problem
    HKBP considers that anyone who marries someone of a different faith has denied the Christian faith. This attitude is based on 1 Cor.7: 12,13,39. Can 1 Cor 7: 12,13,39 still be used to excommunicate those who are married to people of different faiths?

b. Theological Argument
    Paul, the Apostle, teaches that interfaith marriage is a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Paul's teaching excludes the possibility of the Christian member of the marriage initiating a divorce especially because the spouse is an unbeliever. It is quite clear in 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 that Paul did not speak about approval or disapproval of interfaith marriage; rather, Paul is interested in interfaith marriage as a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Likewise, we find in this passage that there is no tension or problem of identity regarding cultural identities such as Gentiles and Jews, Greek and Roman, or religious identities such as Christian and non-Christian, etc. It means that interfaith marriage is a reality in the plural society, it cannot be denied. Interfaith marriage is a committed marriage therefore it should be maintained. Paul affirms, "But God has called us to live in peace" (1 Cor.7:15). To marry an unbeliever is not a violation of faith as long as the Christian spouse can faithfully live in loyalty to God.

c. Principles
    1. A marriage must be founded in sincerity. Therefore, marriage is not a means to subject someone to the superiority of one of the parties.
    2. Interfaith marriage is not an obstacle to serving the partner and the Lord at once without distraction. The church must take responsibility for caring for the Christian spouse so that they reflect good Christian ethics-morals in the life together with the unbelieving spouse.
    3. Marriage is an equal and intimate partnership that must be based on the independent decision of individuals whose existences are respected.

Therefore, the church must spearhead efforts not to make marriages as domination over another.

The Indonesian version would read as follows:

Sikap Gereja Terhadap Mereka Yang Menikah Beda Agama

a. Masalah

HKBP menganggap bahwa barangsiapa menikah dengan orang berbeda i-man telah mengingkari iman Kristen. Sikap ini didasarkan pada 1 Cor.7:12,13,19. Apakah 1 Cor 7:12,13,19 dapat dipakai untuk melakukan ekskomunikasi terhadap mereka yang telah menikah dengan orang yang berbeda agama?

b. Pemahaman Teologis

Rasul Paulus mengajarkan bahwa perkawinan beda agama adalah sebuah kenyataan di dalam jemaat yang seharusnya dirawat dengan cara yang ber-tanggung-jawab. Oleh karenanya dalam pengajarannya Paulus tidak mem-beri kemungkinan kepada anggota Kristen untuk mengajukan perceraian khususnya oleh karena pasangan yang berbeda agama. Cukup jelas bahwa Paulus tidak sedang berbicara tentang menerima atau tidak menerima perkawinan campuran, namun Paulus lebih hendak menegaskan bahwa perkawinan beda agama adalah sebuah kenyataan yang ada di dalam jemaat yang harus dirawat dengan baik dan dengan cara yang bertanggung-jawab. Juga kita menemukan dalam pasal ini tidak ada ketegangan maupun persoalan terkait dengan identitas budaya seperti Yahudi dan non Yahudi, Yunani dan Ronawi, atau identitas agama seperti misalnya Kristen dan non-Kristen, dan sebagainya. Itu berarti bahwa perkawinan beda agama adalah sebuah kenyataan yang ada di tengah masyarakat plural, yang tidak bisa dielakkan. Perkawinan beda agama adalah sebuah perkawinan yang berkomitmen yang seharusnya dirawat. Oleh karena itu Paulus menegas-kan, "Tetapi Allah memanggil kita untuk hidup dalam damai" (1 Kor. 7:15). Dalam konteks Indonesia, umunya dipahami bahwa penolakan ter-hadap perkawinan beda agama adalah demi melindungi pihak Kristen dari gangguan untuk bisa beribadah kepada Kristus. Saya menganggap kebera-tan itu lebih sebagai kecuriagaan sebab bukan tidak mungkin pasangan beda agama mewujudkan spirit mengasihi, saling memahami, dan salung menghargai dalam perkawinan beda agama sehingga pihak Kristen tidak terhambat untuk berbakti kepada Kristus. Menikah dengan seseorang yang

berbeda iman bukanlah sebuah pelanggaran iman sepanjang pihak Kristen hidup dalam kesetiaan.

c. Prinsip-prinsip
1. Perkawinan beda agama bukanlah hambatan untuk dapat melayani pasangan dan sekaligus melayani Tuhan dengan tanpa gangguan. Gereja harus mengambil tanggungjawabnya untuk mendapingi pasangan Kristen agar hidup sesuai dengan etis moral Kristen dalam kehidupannya bersama dengan pasangan yang tidak percaya.
2. Perkawinan haruslah didasarkan pada ketulusan. Oleh karenanya, perkawinan adalah bukanlah alat untuk menundukan seseorang pada superioritas atas yang lain.
3. Perkawinan adalah persekutuan yang setara dan intim yang harus didasarkan pada keputusan bebas individu-individu yang dihormati eksistesinya. Oleh karena itu gereja harus mempelopori upaya untuk membuat pernikahan tidak sebagai dominasi atas yang lain.

GPIB

GPIB officially rejects interfaith marriages. It can be found in the Church Act of GPIB.[470] However, the latest development is that in the GPIB Annual Synod Session, February 2020, the issue of interfaith marriages has been included as a material proposal in the upcoming General Synod Assembly. There seems to be a possibility that GPIB is opening up to interfaith marriage. Marriage is not regulated in the church order of GPIB. The acceptance of interfaith marriages is expected to become part of the Church Act of GPIB. In the structure of GPIB, the Church Act is an ecclesiastical document that contains a description of the response to various issues that are present and in touch with the life of the church. The Church Act is based on the ecclesiology and missiology approach of the church which is open and extends the proclamation of God within the phenomena of human life faced by the people. If GPIB accepts interfaith marriage in the end, my proposal may be input for GPIB. In this regard, I follow the structure of the existing Act of Church of GPIB.[471] I present the proposed Act of Church about interfaith marriage as follows:

The Church Act

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[470] See: *Akta Gereja* GPIB, 2010, pp. 9-11, also *Pemahaman Iman & Akta Gereja, Buku I* (The Understanding of Faith and The Church Act, Book I), Sinode XX, 2015, pp. 218-221.
[471] See Chapter 3, on 'GPIB and Interfaith Marriage', pp. 88–94.

About Interfaith Marriage

a. Definition

Interfaith marriage is a marriage between a confessing member and some-one of another faith in which the non-Christian spouse will remain in his/her faith. A marriage between a confessing member and a member of the Roman Catholic Church is categorized as an ecumenical marriage.

b. Problem

Interfaith marriage is a social reality that must be seriously taken into account by the church. The church must be ready to face this challenge. The church cannot avoid it. Church members interact with many people with different identities. The closure of the church will cause problems for congregations that live in a religiously plural context. However, a clear and strong foundation is needed in responding to this reality.

c. Explanation

(The two theological points that I have presented above[472] can be used as basic arguments for accepting the interfaith marriage).

d. Principles of Solution

(The principles to regulate the acceptance of interfaith marriage in the church order or another ecclesiastical document that I have mentioned above can be applied here, with an addition that Civil Administration Law 23/2006 has opened the door to the possibility of interfaith marriage.)

e. Guidance of Problem Solving

(The preparation of interfaith marriage and the implementation of the interfaith marriage of GKI points 1 - 3, can be applied here.)

