

Christ's Friendly Culture: A Contemporary Mission Construction of the Intercultural Perspective

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Abstract

This paper aims to formulate a contemporary mission theology that is relevant today. The God of the Trinity who introduces Himself by His name in Christianity is a God of the mission. God's mission takes its form in the reality of Jesus Christ, that is God, becoming human in a particular cultural context. In that mission, Jesus Christ had encounters with people from other cultures. The encounter is an intercultural encounter. This paper shows that the validity of the mission is strongly linked to culture. By revisiting the ever-evolving discourse of mission and Christology. And then constructing from an intercultural perspective, this paper produces a Christology called the culturally friendly Christ which serves as the basis for building a mission theology.

Keywords: Christology, Mission, Contemporary Mission, Intercultural.

Introduction

The discourse of mission in the contemporary era has always been a hot debate among theologians and mission practitioners. John Roxborough (2014) as he quoted from David J. Bosch states that in the discourse the main mission is not to explain what missiology is, but rather lies in the question of what a mission is. Bosch stated that the mission must be returned to its original place as the heart of God's heart. Mission thinkers and

practitioners agree that missiology should have a central position in both theology and the church. The reason for this is that missiology is not about understanding it as a concept that refers to a particular idea, purpose, task, or responsibility, but rather must be seen from its connection to God's mission and the essence of the Church.

Missiology is the study of the Christian mission and the issues that arise through mission commitments throughout and within world cultures. These include mission-promoting theology, the effect of mission on theological understanding, and the interconnectedness of mission to other dimensions of Church life. Mission studies today take focus on the critical study of Christian missions in society and history, including their social and cultural effects.

This discourse on missiology seems to have not been able to end, although it has involved so many mission thinkers and practitioners. This may be because the explanation of the mission is always not and should not be complete, because the mission itself is still in progress. Roxborough writes:

Missiology should not be seen simply as an outpost of theological inquiry, boxed in the curriculum and affixed alongside biblical theology, hermeneutics, ecclesiology, and so on. Rather, all theology is intrinsically mystical because it concerns God's mission. This means that all theological categories are inherently missiological and all mission categories are deeply theological. (Roxborough 2014, 122)

Concerning the above, missiology must transcend itself based on its claim that mission is about what is central to God's will and the essence of the church (Keum and WCC 2013). The validity of missiology continues to lie in the validity of the mission, in the importance of the questions addressed, and in the intercultural perspective, it brings to the current issue. In a

sense, missiology must believe in itself that whatever the context, whatever the circumstances, missiological testimony is for God's mission, that is, the testimony of Christ, must never stop.

The significance of missiology to the Christian mission lies in its theological mandate and cultural perspective. In that sense then mission thinkers and practitioners must take responsibility for placing them appropriately in the life of churches, seminaries, and universities. Missiology needs to show its significance, including in places where the Church is unsure of its role in the face of cultural and political change or sees itself as a threatened minority. What is described above then becomes the background and reason for the author to conduct a study by rethinking a Christology that can be used as the basis of a contemporary mission.

Roxborough says that the Christian mission is primarily the purpose of the Church outside of itself – its community, by God's purpose for the Church (Roxborough 2014, 120). The God who introduces Himself by His name in Christianity is a God of the mission. The mission is known as *Missio Dei* which is the entirety of God's work and deeds to realize His plan in the world He created. In the embodiment of His plan, God then presented Himself in Jesus Christ. He became a cultured man in Jesus Christ. It was God incarnate that later became the basis of this idea of Christology.

Christology is the study of Jesus Christ, that is, it carries out the study of His existence: birth – death – a resurrection of Jesus Christ, and then tries to formulate an influence from Him for everyone who has – been – and will meet Him. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. His fullness or perfection makes the study of Jesus Christ a study that will never be completed. This paper offers a Christological study called the Culture-Friendly Christ.

Christ's culture-friendliness is not an entirely new formulation. Christology based on a cultural perspective has been studied by several experts who later gave birth to several Christological ideas as the basis of theology. Kosuke Koyama (1929-2009), a theologian of Japanese origin, gave birth to several theological thoughts that he explored from the perspective of Asian culture. Koyama stated humans live in history. Jesus Christ as a fully human being also has a place in history (Koyama 1974, 213) and Choan Seng Song bases his theology on the understanding that Jesus is no longer just a Nazarene and belongs to the Jews, but Jesus is the reality of each diverse region. Jesus also exists in the culture of the lower classes (Song 1982, 173). Christology is also widely discussed from various perspectives, including those that are not related to culture. Jesus Christ was approached with academic and philosophical evidence, as did Tertullianus (160-220). Christology can be referred to as the formulation of a culturally unfriendly Christ or Christ against culture, as formulated by H. Richard Niebuhr in his book, *Christ and Culture*.

