

ENCOUNTERING THE RELIGIOUS RADICALISM MOVEMENT THROUGH RECONSTRUCTING THE MULTICULTURAL THEOLOGY AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to create a harmonious relationship among different religions in Indonesia. This aim is reached through reconstructing a multicultural theology based on biblical understanding. The multicultural theology is a biblical principle that be constructed in balancing between Old Testament and New Testament, between general revelation and special revelation. By exposing the general revelation based on theocentric dimension, we found general principles about how to make a good relationship among people in their differences, according to God's perspective. At the same time, multicultural theology also exposes particular revelation principles centered upon the Christocentric dimension. This research is a qualitative study with a library approach. Data is analyzed by interpretation, critical thinking, and truth and healthy consideration based on the primary source. We found a Christian value to be a foundation to make the relationship in harmony with other people. For this purpose we are proposing a theological framework designed from Biblical principles, covering the following: (1) Cultural Mandate, (2) Human Nature, (3) Theological principles: God's Sovereignty, God's Providence and God's Justice, (4) Incarnation, (5) Universal Soteriology (6) Present Theocracy, (7) Church Nature and (8) Eschatological Multiculture. Christian leaders are central people that must create a relationship with other people in harmony. Through this way, the Christian leaders can engage the religious radicalism by doing good things and togetherness in social work.

Keywords: Religious radicalism movement, reconstructing multicultural theology, Christian leaders

INTRODUCTION

The religious radicalism produces antisocial attitude among people in their plural situation. Multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon. It has been a problem as long as the human race itself. Historically, it cannot be denied that multiculturalism seemingly turns into an unending conflict. At the end of the twentieth century until the beginning of the third Millennium, the conflict between human beings has become a world crisis. According to Korten, the world community experienced three global crises: "poverty, environmental degradation and

social violence (disintegration)" (Korten 2001). Specifically, regarding social disintegration, Wilfred also explained that globalization indeed resulted in the "disintegration of the human race" (Wilfred 2003). Winarno affirmed in a similar tone that inter-ethnic conflict had become a 'contemporary global issue' (Winarno 2011). This global-scale conflict in the form of acts of violence, moreover 'armed conflicts', has destroyed millions of lives (Miall 2000). This social disintegration also took the form of inter-religious and inter-groupings conflicts, like what happened in Ireland: Catholics and Protestants, in Bosnia-

Herzegovina: between Muslims and Christians, in Palestine: between Muslims and Christians, in Sudan: between Muslims and Christians, in Iraq/Iran/Pakistan: Sunni and Shiah Muslims, in India: between Muslims and Hindu, in Sri Lanka: between Hindu and Buddhism, in Myanmar: between Buddhism and Muslims, and in the Philippines: between Catholics and Muslims (Manguling 2001). Stott added that multiracial conflicts also happened during the period of "slavery in America, anti-Semitism in Germany and Apartheid in South Africa" (Stott 1984). The new form of religious radicalism is "terrorism" that occurred in many countries as Kanbawza Win mentioned, "Terrorism, as a new kind of war, is very much an issue today. Since the nine-eleven, we have witnessed major terrorist acts in London, Spain, Indonesia, not to mention Iraq and Afghanistan and even Rangoon" (Win 2006).

Indonesia is a highly heterogeneous country. Its motto of Unity in Diversity (Bhineka Tunggal Ika) gives more impression in its 'diversity' than its unity. Therefore, disintegration is always a latent and real potential danger (Darmaputera 1993). Since Old Order of government era violence on churches had happen. Moreover, between 1965-1980, the Indonesian government issued three religious policies through Decree No. 1, 1969; Number. 70, 1978; Number 77, 1978. These religious policies offer negative impacts as Sukamto mentioned,

However, the religious policies imposed by the New Order government also brought some negative impacts: (a) It was very difficult for churches to obtain an IMB (building construction permit). In the mid-1980s, many churches were still able to perform religious rituals and services without any problems. However, in the 1990 many churches with no IMB were locked down by radical Muslim groups. (b) The preaching of Gospel was considered a violation, and Christians could be sent to jail because of it (Sukamto 2019).