The Indonesian version would read as follows:

Akta Gereja
Tentang Perkawinan Beda Agama

a. Pengertian

Perkawinan beda agama adalah perkawinan antara anggota Sidi jemaat dengan seseorang yang berbeda iman dimana pihak yang bukan Kristen

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[472] See pp. 247-248.

akan tetap pada imannya. Perkawinan antara warga Sidi jemaat dan warga Gereja Katolik Rima dikategorikan sebagai perkawinan oikumenis.

b. Masalah

Perkawinan beda agama adalah realita sosial yang harus ditanggapi secara serius oleh Gereja. Gereja harus siap menghadapi tantangan ini. Gereja tidak bisa mengindarinya. Warga gereja berinteraksi dengan banyak orang dengan ragam identitas yang berbeda. Ketertutupan gereja justru akan menimbulkan masalah bagi jemaat yang hidup di dalam konteks kemajemukan agama. Namun demikian, dibutuhkan sebuah landasan yang jelas dan kuat dalam merespon realita ini.

c. Penjelasan

(Dua pokok teologis yang sudah saya sebutkan di atas[473] dapat dipergunakan sebagai argumentasi dasar penerimaan perkawinan beda agama.)

d. Prinsip Penyelesaian Masalah

(Prinsip-prinsip untuk mengatur penerimaan perkawinan beda agama di Tata Gereja atau dokumen gerejawi lainnya yang sudah saya sebutkan di atas dapat diberlakukan disini, dengan tambahan bahwa Undang-undang Administrasi Kependudukan 23/2006 telah membuka pintu kemungkinan perkawinan beda agama.)

e. Petunjuk Penyelesaian masalah

(Persiapan perkawinan beda agama dan pelaksanaan perkawinan beda agama GKI butir 1 – 3 dapat diberlakukan di sini).

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[473] Lihat hal. 247-248.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

Church history records a lot of differences and strong opposition throughout the struggle to formulate church teachings. Basically, they are all relevant, contextual, and actual within their particular eras. No one can claim truth over the other without considering the different contexts. Therefore, for a more contextual, relevant, and actual church life, there is the need for a willing evaluation, when the next generation develops new concepts. Our study journey has now arrived at some points of conclusion from our investigation into interfaith marriage issues.

1. Marriage is a human life entity that is as old as human civilization itself. The traditions of theological understanding of marriage have developed along with the changes in human life and in the churches in their way of doing theology. Protestant churches in Indonesia have inherited a theological understanding of marriage from the missionaries who brought the Gospel to this land. Most of these inherited traditions are preserved, but some have changed through their encounters with local contexts. The context of religious pluralism has become one of the important factors and has to be responded to by churches in Indonesia.

2. Marriage has become an ever more political issue as seen throughout the history of civil law in Indonesia. The process of drafting the Marriage Law cannot be separated from religious issues, which are very sensitive, and can even cause tensions. The Marriage Law 1974 is problematic because it does not explicitly regulate interfaith marriage. The rejection of interfaith marriage in some local Civil Registry Offices in Indonesia is due to different interpretations of the Marriage Law 1974. Amending the Marriage Law 1974 is urgently needed for a more humane life that prioritizes an individual's freedom to choose their spouse. This is also a part of religious freedom that must be protected by the law. Nevertheless, amending the Marriage Law 1974 is not easy, since this law is regarded as a recognition of Sharia law on marriage. The process to review and look for a breakthrough of the Marriage Law 1974, as done in the Constitutional Court 2014, has not been fruitful. It cannot be denied that the effort to review the Marriage Law 1974, specifically as far as it

is related to interfaith marriage, has experienced problems because religions in Indonesia have different stances toward this issue. The MUI (Council of Indonesian Ulama), NU (Nahdatul Ulama), and PHDI (the Hindu Dharma Council of Indonesia) have firmly rejected interfaith marriage while PGI (the Communion of Churches in Indonesia), KWI (the Conference of Bishops in Indonesia), and MATAKIN (the Supreme Council for the Confucian Religion in Indonesia) are more open to interfaith marriage. Meanwhile, WALUBI (the Buddhist Communities Council of Indonesia) tends to abide by the government's decision. Even though religious institutions have established official stances toward interfaith marriage, internally, this does not guarantee a unanimous voice. PGI has established an official stance toward interfaith marriage, but it does not mean that all member churches of PGI have the same attitude. In fact, many churches do not accept interfaith marriage. PGI does not have the power to intervene in the affairs of its member churches. Nevertheless, PGI needs to build an open and critical theological discourse on this crucial issue. PGI has courageously issued a pastoral letter regarding the issue of LGBT, which is still a controversial issue among religions in Indonesia. Since PGI finally succeeded in issuing such a great pastoral letter, PGI should also be able to issue a pastoral letter on interfaith marriage. This effort would at least open a way for new thinking to arrive for the member churches that are willing to proceed in the process of moving beyond what they have believed so far. MUI has affirmed its rejection of interfaith marriage by declaring that interfaith marriage is *haram*; however, in fact, there are some Muslims who are open to interfaith marriage. So, there are different stances within each religion. One of the important aspects leading to internal differences is the different interpretations of texts in the scriptures. The decision of the Constitutional Court 2014 indicates that this decision is strongly influenced by the majority and minority situation in Indonesia. This is proven by the fact that the Constitutional Court paid more attention to one of the interpretations prevelant in the majority religion.

Even though the Marriage Law 1974 does not fully open access to interfaith marriage in Indonesia, legally, the opportunity for interfaith marriage is offered in the Civil Administration Law 23/2006. This law offers new hope. Nevertheless, according to this law, marriage is considered legitimate only if it is conducted in accordance with a particular religion or belief. At the end, it depends on the stance on interfaith marriage of the churches in Indonesia.

3. Churches in Indonesia have different attitudes to interfaith marriage. Even though PGI and KWI are open to interfaith marriage, they do not have a

common theological foundation. Both have different understandings of marriage. KWI views marriage as a sacrament while, in general, Protestant churches in Indonesia regard marriage as a civil issue. Nevertheless, in practice, there are pros and cons regarding interfaith marriage among Protestant churches in Indonesia. Since interfaith marriage has become a hot issue in the relationship of religions in Indonesia, connected with the issues of Christianization and Islamization, there is an urgent need for a more profound dialogue in order to find a shared stance to respond to interfaith marriage in the context of religious pluralism in Indonesia.

The marriage service among churches in Indonesia is bound to the legal aspect, to the prevailing law. They commonly obey the official regulations and interpretations of the government related to all products of legislation. Nevertheless, in reality, churches can also be critical of it. In general, interfaith marriage is not acceptable in Indonesia, but not all churches abide by this thought. Churches that are open to interfaith marriage base their understanding on Biblical interpretation and studies in contextual theology; they embrace cultural openness and have an intense relationship with other religions. Meanwhile, churches that disagree with interfaith marriage also have their Biblical arguments and are bound to a cultural tradition. We have learned that culture can serve as a factor that promotes openness to interfaith marriage, but it can also be a factor contributing to the rejection of interfaith marriage.

4. Protestant churches in Indonesia hold the legacy of the Reformation principle, *sola scriptura*. In determining the stance on interfaith marriage, Protestant churches in Indonesia refer to the Bible as the primary counsel. However, the Bible does not provide a single formula for interfaith marriage. Biblical texts do not give guidance to accept or reject interfaith marriage. Some texts explicitly forbid interfaith marriage. Nevertheless, it needs to be taken into account that the prohibition of interfaith marriage is based on a particular situation and context. Forms of faithfulness to God by preserving the holiness and purity of offspring cannot be separated from the context of establishing an identity. Besides, some Bible texts emphasize the importance of manifesting Christian values in married life, even when Christians marry people of different faiths. The texts that reveal openness to interfaith marriage, such as 1 Cor. 7, cannot easily be used as proof to promote the acceptance of interfaith marriage, because Paul rather warns that interfaith marriage should not be an obstacle to serve the partner and the Lord at once without distraction. Therefore, for the sake of fidelity to the Lord, Christians should take every opportunity to avoid distraction. The Biblical texts challenge churches in the current situation to reinterpret and re-actualize the message of the Bible.