The Bible records that Christianity is primarily a way of life rather than a religion. If this is acceptable then *Missio Dei* as a means of presenting shalom amid the world is certainly worthy of consideration as an attempt to produce a harmonious life among all creation (read: culture). *Missio Dei* as the mission of the God of the Trinity can then be studied more closely because He has encountered life in the *Missio Christi*. In this paper, it was *Missio Christi* who later became the basis for rethinking Christology from a cross-cultural and mission perspective. I think that Jesus Christ, Himself has been presented in a particular culture and held encounters with other cultures, in order the sake that Christology will gain its truth when it is discovered or unearthed in the cultures that exist in the world community both globally and locally. The culturally friendly Christ in this paper will be studied from an intercultural perspective using the views of Philip Jenkins and Kathryn Tanner. The study of the culturally friendly Christ will be enriched by the understanding of the Asian theologian, R.S.

Sugirtharajah as an effort to formulate a mission from an intercultural perspective, to produce a contemporary mission based on a culturally friendly Christology.

Christology and Its Development

Traditionally Christianity is built on the teaching that professes that Jesus Christ is Lord. The confession was based on biblical testimony. The Church in the 4th century onwards made efforts to translate the confession of faith with a firm formulation and understandable to Christians. The formulation of the confession of faith in his time was also at once a response to the teachings that emerged to describe Jesus that did not conform to the testimony of the Bible. It was the inquiry, search, interpretation, translation, and formulation of the confession of faith that later evolved into a study known as Christology.

In the history of dogma, Christology has developed since the Council of Nicea (325) which sought to counter the teachings of Arius by formulating a statement of faith stating that Jesus was equal to God. The Council of Ephesus (431) was a council conducted to counter Nestorianism by reaffirming that Jesus, God, and man, are the same. The Council of Chalcedon (451) affirmed that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly a man united in a divine person in an unmixed, undivided, and inseparable way (Groenen 1998). The formulation of confession of faith as a Christology is very helpful for Christianity in its faith journey, but it is not always easily understandable in different ages and contexts.

Today Christology has been approached from various perspectives, often even the basis for the birth of theology, for example, Feminist Theology, Liberation Theology, Ecological Theology, and so on. It shows that Christology is an effort that will not stop at seeking and discovering the meaning of Christ for humanity. The above themes arise because humans feel the existence of incompatibilities or gaps that occur in the socio-political, societal, and cultural systems, which in the end cause

disharmony and even crisis for mankind itself. The Christ witnessed by Scripture is the Christ who reveals Himself to be the Image of God and the fullness of God who has reconciled Himself to all things (Col. 1:20) and Christ who is present to preach the good news, deliverance, and mercy of God (Luke 4:18-20).

Nowadays theology is experiencing very rapid development. Today's theological tendencies are no longer as comprehensive as in the past, but rather tend to be fragmentary, contextual, and even multicultural. Such theological approaches can then be seen in the thinking of theologians.

Philip Jenkins offers Christology from a social and cultural context approach. Jenkins began his thinking by re-critiquing the fundamentalism of church schools that tend to interpret Scripture from different backgrounds and points of view (Jenkins 2006, 1-2). The interpretations brought by European and American fundamentalists who tend to interpret Scripture with modern scholarship and contemporary culture do not quite match those of African fundamentalists who instead interpret the Bible based on the literal meaning of the words in Scripture. It creates tension so that the Christ who is trying to be introduced in the Christology of each fundamentalist is inadequate and satisfactory to be the answer in the context of each other's lives. Tensions persisted, which resulted in a great many theological schools, such as Liberal Theology, African Theology, and Asian Theology. The emerging theological themes are caused by differences in viewpoints in reading scriptural texts that are confronted with social and cultural contexts. Jenkins also states that in African and Asian Christian religious thought conservative themes are still quite numerous, including a much greater respect for the authority of Scripture, especially when it comes to morality; a willingness to accept the Bible as an inspired text, and a tendency to literalism; a special interest in supernatural elements of Scripture, such as miracles, visions, and healing; belief in the continued power of prophecy.