As a matter of fact, this social disintegration happened in Indonesia at the end of the New Order Era and even during the Reformation period. This is evident from religion-related incidents that took place in Situbondo,

Tasikmalaya, Mataram, Ambon, Poso, Tolikara (Papua), Singkil (Aceh), and so on. These conflicts have destroyed the nation's culture and caused material damage. For example, the mass violence in Situbondo on October 10, 1996, destroyed the religious infrastructure, while creating a long-term trauma for many citizens (Suatan 2010). Even during the Reformation era, some 408 churches were closed, damaged and burnt down (Rina 2001). Other cultural conflicts also took place in West and Central Kalimantan between the Dayak, Malay and Madura ethnic people in 2000-2001 (Aritonang 2004). Information from the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) noted that in 2002-2005 again an additional 27 churches were closed down. The same problems continued to happen in 2006-2007. As an example, on June 3, 2007, anarchy actions took place against Gereja Sidang Jemaat Allah (GSJA) in Bandung and GSJA Taloyang, South Garut (PGI 2008). The action of anarchy against churches did not stop in 2008. On July 14, 2008, the Subdistrict Head (Camat) of Tambun, Bekasi, West Java, ordered the demolition of GEKINDO Church and the HKBP 'Getsemani' Church (Makugoru 2008). The GKI Taman Yasmin Church in Bogor and the St. Johannes church suffered a similar fate. According to Setara Institute, in 2011, there were 244 cases concerning the violation of freedom of religion and beliefs, with 299 forms of violent assaults. The highest incidence of this violation took place in West Java, East Java and South Sulawesi (Bancin 2012).

The most frequent blunt reason used by the opposite party to attack the Church is that it has no "Building Construction Permit" or that it misuses a residential house for a house of worship. They claimed that the house is considered illegal (Sulistiyanto 2008). The Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) filed a strong protest against the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Sairin, 2010). "Plurality and true harmony: Main Pillar of Unity of Indonesia" that they reprimand the Sub District Head of South Tambun, Bekasi, Java and reinstate the rights of the congregations

to worship (PGI 2008). Besides these violent actions against the Church, many other conflicts continue to take place in Indonesia in terms of ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group relations, which have destroyed Indonesian cultural values.

From a spiritual perspective, the various religious-cultural conflicts are caused by sin and blindness towards truth, with indifference against human nature and social character, and the laws concerning relationships between people (Kuyper 2004). Besides, these conflicts also reflect a lack of understanding of multiculturalism in Indonesia. Sairin affirmed that harmony would be created if society has an "awareness of multiculturalism so that their lives are filled with an atmosphere of tolerance, respect, and harmony" (Sairin 2006). But, Azhargany says, "Multiculturalism will always face challenges from the advocates of the radicalism of both religious and ethnic radicalism. In this time, religious radicalism movements often emerge (Azhargany 2019). Karwadi says, "We have nowadays witnessed a growing trend of the rising of radical religious thoughts" (Karwadi 2014). Religious radicalism is instilled through understanding, so that Muqoyyidin says, "educational institutions have the opportunity to be spreaders of the seed of radicalism" (Muqoyyidin 2013). Lasmana confirms that the religious radicalism movement caused by "Understanding of texts that only pay attention to the textual aspects without considering the contextual aspects for it will lead to an incomprehensible understanding" (Lasmana 2017). So, this research will focus on how to make a multi-cultural theology that has a comprehensive understanding that based on the Bible. If the Christian leaders have such theology, they are hoped to be able to manage many differences in society, including the religious radicalism movement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word 'radicalism' means 1) quality or radical situation, (2) radical doctrine or principles, radical movement 3) will or effort to defeat and

change a reality (Gove 1986). So, 'radicalism' can be said as a principle that demands a change quickly, through violence. The word "religious radicalism" means: "people or a specific group that uses violence to obtrude for others on behalf of his/her religion" (Effendi 2005). In other forms, radicalism is called "terrorism". The word "terrorism" mean using violence to causing fearless as an effort to reach the aim (political aim); terror action (PBDPN 2008). Mostly, religious radicalism and terrorism produces social disintegration. It means the religious radicalism and terrorism are a form of multicultural conflict.