5. Doing contextual theology is not based only on the Bible. It should seriously take into account changes of cultural and social contexts. Indonesia has experienced social change to which churches in Indonesia must respond. A gap exists in the theological discourse of churches in Indonesia in an imbalance between discourse and the embodiment of interfaith dialogue. Theological discourse on interfaith dialogue develops very well. This is, at least, obvious in the attitude of churches in Indonesia that are not hostile to their neighbors of different beliefs. This is very good. However, it does not encourage an inclusive attitude and the acceptance of others the way they are. In reality, there is doubt among Protestant churches in Indonesia when they deal with concrete life, especially with the interfaith marriage issue, which leads to the tendency to be reticent. Another challenge for the acceptance of interfaith marriage comes from rejection by the family or the church-board. Often, some members of church-boards are against interfaith marriage despite the Synod's decision. In this case, the drive to establish an open identity is needed.

6. The ideal marriage does not depend on identity, but on the manifestation of Christian values that serves as the spirit for two individuals united in marriage. It does not mean that the church must promote interfaith marriage. Interfaith marriage is an inevitable reality, so the church must be ready to help church members who want to marry a person of a different faith. It is impossible for a church to stay still and let the congregation find a solution to the struggle by themselves. The church has to develop a marriage theology that provides a strong foundation for the conviction that marriage is the gift of life, a blessing for humanity. This is how a marriage must ennoble human dignity. On this basis, families can live a more humane and dignified life without discrimination and injustice in the marital relationship where each family member's dignity is guaranteed. I reconfirm my belief that, in the Indonesian context, interfaith marriage is the manifestation of the most profound and concrete dialogue, since in interfaith marriage, appreciation of and respect for difference are fully manifested in daily life, not only serving as a matter of discourse. Interfaith marriage is a means to be able to promote peace and to ennoble humanity in a religiously plural society.

Reflection

In every discussion, encountering differences is not a sign of a setback. It is very well possible that interfaith dialogue ends with no agreement. Even if there is an agreement, it is a matter of 'agree to disagree'. The important point is that through the similarities and differences, a room and an opportunity to learn together from

each other's experiences are created. Churches have inherited teachings that were born from the context generations ago, with specific approaches. In my view, dialogue will be more constructive if it is not only based on what has been normatively determined, but on the spirit to share faith experience, which means that even though different, churches can share their experiences. Churches in Java are open due to their encountering experiences with other religions. Therefore, this experience should be a room for relatively homogeneous churches to learn in. In this way, the dialogue is not only normative but natural, it flourishes from the encounter experience. For example, I can attend the services of Charismatic or Catholic churches, and I learn about the faith experience from my brothers and sisters there without having to lose my typical identity. The experience I have from my brothers there adds to the richness of my personal experience of faith. The church is a community of shared pilgrimage, which is why openness to build each other up is needed.

We all face the plural world, which is sometimes confusing. In the language of social media, pluralism is known as hyperreality. Since we often face diversity or hyperreality in ethnicities in the context of Indonesia, we can be proud that we can count on the principle of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity), on Pancasila as the national ideology, and on the 1945 Constitution. Formally, we develop a positive attitude toward other religions, but the reality can be different. Religion can be a source of conflict. In this case, an open identity to respond to religious diversity needs to be developed. In church life, we are called to develop an open identity-based ecclesiology to respond to religious diversity.

Developing a new ecclesiology, a contextual ecclesiology, an orientation towards human problems and their complexities will be a vital need for churches in the future. Interfaith marriage, as one of the problematic aspects of marriage, can serve as a reflection for other problems. I reflect on the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. This pandemic also challenges churches to further develop ecclesiology, when sermons must be done online, bringing the church's pulpit around the dining table, among the congregation's families. The Covid-19 pandemic has opened a new reflection to develop ecclesiology because a new change has taken place in the life of the believers. Take for example, the way we worship, the change in liturgy, or different ways to administer Sacraments. The centrality of church leaders has changed. Sermons have infiltrated all areas, markets, shops, roads, regions, countries, and even continents. The concept of a church as a group of people assembling in a building has changed since people now stay in the silence in their homes for family worship. Offline (face to face/communal) gatherings have changed into online meetings through social media. The social system has also changed; relational warmth symbolized by shaking hands, hugging, and

kissing each other is replaced by nodding heads. Amidst these changes, we should decide to do things differently, including developing a new way of thinking as a step to adapt to new realities, but also declaring the seriousness in the journey of reflection on ecclesiology. We are dealing with a new experience. For many, the use of media for fellowship is a new experience. In the past, the experience related to the proclamation of Christ gave birth to the early church. Their relationship was marked by gathering, breaking bread or dining together, praying together, and listening to the Apostle's testimony. This experience continues to the present. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not enough to be reactive, but we should also be proactive, since the changes will influence future realities. It is not enough for churches to prepare a virtual worship model; this is a momentum for them to change their ecclesiological direction, developing a new ecclesiological way forward. The experience leads us to see that being online is a momentum to catch up with God's footsteps.

Problematic sides of human life will continuously occur along with the changes in human civilization. Families and marriages no longer live in the technological era, but have entered the so-called industrial revolution 4.0. This influences human relationship patterns and systems. Nowadays, communication depends heavily on electronic devices. Moreover, our social system has entered what Fukuyama calls society 5.0 revolution. Society 5.0 is a society that can solve challenges and social problems with the help of various innovations of the industrial revolution 4.0, such as the internet of things, artificial Intelligence, and big data. Fukuyama formulates society progress as follows: society 1.0 means groups of hunters who join in life and coexist harmoniously with nature; society 2.0 forms groups based on agricultural cultivation that develop organizations and a nation; society 3.0 is a community prioritizing industrialization through the industrial revolution and creating mass production; society 4.0 is an information society creating a dynamic addition value by connecting invisible assets, for example, through information networks. Society 5.0 is an information society that is developed beyond society 4.0, and aims at developing a prosperous human-centered society characterized by economic and social resolution development in such a way that human beings can enjoy high quality and comfortable lives. All aspects of human life, including region, gender, age, and language, will be facilitated by the realization of the fusion of cyberspace and physical space so that every person can access data and from there they can create new values and solutions to deal with challenges and leveraging community strength.[474] I am aware

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[474] Mayumi Fukuyama, *Society 5.0: Aiming for a New Human-Centered Society, an article*, Japan Spotlight, 2018, pp. 47-48.

that there are many other scholars who are dealing with this issue. I do not intend to enter the complexity of this issue in this reflection. My point is that the Church needs to use 'new eyes' to read this complex reality, which dynamically changes, in order to be a relevant and actual Church.

The challenge of doing theology will be more complicated along with the changes in human life and civilization in the world entering society 5.0. Interfaith marriage is a small part of human life's complexity. The contextual study of church polity in the context of Indonesia will equip churches in Indonesia in re-ordering their ministries to be more relevant and actual. This study stimulates further study that is more open and profound, which will also be needed by churches in Indonesia. Some examples of topics for such open and profound studies are crucial issues including human sexuality, LGBT, same-sex marriage, divorce, etc. The studies of actual topics will be needed along with ecclesiastical service that is expected to further empower the church. The contextual study of church orders is a driving force for church transformation to actualize Christian ethics and religious values as a shared calling for a community of faith.