The theological approach offered by Jenkins is to move the focus of theology from Europe and America to parts of Asia and Africa. This is motivated by demographic and socio-cultural factors that have begun to shift. A wide variety of theological themes also emerged from the Southern hemisphere, although sometimes American and European liberals and conservatives continued to try to impose their theological thinking. Jenkins therefore confidently says that today the mecca of Christianity is moving south; thus the reading of Scripture with the label of fundamentalism, conservative, and liberal is no longer adequate, but critically must be interpreted as new while paying attention to the authority of the Bible which is more concerned with the context of the Southern hemisphere (Jenkins 2006, 11-12,16).

Jenkins stated that in the present and future eras we must prepare for the new face of Christianity. The new face in question is a change in the way Scripture is read and its interpretation (Jenkins 2006, 24). If the Northern world still retains the hegemony and the primacy of literacy as a legacy of enlightenment, then the Southern hemisphere world is doing a Scriptural reading of poverty and oppression. Thus the new face of Christianity that Jenkins offers is a theology that can be felt more in the realities of everyday life. Therefore, the new face of Christianity must continue to be wrestled, to better fit a worldview.

Jenkins' thought outlined above soon gave rise to the idea about Christology. By assuming that the reading and interpretation of Scripture must take into account socio-cultural conditions or the so-called new face of Christianity, the Christology to be constructed from the text of Scripture must also be friendly to the cultural context. Christology should be built from scriptural texts that have the same spiritual or emotional atmosphere as the cultural context. Christology must be able to bridge the encounter of Jesus Christ with the local culture so that Christology is not just a formulation of a statement of faith but a vehicle for mission in encounters with cultured humans. The

new face of Christianity that has now taken its mecca in the South has the potential for cultural diversity. By remembering the foundation of Christology, which is God incarnate in Jesus Christ, the construction of Christology can be done with the concept of cultural theology, so that the resulting image of Christ is a culturally friendly Christ.

Kathryn Tanner (2010) tries to reinterpret Christology by re-embracing the concept of Christology from church fathers, such as Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, Irenaeus, and Augustinus. His reinterpretation is explained by being Christ-centered using the eclectic nature of Scripture, traditions, and philosophical conceptions of the church fathers. His views begin with the statement: "God wants to give us the fullness of God's own life through the closest possible relationship with us as that comes to completion in Christ" (Tanner 2010, vii). This is the basis for his Christological understanding derived from the idea of God's image, human nature, grace, and the Trinity.

The Christology Tanner offers comes from the idea of the image of God. According to him, *it is human nature* and not sinfulness that is the main focus for a human to understand grace. The humanity he contemplates comes from the idea of the image of God, which is referred to in the book of Genesis by the use of two Hebrew words: *tselem* and *demut*. The two terms are interpreted by the words image and form. Church fathers observed that the term meant the same thing, but Tanner argued that the concept could be understood more comprehensively when viewed from a Christ-centered perspective (Tanner 2010, 2).

The New Testament refers to Christ as the Image of God which in Greek uses the word *Eikon*. The word *eikon* itself can be translated as *fullness – the brilliance* of God, or it can be translated as "a real representation of God". As Gregory of Nyssa interpreted the book of Genesis: man is not a direct representation of divinity but was created "in the Image of" God.

Nevertheless, Christ is not merely an icon or representation of God, but He is God on earth.

As Tanner stated, God wants to give mankind His full divine life. And this is possible when Christ is the key to interpreting the text of Genesis. Then, man can become a participant in God as Christ, God incarnates and unites himself with a man in hypostatic unity.

The hypostatic union of Christ became the basis for the working of God's grace. Because God wants to share His full divine life, God incarnates there is the entrance to our participation in Him. *Logos* became human in the incarnation. And, mankind cannot lose the Spirit again, for the humanity of Jesus has the Spirit as the Word does. This wording, togetherness, and presence of the Spirit is a later emphasis in Tanner's explanation.

R.S. Sugirtharajah offers Christology based on themes of experiences experienced by Asians in particular. He begins with a picture of the tension of Christological studies efforts from two different perspectives, namely Europe and Asia. A European perspective that began with the publication of the book Albert Schweitzer's: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, this book seriously seeks to find the historical Jesus from the testimony of Scripture as well as rigorous academic studies (Sugirtharajah 2018, 25-26). On the contrary, the Asian perspective seeks to find Jesus by extending the study of historical Jesus with a cultural approach – experience, and intuition – according to story sources based on self-discovery or the process of decolonization to update the legacy theology of colonized missionaries.