Communities in the plurality of life require harmony so that the multicultural conflict does not occur. The word "harmony" has two expressions. First, it is hoped that eagerly yearns for a "peaceful, comfortable and harmonious" situation. Concurrently, there is implicitly a potential conflict between different diverse communities. Therefore, this topic about "harmony" discusses the horizontal relationship between people. The importance of this subject urges Christian leaders to analyze this topic since they have been 'accused' for a long time of not paying attention to horizontal or social problems. On the other hand, Christian leaders are considered to pay more attention to "religious" problems that are vertical-eschatological. At least, this shortcoming was recognized and resulted in the adoption of the "Lausanne Covenant", a document formulated by Evangelicals at a worldwide conference in Lausanne in 1984.

Indeed, Christian Churches today are facing many civilizations; there are differences in race, ethnicity, skin colour, language, classes and others. This plurality exists within and outside Church, which in and of itself offers richness, but at the same time, it contains a potential conflict. Internally churches have isolated themselves long enough within exclusive communities from other races, ethnicities, languages, and denominations in their local areas. However, as globalization in the world community increases, the assimilation of race, people, church groups and social order cannot be avoided. For example,

Javanese people are not the only ethnic group attending the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ) in Rawamangun, Jakarta; there are also people from Tapanuli, Timor, and Minahasa. The Pasundan Christian Church in Majalengka has an ethnic Minahasa pastor serving in a majority ethnic Tapanuli congregation (Suleeman 2012).

Through The Great Commission, Jesus already affirmed that followers are responsible to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Within the context of multicultural reality, the Church is expected to have the ability to identify the existing differences. On this subject, Hesselgrave wrote, "Effectiveness in Christian cross-cultural counseling and helping, as in all cross-cultural counseling, depends upon the ability to identify and interpret universal, group-specific correctly, and an idiosyncratic factor which both counselors and counselees bring to the counseling situation" (Hesselgrave 1984). Diversity should be well managed to create a harmonious and peaceful existence in order to grow a healthy faith.

Externally, the Church as an integral part of the world community, cannot avoid the facts of the global multiculturalism. The multicultural phenomenon also has turned into one of the global crises. The conflict between race, people and religion has been vicious and sacrificed many lives. In Indonesia, churches have often been victimized by violent acts from other communities.

How can you respond to this multicultural phenomenon internally as well as externally outside the Church? This treatise intends to describe the multicultural problems and to propose a framework of theological understanding as a foundation for Christians to build relationships with people who are different. Sudarmanto calls this theological framework as "Multicultural Theology", which is a theological study based on Biblical truth. Multicultural Theology is a theology that formulates the minds, attitudes, and actions of God against a multicultural phenomenon (Sudarmanto 2014). In particular, multicultural

theology concerns with cultural issues relating to the problems of human relations with others (Koentjaraningrat 1979).

This would be the basis for Christian leaders to address the multicultural realities contextually without sacrificing the uniqueness of the Christian faith. Then, in the same way, Christian leaders must encounter radicalism movement.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Küng stated that "There is no peace among nations without peace among religions" (Küng and Karl-Josep 1999). That statement establishes the central role of religion in creating a peaceful atmosphere between human beings. Obviously, that challenge also applies to Christian leaders. Most importantly, Evangelical leaders need to understand how to set manoeuvre in the middle of the multicultural reality influx. The Christian leaders are central and vital persons. The leaders play roles as a "controller, motivator, mobilizer, and modifier" (Darmaputera 2005). In other words, the leader is "someone who knows the goal clearly and influence, move, and directing others to reach the goal actively" (Sudomo 2009). In the context of plurality, the leader holds an important role to embrace differences. Especially, leaders must face conflict in society, including the existence of radical religious movement. Why is it proposed? Several reasons can be stated, among others.