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SUMMARY

In Chapter 1 – *Introduction* – the background, aims, methodology and relevance of this research project on interfaith marriage are presented.

It is an undeniable fact that interacting and associating with those who have different identities are necessities in a pluralistic society. Therefore, two persons of different religions who love each other and are willing to marry is a plausible reality in a pluralistic society. However, the problem is not as simple as that. In the Indonesian context, marriage has social, cultural, and religious dimensions. These dimensions are related to each other so that they cannot be put aside. Failure to fulfill one of these dimensions will be a burden in itself for each person getting married. That is why interfaith marriage, which is actually a concrete reality in a pluralistic society, exists as a natural thing that should be a logical result but, in fact, becomes a complex problem that is painful for many couples. Couples with different religions will not automatically find a way out of their longing. They often find dead ends in realizing their dream.

One of the factors that contribute to this complication is the civil law system on marriage in Indonesia. Chapter 2 – *Interfaith Marriage in the Civil Law of Indonesia* – deals with this issue. It was complicated by the birth of the Marriage Law No.1/1974 through tensions within society which actually intersected with sensitive issues in interreligious relations in Indonesia. Issues of marriage in drafting the Marriage Law shifted to the issue of identity politics. The Marriage Law 1974 has a contentious history because the establishment of this law cannot be separated from its political context. When this law was established, it was a political compromise that tried to find a way to deal with the reality of marriage in the plural Indonesian context. However, this law has not solved the reality of marriage in a plural context. Before the enactment of Marriage Law No.1/1974, interfaith couples could easily legalize their marriages. After the Marriage Law was enacted, interfaith couples had to swallow bitterness because of the many difficulties they had to face. In fact, this law does not explicitly prohibit or regulate interfaith marriage. Therefore, the implementation of this law is interpreted differently by each local authority. The implementation of the Marriage Law has created difficulties and obstacles for interfaith marriages. The prohibition of

interfaith marriage comes from the interpretation of the Marriage Law 1974. The ban on interfaith marriage derives from the decisive phrase in Article 2 (1) of this law. The literal interpretation of the sentence in Article 2 (1) that marriage is legitimate 'if it has been performed according to the laws of the religion and belief of the parties concerned' has been taken as a formal prohibition of interfaith marriage. Therefore, it is considered as a common understanding of most Civil Registry Offices in Indonesia that interfaith marriage is not allowed.

It can be asserted that the awareness of society regarding the importance of a legal breakthrough in order to give interfaith marriage a place in law is much stronger. The case of interfaith marriage in the Indonesian Civil Law, which came to the Constitutional Court in 2014, is a hint that there are persistent efforts to find the best solution to deal with the issue of interfaith marriage in society. Unfortunately, the Constitutional Court decided to refuse the petition to amend Article 2 (1) of the Marriage Law No.1/1974. From the judicial process in the Constitutional Court, we found that the stance on interfaith marriage among religions in Indonesia is characterized by pros and cons. Muslim organizations (MUI, NU) and the Hindu PHDI clearly opposed the whole petition while the Protestant PGI, the Catholic KWI, and the Confusian Matakin seemed open to interfaith marriage. Buddhist WALUBI clearly states that they will obey the provision by the government. In a religiously pluralistic society, a different view or stance on interfaith marriage is nothing bad. The religions in Indonesia should be able to overcome the issue of 'majority – minority' before the law in order to avoid a law of the jungle. Otherwise, the minor religions will always feel threatened. The Constitutional Court views that religion legitimates a marriage, but the decision of the Constitutional Court signifies that the deliberation of the Court, to some extent, is based on a certain interpretation and view, in this regard based on the religion of the majority. How about the adherents of other religions who have a different interpretation or belief? Unfortunately, the final decision of the Court has been used as the legal basis for all people.

The Civil Administration Law 23/2006 is an opportunity and a challenge. It is a new hope for those who will register their interfaith marriage in the Civil Registry Office. In principle, it provides a way out for interfaith couples to fulfill their wish, albeit without a religious procedure. Therefore, although there is a chance for interfaith marriage in Indonesia, this chance is still determined by the stance of the Church toward interfaith marriage, whether it is accepted or prohibited. For that reason, churches in Indonesia are necessarily open and ready to enter into a deep discourse on this issue. This is the challenge for the church polity of the churches in Indonesia to review and formulate theologically in order

to stipulate it in the church order, guiding the reality of interfaith marriage in this plural society in a relevant way.

Chapter 3 presents *The Official View on Interfaith Marriage in Indonesian Churches.* The Marriage Law No.1/1974 confirms that marriage is legitimate if it has been performed according to the laws of the religion and beliefs of the parties concerned. This means that the Church in Indonesia, as a religious institution, is placed in a position that determines the validity of marriage. This is not the choice of the Church, but like it or not, the Church is carried away by a certain attitude that assumes that the validity of marriage is in their respective religions. Another problem arises because every church has a teaching tradition on this subject. Therefore, this investigation is carried out by entering to tune in, track, and analyze the fact that churches in Indonesia embrace different responses toward interfaith marriage. What is the argument of the churches in Indonesia in their stances towards interfaith marriage? Five churches with quite different historical backgrounds and present contexts were chosen, namely GKJ, GKI (both mainly Java), HKBP (Sumatra), GPIB (Western Indonesia), and GKPB (Bali). The investigation shows that there are pros and cons with each argument. From our investigation we found that GKJ, GKI and GKPB accept interfaith marriage as ecclesiastical marriages, while HKBP and GPIB reject interfaith marriage. Churches in Indonesia have different stances on interfaith marriage. Even though PGI and KWI are open to interfaith marriage, they do not have a common theological foundation. Both have different understandings of marriage. KWI views marriage as a sacrament while, in general, Protestant churches in Indonesia regard marriage as a civil issue. Nevertheless, in practice, there are pros and cons regarding interfaith marriage among Protestant churches in Indonesia. Since interfaith marriage has become a hot issue in the relationship of religions in Indonesia, connected with the issues of Christianization and Islamization, there is an urgent need for a more profound dialogue in order to find a shared stance to respond to interfaith marriage in the context of religious pluralism in Indonesia.

In 2015, the results were published of research conducted in 2013 by the PGI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia). One of the research points is about the relationship and cooperation with other religions and beliefs. The results of the research show that the theological discourse of interfaith dialogue and pluralism has been very strong among churches in Indonesia. The report from researchers on the acceptance of other religions and beliefs is very positive. It means that other religions/beliefs are no longer seen as enemies, competitors or

even threats, but are viewed as partners in facing communal problems. The data obviously indicate that in terms of interfaith discourse, interfaith cooperation, and interfaith dialogue, 91% of the churches in Indonesia are reportedly open, but in terms of the most concrete form of living together in religious diversity, interfaith marriage, there is still doubt. It shows that there is a gap between theological discourse on the one hand and the concrete attitude of Indonesian churches in the plural context on the other hand. In practice, churches cannot accept the idea that their brother/sister who belongs to another religion can receive blessings upon their marriage, even though the churches claim to be very open in the theological discourse on interfaith dialogue. Therefore, the objection to blessing an interfaith marriage is closely related to the question of whether or not the blessings can be given to those who belong to different religions. It is also commonly understood by the Protestant churches in Indonesia that churches do not legalize marriage. This is part of the legacy of tradition regarding the understanding of marriage.