Although the efforts of Asian theologians to reconstruct their Christology were met with strong criticism from Western theologians for not meeting the criteria of the academic-mic, Asian theologians did not stop, as the constructions, they constructed were more relevant in finding a more suitable

Christology. The approach of Asian theologians from India, Korea, Japan, China, and other Asians is to read and interpret biblical texts relating to Jesus in their context. That view is certainly based on Jesus Christ Himself which corresponds to the testimony of Scripture present in certain cultural contexts and struggles, so from there Jesus is then presented in the context of Asian cultures and struggles. These themes built by Asian theologians, for example, oppression, mischief, suffering, and colonization are in reality concrete experiences of each country in Asia.

Sugirtharajah is well aware that in today's religious life, European Christianity is meeting with postcolonial Asian life. Admirably he managed to demonstrate the metamorphosis with the help of key texts by Asian thinkers or theologians. He gives discourse as the basis of his Christology in three domains, namely politics, economic difficulties, and spirituality. Although it seems to overlap in some places, it is very good to use for a Christological study. In his explanation, he for example traces to Hong Xiuquan, the leader of the nineteenth-century Taiping rebellion in China who imagined Jesus as a shadowy and dark figure who killed demons, cursed people, and ordered the execution of those who failed to uphold the right ideals and behavior. Ahn Byung Mu, one of the pioneers of Korean Minjung Theology, sees Jesus as the Messiah of Minjung or the oppressed and poor masses (Sugirtharajah 2018, 145–47).

Sugirtharajah's efforts with a more inclusive search for historical Jesus beyond the narrow confines of the Western world presented a new face of Christianity as a postcolonial religion. From the heterogeneous sample of Asian voices came new insights into Christology. That new insight can then be the conclusion that the historical Jesus on which Christology is based no longer belongs only to Western thinkers and theologians, but can also be approached from a truly rich intercultural perspective in the Eastern hemisphere.

Construction of Culture-Friendly Christology

The Christology that this paper is trying to struggle with is certainly not an entirely new formulation, but an attempt to draw Jesus Christ closer as the giver of life to all creation, to then enjoy His presence naturally. Thus this construction of Christology will be preceded by the theology of creation. The creation story depicts Christ not coming during God's work and mission to the world, but rather being involved from beginning to end.

Christ the Imago Dei

God in His love made the world and all creation. He created and arranged it well, even very, very well, with the presence of man as the crown of creation. Man's presence in Genesis 1:26-28 as a creation in God's image is also followed by the granting of a mission to strive for and nurture all of creation, to have grandchildren, and to fulfill the earth (cultural mandate). Thus to understand His mission man must start from the image of God – *Imago Dei* which is given as a model or pattern of being human. Being human is ultimately understood as being similar to *Imago Dei*.

Imago Dei, as explained by Tanner (2010), is a model or pattern according to which humans are made. The New Testament uses the word *eikon* to refer to the image of God as used in Colossians chapter 1, in which Paul refers to Jesus Christ. The reference immediately makes talking or studying Jesus Christ essential to better understanding his humanity and mission. Jesus Christ is the full God and the full Man. He presented and represented the fullness of individuality. That is to say, He is constantly in an eternal relationship in the Trinity so that He is always *divine*. This is important to put forward because, concerning humanity and its mission, that is the direction it must go in the process of becoming.

This related God then enters into the human being in *Jesus history*. This action can be interpreted as the consistency of God on a mission in the world He loves. As per John 3:16, the purpose of His love is that man is not conquered by the world, but also consistently loves the world. Jesus Christ in His presence in the world can now be understood historically as well as spiritually as *imago Dei* not only as a model or pattern of physical man created but also as a model or pattern for man to receive divinity as a reviving grace. The historical Jesus is then presented in a specific cultural context and shows how to relate to the rest of creation. His presence—according to Luke 4:18-19—is to preach the good news, heal, deliver and bring god's mercy.

The Culturally Gracious Christ

God is the Creator God of heaven and earth and He loves this world so much. The world we know today is a very complex one. Complex with humanitarian problems stemming from the diversity of belief systems, cultural, social, economic, and political. Man must strive to remain in his duties and missions. As mentioned above, culture is one of the problems of humanity and God is God for humanity and culture. Therefore, one way out to overcome problems in culture is to find Jesus Christ who is present in that culture.