The marriage service among churches in Indonesia is bound to the legal aspect, the prevailing law. Churches commonly obey the official regulations and interpretations of the government related to all products of legislation. Nevertheless, in reality, churches can also be critical of them. In general, interfaith marriage is not acceptable in Indonesia, but not all churches abide by this thought. Churches that are open to interfaith marriage base their understanding on Biblical interpretation and studies in contextual theology; they embrace cultural openness and have an intense relationship with other religions. Meanwhile, churches that disagree with interfaith marriage also have their Biblical arguments and are bound to a cultural tradition. We have learned that culture can serve as a factor that promotes openness to interfaith marriage, but it can also be a factor contributing to the rejection of interfaith marriage.

As chapter 4 – on *Contextual Church Polity in the Indonesian Context* - shows, the stance of the church toward interfaith marriage is necessarily theological in nature. Many factors influence the church in the process of decision-making. Undoubtedly, a theological understanding of marriage is grounded in its biblical interpretation. The biblical texts, either explicitly or implicitly pertaining to interfaith marriage, become primary references. There is no single view of interfaith marriage in the Bible, because pro and contra stances exist. Hence, we cannot present a single biblical teaching on interfaith marriage. Although there are different views, together they can reflect the struggle of faithful communities to deal with this issue in their social-religious context and circumstances.

Interfaith marriages between Israelites and foreigners, who were considered unbelievers, occurred during the Old Testament period. However, it doesn't mean that interfaith marriage was always positively accepted. The biblical texts that directly prohibit interfaith marriages in the Old Testament can be found in Exodus 34:11-16, Deuteronomy 7:3-4, and in Ezra 9-10. The important point is that the prohibition is an effort of prevention. The covenant with God, the maintenance of faithfulness before God, the struggle for their identity as the chosen people of God, and the need to keep themselves away from any apostasy or the chance to fall into worshiping other gods are some of the points of prevention surrounding the prohibition of interfaith marriage. The Israelites were challenged to formulate their conviction to God, expressed in their fidelity to God, and actualized into their lives with people of other faiths. The prohibition of interfaith marriages that took place in a particular time and situation was a means to realize their calling, although the solution is rather anti-social.

In the New Testament, we do not have a reference for what Jesus taught about interfaith marriage. The Bible texts in the New Testament that explicitly speak about interfaith marriage can be found in the letters of Paul to the Corinthians, namely 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, which are commonly used as the basic argument to deal with interfaith marriage. Our investigation into these passages shows that interfaith marriage was a reality within the congregation of Corinth's plural society. Paul did not give any kind of recipe to choose a stance towards 'approval' or 'disapproval' regarding this issue; he rather warned the Christians to implement the virtue and value of Christian marriage in daily life within a pluralistic society. The bond of mixed marriage is a committed marriage. Paul warns Christians who enter into mixed marriages that to be married or not married must become a responsible decision, even when it regards an unbeliever. There is no reason for divorce. For Paul, interfaith marriages are not obstacles that prevent commitment to both the partner and the Lord at once without distraction.

To address the issue of interfaith marriage, the view of Ariarajah helps us locate a point to begin. He views that we need a theology that makes us hospitable. A negative stance toward interfaith marriage is connected with an attitude of looking at the religions as mutually exclusive. There is an attitude of emphasizing what is distinctive and different from others and what separates them rather than focusing on the common values. Churches in Indonesia should be a partner of dialogue and cooperation for a better situation of the people of Indonesia in the future, for democracy, and human dignity. Not all Islamic groups reject interfaith marriage, but not all churches accept interfaith marriage,

either. Therefore, dialogue is very important for both of them. Even more, interfaith marriage can subsequently be seen as a means of dialogue for life.

How can we theologically understand interfaith marriage? From a biblical perspective, we have concluded that interfaith marriage is a legitimate, Christian marriage. Christian marriage is a sacramental relationship. God is intimately involved in the intimate partnership of the couple. The involvement of God in the covenant of marriage happens when spouses consent and commit themselves to create a life of equal and intimate partnership in loyal and steadfast love. This is the point from which we construct the theological understanding of interfaith marriage. Marriage is a gift that has been given by God to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. The value of sacramental marriage lies in the conviction that God is intimately involved in the intimate partnership of the couple, so God is also involved in the intimate and committed partnership of an interfaith couple. The value of sacramental marriage is not at all depending on the same religion of the couple, but it is all about an equal and loving partnership, the mutual sacrificial love to be lived for the whole life in the total mutual self-giving of the couple which symbolizes God's self-giving in Christ. There, Christ's grace is present. Paul, the Apostle, teaches that interfaith marriage is a reality within the congregation that should be well maintained in a responsible way. Paul's teaching excludes the possibility of the Christian member of the marriage initiating a divorce especially because the spouse is an unbeliever (see 1 Corinthians 7:12–13). Interfaith marriage is a committed marriage. Interfaith marriage is a Christian marriage.

The ideal marriage does not depend on identity, but on the manifestation of Christian values that serves as the spirit for two individuals united in marriage. It does not mean that the church must promote interfaith marriage. Interfaith marriage is an inevitable reality, so each church must be ready to help its members who want to marry a person of a different faith. The Church has to develop a marriage theology that provides a strong foundation for the conviction that marriage is the gift of life, a blessing for humanity. This is how a marriage must ennoble human dignity. On this basis, families can live a more humane and dignified life without discrimination and injustice in the marital relationship where each family member's dignity is guaranteed. In the Indonesian context, interfaith marriage is the manifestation of the most profound and concrete dialogue, since in interfaith marriage, appreciation of and respect for difference are fully manifested in daily life, not only serving as a matter of discourse. Interfaith marriage is a means to promote peace and to ennoble humanity in a religiously plural society.

Churches in Indonesia need the means to make sure that ecclesial life becomes more agile in responding to human problems so that they find a way in concrete, relevant, and actual steps. The context of church life in Indonesia in the future requires the Church's openness to dealing with the problems of humanity, including intolerance. A church order must be an instrument to assist in opening the door to critical dialogue so that it produces thoughts that are self-critical as well. A contextual church order is an essential instrument to give direction for church ministry to be relevant and actual. When a church order is unable to respond to basic human problems, it is time for it to be revitalized. A contextual church order should have a transformative character. That character in turn becomes an instrument for building a transformative church. A contextual church order should give more room for openness, and freedom should be in dialogue with orderliness and not disputed. A church order is a product of the awareness of a church in doing theology. Therefore, it should continue to grow and should be authentic. Since a church order is part of the church identity, such identity should be built in the spirit of openness in order to enrich, to deepen, and to widen understanding. A contextual church order should accommodate diversity and give more room for mutual enrichment and complementarity. The expected church order should be ecumenical, contextual, and pastoral, as well as a regulation to maintain order and discipline. The congregation's life constantly changes and moves in such a complex and problematic context. It is impossible for any church order to cover all the complexities of congregational problems for all times and circumstances. Therefore, it is necessarily one sided, provisional, and needs openness to ecumenical dialogue.

In Chapter 5 – *Conclusion and Reflection* – the main results of this research are presented and summarized.

SAMENVATTING

In hoofdstuk 1 – *Inleiding* – worden achtergrond, doelstellingen, methodologie en relevantie van dit onderzoeksproject gepresenteerd.