As already explained, Jesus Christ in his capacity as a historical and spiritual Jesus is very likely to be approached from a cultural perspective. Historically, God through Jesus Christ broke through humanity in the context of Jewish culture. He was born, lived, and worked in Jewish society. In that life, Jesus showed how much He valued the culture. One of the stories that stand out is His presence at the wedding feast in Cana. Jesus was there in association with relatives and invitees to show His attachment to Jewish traditions and culture. But what is more interesting is that His attachment to Jewish culture does not make Him a person who is not free from other cultures. Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan Woman

and the Siro Fenesian woman proves this. Jesus Christ demonstrated that God's mission—to love the world—was able to free Jesus from the narrow confines of local culture to reach intercultural encounters.

The essence of the intercultural encounter conducted by Jesus Christ, which is to share the good news, and heal and liberate humanity, is an important note to declare that Jesus is a culturally friendly Christ. This kind of Christology can then be wrestled constantly to find Jesus Christ as a human being performing an intercultural mission. In different cultural contexts, a culturally friendly Christ can be an entry point to look into the depths or essence of culture. Culture is no longer seen as a restrictive rite or tradition, but culture in its essence is a way that helps man to find his whole, humane divine, and human humanity. This means that a cultured human being is a human being aware of his connection – his relationship – with God and others.

This culturally friendly Christ can then be formulated by viewing culture as the place where Jesus Christ appears. The value or virtue found in culture can be analogous to the *virtue* inherent in Jesus Christ. This depiction will soon change the culturally unfriendly Christology, that is, the depiction of the superior Jesus Christ, who went to convert others by uprooting it from cultural roots such as the traditional mission practice in colonialism. If Koyama declares the *impartiality* of God as the authenticity of the gospel message, where Jesus in His own is the God who meets and is in other cultures (Koyama 1974, 137–39) then in Christ's culturally friendly, *virtue* in culture is the presence of Jesus Himself as the basis for man in the process of becoming conformed to Jesus Christ. Thus Christ's friendly culture is an earnest effort to find the *same virtue* as the values and names attached to the selfhood of Jesus Christ.

Culture-Friendly Christology as the Basis of Intercultural Mission

Based on the Christological constructs that have been tried to build on top of that, I will try to offer an analogy or a Christological metaphor from a mission perspective. The Christology that has been described is Jesus Christ's culturally friendly. Jesus Christ was unearthed and found in his relationship with God as the God of intercultural and the whole world according to the testimony of the Bible. The Bible begins with the words: "In the beginning God ... "; this statement immediately made Him a central focus in the entirety of Scripture and throughout human history. The God who introduces Himself by His name is a God of the mission. The Bible is a grand narrative that reveals God, His purpose, and His plan for His people and the nations of the world. Throughout the biblical narrative can be seen as God jealously keeping the glory of His name and with seriousness introducing His name among the nations. In that sense, it can be said that *Missio Dei* is keeping the glory of His name and introducing His name among nations (different groups of human beings).

The intercultural mission is rooted in God as the Creator of nations (Acts 17:26). The Bible records God's involvement in the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 in the language jamming that resulted in them being scattered throughout the earth. His mission continued with Abraham's calling in Genesis 12:2-3 when God promised that all the people of the earth would be blessed. The Book of Exodus can also be a cross-cultural missional root. The liberation of Israel from Egypt when interpreted from a mission perspective was a show of His mission in which He became globally famous. Egypt is a land famous for idolatry. Regarding the plagues, God said, to all the gods in Egypt, "shall I bring down punishment" (Ex. 12:12). It not only destroyed the reputation of the gods but also He declared that He far surpassed them and proclaimed that "there is no one like me in all the earth" (Ex. 9:14). Even His purposes

show His power in such a way as "that my name may be made known in all the earth" (Ex. 9:16).

Jesus the *Imago Dei* is a representation of God's glory. Traditionally the basis of intercultural missions is the great commission of Jesus Himself who commands the mu-rids to go to the tribes – *Panta ethne* (Matt. 28:18-20). Paul, who was the architect of the early Christian mission to the Gentiles, used the theological basis of his mission on the foundations of the Old Testament, for example, Paul returned to creation and viewed God's mission as bringing all creation to destitution with God's children (Rom. 8:18-27). Paul also returned to the prophets and saw that God's purpose was for the gathering of nations to be a part of Israel, and Israel itself led to renewal and restoration (Rom. 9-11). Jesus did the same thing when He taught His disciples to view their mission on the same foundation (Luke 24:46-48).

Cultural Friendly Christology as the Foundation of Contemporary Mission

From the searches that have been carried out throughout this paper, it is clear that Christology and missiology have a very close and inseparable relationship. The foundation of the Christian mission is God working in His love for the salvation and restoration of the world. Just as God sent Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit, all three of Them sent churches into the world to perform His mission. Christology is an attempt to discover and know Christ the *Imago Dei* who works to present God's shalom for all creation. Thus the mission is an essential calling of the Church and the implementation of the mission is the responsibility of the Church. To perform its duties and vocations, the holy Church can make Christology and missiology orthodoxy and orthopraxis, like a pair of wings that will help the Church to continue to exist as a missional church.