Het valt niet te ontkennen dat het in een pluralistische samenleving voor mensen met verschillende identiteiten noodzakelijk is met elkaar contact te hebben en met elkaar om te gaan. Daarom is het feit dat twee personen van verschillende religies elkaar liefhebben en met elkaar willen trouwen in een pluralistische samenleving een plausibele realiteit. Echter, zo simpel is dat niet. In de Indonesische context heeft het huwelijk sociale, culturele en religieuze dimensies. Deze dimensies zijn op elkaar betrokken, zodat ze niet buiten beschouwing kunnen worden gelaten. Geen rekening houden met een van deze dimensies zal voor elke persoon die gaat trouwen een last worden. Daarom bestaat het interreligieuze huwelijk, dat feitelijk een concrete realiteit is in een pluralistische samenleving, als iets natuurlijks dat voor de hand zou moeten liggen, maar dat in feite een complex probleem wordt, dat pijnlijk is voor vele paren. Paren met verschillende religies zullen niet automatisch een uitweg vinden. Dikwijls lopen ze dood bij het verwerkelijken van hun droom.

Een van de factoren die aan deze complicaties bijdragen is het burgerlijk huwelijksrecht in Indonesië. Hoofdstuk 2 – *Het interreligieuze huwelijk in het burgerlijk recht van Indonesië* – gaat daarop in. Het werd ingewikkeld bij de totstandkoming van de Wet op het Huwelijk No.1/1974, door spanningen in de samenleving die in feite verknoopt raakten met gevoelige issues in interreligieuze relaties in Indonesië. Zaken die bij het ontwerpen van deze Wet het huwelijk betroffen, verschoven naar het veld van de identiteitspolitiek. De Wet op het Huwelijk van 1974 had een geschiedenis vol strijd omdat de totstandkoming van deze wet niet gescheiden kon worden van haar politieke context. Toen de wet tot stand kwam was dat een politiek compromis dat probeerde een weg te vinden om om te gaan met de realiteit van het huwelijk in de plurale context van Indonesië. Echter, deze wet heeft voor de realiteit van het huwelijk in een plurale context geen oplossing geboden. Voordat de Wet op het Huwelijk No.1/1974 in werking trad, konden interreligieuze paren hun huwelijk gemakkelijk legaliseren. Nadat de wet in werking trad, kregen zulke paren bitterheid te verstouwen vanwege de vele moeilijkheden die ze onder ogen moesten zien. Feitelijk verbiedt deze wet het

interreligieuze huwelijk niet, en regelt zij dit evenmin. Daarom wordt de implementatie van de wet verschillend geïnterpreteerd door elke lokale autoriteit. De implementatie van de Wet op het Huwelijk heeft moeilijkheden en obstakels gecreëerd voor interreligieuze huwelijken. Het verbod op zulke huwelijken komt voort uit de interpretatie van de Wet op het Huwelijk van 1974. De ban op het interreligieuze huwelijk wordt afgeleid uit een beslissende zinsnede uit artikel 2 (1) van deze wet. De letterlijke interpretatie van de zin in artikel 2 (1) van deze wet, dat een huwelijk wettig is 'als het is gesloten in overeenstemming met de wetten van de godsdienst en de overtuiging van de betrokken partijen' is beschouwd als een formeel verbod van het interreligieuze huwelijk. Daarom beschouwen de meeste bureaus van de Burgerlijke Stand in Indonesië het als algemeen aanvaard dat een interreligieus huwelijk niet is toegestaan.

Men kan stellen dat het besef dat een wettelijke doorbraak noodzakelijk is om het interreligieuze huwelijk een plaats te geven in de wetgeving, in de samenleving veel sterker is geworden. De zaak rond het interreligieuze huwelijk in de Indonesische burgerlijke wetgeving die in 2014 werd voorgelegd aan het Constitutionele Hof, wijst erop dat er aanhoudend pogingen worden gedaan om de beste oplossing te vinden om met de kwestie van het interreligieuze huwelijk in de samenleving om te gaan. Helaas besloot het Constitutionele Hof het verzoek om artikel 2 (1) van de Wet op het Huwelijk No.1/1974 te amenderen, af te wijzen. Uit het juridisch proces in het Constitutionele Hof kunnen we concluderen dat de houding ten opzichte van het interreligieuze huwelijk onder de verschillende religies in Indonesië wordt gekarakteriseerd door voors en tegens. Moslimorganisaties (MUI en NU) en de Hindoeïstische PHDI verzetten zich duidelijk tegen het verzoek als zodanig, terwijl de protestantse PGI, de katholieke KWI en de Confucianistische Matakin open schenen te staan voor het interreligieuze huwelijk. De Boeddhistische WALUBI stelt duidelijk dat zij de regelgeving van de overheid zullen gehoorzamen. In een in religieus opzicht plurale samenleving is het bestaan van verschillende opvattingen over het interreligieuze huwelijk geen slechte zaak. De religies in Indonesië zouden in staat moeten zijn om de kwestie van 'meerderheid versus minderheid' voor de wet te overstijgen om een 'wet van de jungle' te voorkomen. Anders zullen de minderheidsreligies zich altijd bedreigd voelen. Het Constitutionele Hof is van mening dat de religies een huwelijk wettig maken, maar de beslissing van het Constitutionele Hof duidt erop dat de overwegingen van het Hof tot op zekere hoogte gebaseerd zijn op een bepaalde interpretatie en opvatting, in dit opzicht gebaseerd op de meerderheidsreligie. Hoe zit het dan met de aanhangers van andere religies, die er een andere

interpretatie of overtuiging op na houden? Helaas is de uiteindelijke beslissing van het Hof gebruikt als een wettelijke basis voor alle mensen.

De Wet op de Burgerlijke Stand 23/2006 vormt een mogelijkheid en een uitdaging. Zij biedt nieuwe hoop voor diegenen die hun interreligieuze huwelijk willen registreren bij de Burgerlijke Stand. In beginsel biedt zij een uitweg voor interreligieuze paren om hun wens in vervulling te doen gaan, zij het zonder een religieuze procedure. Daarom, hoewel er een kans is voor het interreligieuze huwelijk, wordt deze kans nog bepaald door de houding van de kerk tegenover het interreligieuze huwelijk, of het geaccepteerd wordt dan wel verboden. Om die reden staan kerken in Indonesië noodzakelijkerwijs open voor en zijn klaar voor een diepgaand gesprek over deze kwestie. Dit is de uitdaging voor het kerkrecht waar de kerken in Indonesië voor staan, om een en ander te herzien en theologisch op formule te brengen, teneinde het in de kerkorde vast te leggen, om zo de werkelijkheid van het interreligieuze huwelijk in deze plurale samenleving op relevante wijze een begaanbare weg te wijzen.