The contemporary mission that can be proposed from this paper is a culturally friendly mission that is based on Christ's friendly culture. Christology is formulated from the results of contextualization, by elaborating the following: *first*: the context of the biblical culture, *second*: the cultural context of the church, and *third*: the cultural context of the area in which the mission is performed. The contextualization of Christology is an attempt to remove Jesus from his historical moorings so that he can live at any time, including in the present, what is sought is not the "past" Jesus but the "present" Jesus.

In my opinion, culturally friendly Christ becomes something relevant in the context of contemporary missions. Some of the reasons that can be given are: *first*: The historical context has changed. Western theologians undertake Christological studies or attempts to search and find Jesus at a time when rationalism, the scientific method, democratic processes, and secular culture are a challenge for them. In contrast to that condition, today theology is in the category of civil society that is developing in a multicultural world. *Second*: Western theologians were deeply influenced by the Enlightenment. Anthropologist Charles H. Kraft cites the Western worldview as naturalistic in which supernatural things are ignored, the thought of the time being dominated by materialistic-humanistic values so that God becomes less relevant; his thinking is also very rationalistic, thus rejecting everything that seems to be outside the scope of rational analysis and prominent individualism (Kraft 1998, 27–34). Whereas today there are different concerns, for example, the theology that is in the Asian context, its cultures tend to be more holistic, without a sharp separation between the natural and the supernatural, still have an emphasis on the world of spirits and the world of the dead, are not too materialistic and not too humanistic, open to intuition and experience and are more oriented towards groups or communities.

This culturally friendly Christology should also be seen as a way of participating in God inviting us into God's life-giving mission

and empowering us to bear witness to the vision of abundant life for all people in the new heavens and earth. Thus the contextualization of this Christo-logi becomes a comprehensive process that contains reflections and actions that are carried out after the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit understands the meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ from within its own culture, as well as the socio-political and economic realities of seeking to live out its new faith according to the cultural patterns of the local community, and on the other hand, transform that society in response to their needs according to the guidance of God's Word and the Holy Spirit.

The mission is always to communicate the whole gospel – the good news – to all mankind around the world. His goal is the salvation of the world and the glory of God. The mission is an effort that makes explicitly and unambiguously the centrality of the incarnation, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, without setting limits on God's saving grace. The Church strives to share this good news with all those who have never heard of it and invite them to experience the experience of living in Christ. This culturally friendly Christ is then expected to be an authentic mission, which is to make the "other" a partner, not an "object" of the mission. The mission is essentially not only the proclamation of our deepest convictions, but also listening to others and being challenged and enriched by others (Acts 10).

Conclusion

Christ's culturally friendly is an attempt to formulate a value or *virtue* inherent in the selfhood of Jesus Christ that has manifested and must be found in culture. It is done because it is in and through Christ that man gains the way to his complete humanity. Man and humanity have also gone through a long history that began with the creation of the task and vocation that has been given to it. God is a God who works in cultural diversity. That diversity includes trustworthiness, social, political, and cultural. Thus, to realize harmony in diversity requires a culturally friendly Christology. The culturally friendly

Christ is a formulation of Christology that finds the selfhood of Jesus Christ present in humanity by being born, living – working, dying, and rising – in a particular cultural context. It is in this respect that Christ's culturally friendly nature becomes the foundation of the Church to perform duties and vocations in a world loved by God.

The essence of the duties and vocations of the church is the mission. A church that is no longer missioned has ceased to be a church. Therefore, every believer in his or her church life becomes a mission doer as a form of participation in God's mission. The mission proposed in this paper is called a culturally friendly mission. A culturally friendly mission is undertaken with the realization that inter-power encounters are a necessity. That inevitability then gives birth to a creative encounter with the supposition that each culture is unique and equal in which Jesus Christ has been present and worked. Thus the mission performed by the church becomes a mission that transcends the understanding of *the church for others* and becomes its *church with others* (Barth 2004). "The church with the other" is a mission in church life that does not make the "other" the object of the mission but rather in the apes seeing the "other" as a partner so that both can equally learn in finding Jesus Christ who is already present and the Holy Spirit who has worked as a common basis towards complete humanity and realizing the shalom of God.

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