In hoofdstuk 3 wordt *de officiële visie op het interreligieuze huwelijk in Indonesische kerken* onderzocht. De Wet op het Huwelijk No.1/1974 stelt vast dat een huwelijk wettig is als het gesloten is in overeenstemming met de wetten van de religie en de overtuigingen van de betrokken partijen. Dit betekent dat de Kerk in Indonesië, als een religieuze instelling, in een positie is gebracht die de geldigheid van het huwelijk bepaalt. Dat is niet waar de Kerk voor kiest, maar – of zij het leuk vindt of niet – de Kerk wordt op sleeptouw genomen door een houding die ervan uitgaat dat de geldigheid van een huwelijk ligt in de respectieve religies. Daarmee rijst een volgend probleem, omdat elke kerk op dit punt een eigen leertraditie heeft. Daarom is dit onderzoek uitgevoerd door allereerst af te stemmen op het feit dat kerken in Indonesië verschillend reageren op het interreligieuze huwelijk, en die reacties op te sporen en te analyseren. Wat is het argument van de kerken in Indonesië in hun verschillende houdingen tegenover het interreligieuze huwelijk? Vijf kerken met verschillende historische achtergronden en hedendaagse contexten zijn uitgekozen, namelijk de GKJ en de GKI (beide Java), de HKBP (Sumatra), de GPIB (West-Indonesië) en de GKPB (Bali). Het onderzoek laat zien dat elk argument zijn voors en zijn tegens heeft. Uit ons onderzoek concluderen we dat de GKJ, de GKI en de GKPB interreligieuze huwelijken aanvaarden als kerkelijke huwelijken, terwijl de HKBP en de GPIB het interreligieuze huwelijk afwijzen. Kerken in Indonesië hebben dus verschillende standpunten in deze kwestie. Hoewel de PGI en de KWI open staan voor het interreligieuze huwelijk, hebben zij daarvoor geen gemeenschappelijke theologische fundering. Beide hebben een verschillend theologisch begrip van het huwelijk. De

KWI ziet het huwelijk als een sacrament, terwijl protestantse kerken in Indonesië het huwelijk in het algemeen als een burgerlijke zaak beschouwen. Niettemin zijn er in de praktijk voors en tegens met betrekking tot het interreligieuze huwelijk tussen de kerken in Indonesië. Omdat het interreligieuze huwelijk een hot issue is geworden in de betrekkingen tussen de religies in Indonesië, nauw verbonden met zaken als christianisering en islamisering, is er dringend behoefte aan een meer diepgaande dialoog om een gezamenlijk standpunt te vinden om te reageren op het interreligieuze huwelijk in de context van het religieuze pluralisme in Indonesië.

In 2015 werden de resultaten gepubliceerd van een onderzoek dat in 2013 was uitgevoerd door de PGI (Gemeenschap van Kerken in Indonesië). Een van de punten van onderzoek betreft de relatie en samenwerking met andere religies en overtuigingen. De uitkomsten van het onderzoek laten zien dat het theologisch discours betreffende de interreligieuze dialoog en het pluralisme heel sterk was onder de kerken in Indonesië. Het rapport van de onderzoekers met betrekking tot de aanvaarding van andere religies en overtuigingen is heel positief. Het betekent dat andere religies/overtuigingen niet langer als vijanden, concurrenten of zelfs bedreigingen gezien worden, maar dat zij beschouwd worden als partners bij het onder ogen zien van problemen in de gemeenschap. De gegevens wijzen er klaarblijkelijk op dat wat betreft interreligieus overleg, interreligieuze samenwerking en interreligieuze dialoog, 91% van de kerken in Indonesië zeggen open te zijn, maar wat betreft de meest concrete vorm van samenleven in religieuze verscheidenheid, het interreligieuze huwelijk, is er nog steeds twijfel. Het laat zien dat er een kloof is tussen het theologisch gesprek enerzijds en de concrete houding van Indonesische kerken in de plurale context anderzijds. In de praktijk kunnen kerken het idee niet aanvaarden dat hun broeder/zuster die tot een andere religie behoort, een zegen kan ontvangen op het huwelijk, ook al claimen de kerken dat zij heel open zijn in het theologische gesprek over de interreligieuze dialoog. Het bezwaar tegen het zegenen van een interreligieus huwelijk is dus nauw gelieerd aan de vraag of de zegen wel of niet kan worden uitgesproken over wie behoort tot een andere religie. De protestantse kerken zien het ook gezamenlijk zo dat kerken het huwelijk niet sluiten. Dit behoort tot de geërfde traditie met betrekking tot de wijze waarop het huwelijk wordt gezien.

De huwelijksdienst is bij kerken in Indonesië gebonden aan het wettelijke kader, de geldende wet. Gewoonlijk gehoorzamen kerken de officiële regels en interpretaties van de regering ten aanzien van alle wetgeving. Niettemin kunnen de kerken daar in werkelijkheid ook kritisch over zijn. In het algemeen is het interreligieuze huwelijk in Indonesië niet aanvaardbaar, maar niet alle kerken houden

zich aan deze gedachte. Kerken die openstaan voor het interreligieuze huwelijk baseren hun visie op Bijbelinterpretatie en studies in contextuele theologie; zij omarmen culturele openheid en hebben een innige relatie met andere religies. Kerken die het niets eens zijn met het interreligieuze huwelijk hebben daarentegen hun eigen Bijbelse argumenten en zijn gebonden aan een culturele traditie. We hebben geleerd dat cultuur kan dienen als een factor die openheid voor het interreligieuze huwelijk bevordert, maar dat het ook een factor kan zijn die bijdraagt aan de afwijzing van het interreligieuze huwelijk.

Zoals hoofdstuk 4 – *Contextueel kerkrecht in de Indonesische context* – laat zien, is de houding van de kerk tegenover het interreligieuze huwelijk noodzakelijkerwijs theologisch van aard. Veel factoren hebben invloed op de kerk in het besluitvormingsproces. Een theologische opvatting over het huwelijk is ongetwijfeld gebaseerd op Bijbelinterpretatie. De Bijbelse teksten die expliciet of impliciet betrekking hebben op het interreligieuze huwelijk worden primaire referentiepunten. Er is in de Bijbel niet één visie op het interreligieuze huwelijk, want standpunten voor én tegen bestaan naast elkaar. Daarom kunnen we niet een enkelvoudige Bijbelse leer over het interreligieuze huwelijk presenteren. Hoewel er verschillende visies zijn, kunnen ze samen de worsteling van gelovige gemeenschappen laten zien om met dit thema om te gaan in hun sociaal-religieuze context en omstandigheden.

Interreligieuze huwelijken tussen Israëlieten en vreemdelingen, die als ongelovigen werden beschouwd, kwamen voor in de oudtestamentische tijd. Dat betekent echter niet dat het interreligieuze huwelijk altijd positief werd aanvaard. De Bijbelteksten die interreligieuze huwelijken direct verbieden kunnen in het Oude Testament gevonden worden in Exodus 34:11-16, Deuteronomium 7:3-4 en Ezra 9-10. Het kernpunt is dat het verbod een poging tot preventie is. Het verbond met God, de handhaving van de trouw aan God, de strijd voor de eigen identiteit als het uitverkoren volk van God, en de behoefte zich verre te houden van enige vorm van afvalligheid of het risico te vervallen in de aanbidding van andere goden, behoren tot de punten van preventie rond het verbod op het interreligieuze huwelijk. De Israëlieten werden uitgedaagd om hun overtuiging jegens God te formuleren, tot uitdrukking gebracht in hun trouw aan God, en actueel gemaakt in hun leven met mensen van andere religies. Het verbod op interreligieuze huwelijken dat plaatsvond in een bepaalde tijd en situatie was een middel om hun roeping te realiseren, hoewel de oplossing nogal antisociaal is.

Wat het Nieuwe Testament betreft hebben we geen aanknopingspunt voor wat Jezus geleerd heeft over het interreligieuze huwelijk. De Bijbelteksten in het Nieuwe Testament die expliciet spreken over het interreligieuze huwelijk zijn te

vinden in de brieven van Paulus aan de Korintiërs, namelijk 1 Kor. 7:12-16 and 2 Kor. 6:14-7:1, teksten die gewoonlijk worden gebruikt als basisargumenten als het gaat om het interreligieuze huwelijk. Ons onderzoek van deze passages laat zien dat het interreligieuze huwelijk een realiteit was binnen de gemeente in de plurale samenleving van Korinthe. Paulus gaf geen recept om een standpunt in te nemen wat betreft 'goedkeuring' of 'afkeuring' op dit punt; veeleer waarschuwde hij de christenen om de deugd en waarde van het christelijk huwelijk in het dagelijks leven gestalte te geven binnen een pluralistische samenleving. De band van een gemengd huwelijk is een toegewijde band. Paulus waarschuwt christenen die een gemengd huwelijk aangaan, dat getrouwd zijn of niet getrouwd zijn een verantwoordelijke beslissing moet zijn, ook als het gaat om een ongelovige. Er is geen reden om te scheiden. Voor Paulus zijn interreligieuze huwelijken geen obstakels die toewijding aan de partner en de Heer tegelijkertijd, zonder afgeleid te worden, onmogelijk maken.

Bij de doordenking van de kwestie van het interreligieuze huwelijk helpt de visie van Ariarajah ons om een beginpunt aan te geven. Zijn visie houdt in dat we een theologie nodig hebben die ons gastvrij maakt. Een negatief standpunt ten aanzien van het interreligieuze huwelijk is verbonden met een houding waarin religies worden gezien als wederzijds exclusief. Er is een houding die de nadruk legt op wat onderscheidend en verschillend is ten opzichte van anderen, en eerder op wat hen scheidt dan te focussen op de gemeenschappelijke waarden. Kerken in Indonesië zouden een partner in dialoog en samenwerking moeten zijn voor een betere situatie van de mensen in Indonesië in de toekomst, voor democratie, en menselijke waardigheid. Niet alle Islamietische groepen verwerpen het interreligieuze huwelijk, maar evenmin aanvaarden alle kerken het interreligieuze huwelijk. Daarom is de dialoog voor beiden zeer belangrijk. Meer nog, het interreligieuze huwelijk kan dientengevolge worden gezien als een middel in de dialoog van het leven.

Hoe kunnen we het interreligieuze huwelijk theologisch duiden? We hebben geconcludeerd dat het interreligieuze huwelijk vanuit Bijbels perspectief een legitiem, christelijk huwelijk is. Het christelijk huwelijk is een sacramentele relatie. God is op intieme wijze betrokken in het intieme partnerschap van het paar. De betrokkenheid van God in het huwelijksverbond geschiedt als echtgenoten erin toestemmen en zich eraan committeren om een leven van gelijkwaardig en intiem partnerschap tot stand te brengen, in trouwe en standvastige liefde. Vanuit dit punt construeren we de theologische duiding van het interreligieuze huwelijk. Het huwelijk is een gave die door God gegeven is aan heel de mensheid voor het welzijn van heel de menselijke familie. De waarde van het sacramentele huwelijk

ligt in de overtuiging dat God op intieme wijze betrokken is in het intieme partnerschap van het paar, en dus is God ook betrokken in het intieme en toegewijde partnerschap van een interreligieus paar. De waarde van het sacramentele huwelijk hangt volstrekt niet af van dezelfde religie van het paar, maar het gaat in alles om een gelijkwaardig en liefdevol partnerschap, de wederzijdse opofferende liefde die geleefd wordt voor heel het leven, in heel het wederzijdse zichzelf geven van het paar, dat Gods zelfovergave in Christus symboliseert. Daar is de genade van Christus aanwezig. De apostel Paulus leert dat het interreligieuze huwelijk een werkelijkheid is binnen de gemeente die goed moet worden onderhouden, op een verantwoordelijke manier. Paulus' onderwijs sluit de mogelijkheid uit dat een christelijke huwelijkspartner een echtscheiding in gang zet juist omdat de partner een ongelovige is (zie 1 Kor. 7:12-13). Het interreligieuze huwelijk is een toegewijd huwelijk. Het interreligieuze huwelijk is een christelijk huwelijk.

Het ideale huwelijk is niet afhankelijk van identiteit, maar van de manifestatie van christelijke waarden die bepalend is voor de geest waarin twee individuen in een huwelijk verenigd zijn. Het betekent niet dat de kerk het interreligieuze huwelijk moet promoten. Het interreligieuze huwelijk is een onvermijdelijke realiteit, en dus moet elke kerk klaarstaan om haar leden die iemand van een andere religie willen trouwen, te helpen. De kerk moet een huwelijkstheologie ontwikkelen die een sterke basis biedt voor de overtuiging dat het huwelijk een levensgave is, een zegen voor de mensheid. Zo moet een huwelijk de menselijke waardigheid op een hoger plan brengen. Op deze basis kunnen gezinnen een menselijker en waardiger leven leiden, zonder discriminatie en onrecht in de huwelijksrelatie, waarin de waardigheid van elke gezinslid gegarandeerd is. In de Indonesische context is het interreligieuze huwelijk de manifestatie van de diepste en concreetste dialoog, omdat in het interreligieuze huwelijk waardering en respect voor verschil voluit zichtbaar wordt gemaakt in het dagelijks leven, en niet alleen dient als een zaak voor het discours. Het interreligieuze huwelijk is een middel om vrede te bevorderen en om de mensheid op een hoger plan te brengen in een religieus plurale samenleving.

Kerken in Indonesië hebben de middelen mogelijk om zeker te stellen dat het kerkelijk leven wendbaarder wordt in het ingaan op menselijke problemen, zodat ze een weg vinden in concrete, relevante en actuele stappen. De context van het kerkelijk leven in Indonesië in de toekomst vereist openheid van de kant van de kerken in het omgaan met problemen van de mensheid, met inbegrip van intolerantie. Een kerkorde moet een instrument zijn dat ondersteunt in het openen van de deur naar een kritische dialoog, zodat het gedachten oproept die ook zelfkritisch zijn. Een contextuele kerkorde is een wezenlijk instrument om richting te geven aan de kerkelijke dienst om relevant en actueel te zijn. Als een kerkorde

niet in staat is in te gaan op basale menselijke problemen, is het hoog tijd dat zij gerevitaliseerd wordt. Een contextuele kerkorde moet een transformatief karakter hebben. Op zijn beurt wordt dat karakter dan een instrument om te bouwen aan een transformatieve kerk. Een contextuele kerkorde moet meer ruimte scheppen voor openheid, en vrijheid moet in dialoog zijn met ordelijkheid, zonder weersproken te worden. Een kerkorde is een product van het bewustzijn waarmee een kerk theologie bedrijft. Daarom moet zij blijven groeien en authentiek zijn. Omdat een kerkorde deel is van de identiteit van een kerk, moet die identiteit worden opgebouwd in een geest van openheid, om te verrijken, te verdiepen en begrip te verbreden. Een contextuele kerkorde moet plaats bieden aan verscheidenheid, en meer ruimte bieden voor wederzijdse verrijking en complementariteit. De kerkorde van de toekomst zou oecumenisch, contextueel en pastoraal moeten zijn en tegelijk het handhaven van orde en discipline moeten reguleren. Het gemeenteleven verandert en beweegt voortdurend in zo'n complexe en problematische context. Het is voor geen enkele kerkorde mogelijk om alle ingewikkeldheden van gemeenteproblemen in alle tijden en onder alle omstandigheden te dekken. Daarom is zij noodzakelijkerwijs voorlopig, en moet zij open staan voor de oecumenische dialoog.

In hoofdstuk 5 – *Conclusie en reflectie* – worden de belangrijkste resultaten van dit onderzoek gepresenteerd en samengevat.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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