Currently, many Christian leaders have left their church ministry because of "emotional fatigue and suffering from stress and disappointment" (Gibbs 2010). The stress is triggered by the external conflicts in society, and any person who is unable to handle stress will result in illness/mental disorders (Dami et al 2019). Today's leadership is facing challenges in diversity. Therefore it needs to apply 'diversity management', which is an approach to enable these leaders to apply in overcoming diversity challenges (Thomas 2010). To understand the diversity of ethnicity, gender, religion and social issues, leaders should be able to handle

conflicts around them by rallying the differing factions behind an overarching and robust vision (Hesselgrave 1984). For this, to form a 'leadership team', it is needed to possess a highly visible essential intelligence in its ability to understand the leadership responsibility, be insightful of its subordinates' conditions, and be prepared to submerge into the demands and consequences of its responsibility and commitment. It must direct the subordinates (leader-followers) to explore their own individual capacity in achieving the best possible results (Kadarusman 2012).

Christian leaders cannot confine themselves to choose the ministry area of their own preference. They should become generalists, attracted to each stage and the living conditions of the congregation. Pastoral leaders must be inclusive that is grounded on a respectful attitude, desiring the best for each person to become people of character. Christian leaders must develop relationships with people of various differences in the congregation, and become the 'guardians of equality' (Gibbs 2010). About this leadership behaviour, Munroe reminded The Third World leaders to have an attitude of "leadership strength while investing in a good and respectful attitude to bring about a positive influence" (Munroe 2006).

Larry Stout believes that leadership is also determined by conditions beyond the individual's control, particularly by sociological conditions that catalyze and push the lead into the public spotlight. Such conditions could become an opportunity in bringing about "a positive advancement for the institution under the leadership" (Stout 2010). Gary Goodell calls this 'chaordic leadership' which is a collaboration between open social prototypes (interactive relationship) and leading (Goodell 2012).

A new leadership develops a commitment to each other. This becomes a kind of 'social capital', an individual, collective value, that knows and understands in common what to do for their fellow human beings. With that understanding, a leader can unify diverse and divided followers

(Kouzes and Posner 2004). Maxwell calls this typical leader a 'relationship builder' who thinks more 'horizontally, focuses on relationships, respecting cooperation, seeking partnership, building consensus and willing to stand together" (Maxwell 2010). Such a relationship is founded on a culture of mutual understanding and love that builds a culture of care. In his book, *Organic Leadership*, Cole explains that such a relationship must be based on Biblical principles like Love one another (Jn 13: 34), unity (Rom 15: 5), accept one another (Rome 15: 7), equal concern for each other (1 Cor 12: 25), and bearing with one another (Eph 4: 2) (Cole 2011).

From the above reasons, one can say that presently a multicultural Christian Leadership is needed to manage diversity within a congregation, as well as being able to interact with ethnic and religious diversity outside the Church. It needs to have the ability to adapt to different situations and a multicultural congregation and society. As such, the Church is constantly driven to develop the quality of its internal fellowship, and simultaneously to be the salt and light at the centre of its community's social environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative study with a library approach. The researcher gathers primary data corresponding to the focus of research and data analyzed at the same time to understand the meaning and to capture the meanings contained within the categories of data collected. The data collection process is: (1) recording the data in the quotation, or records data from the primary source directly and accurately, and then records using paraphrase; (2) drafting sentences by the researcher; and (3) making a summary (Kaelan 2005). The stage of data analysis begins with interpretation, and this stage is to explain and declare the meaning contained within the research object. Interpretation is also used to understand the context behind the ideas, motives, and ideology that exist in the idea. An analysis is followed by an objective and critical

thinking analysis of concepts, writings, and conversations based on the meaning of the word. An analysis is purely based on truth and healthy consideration. The application of this method is to reconstruct multicultural theology based on biblical understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Encountering Radical Religious Movements through Re constructing the Multicultural Theology

In considering the problems of religious radicalism movement in multicultural people, the effort to create and maintain harmony is no longer a choice, but an obligation. With that perspective, the Christian leaders need to possess Biblical principles to develop a relational attitude among their fellow congregants and the plural citizens in their community.

For this purpose I propose a theological framework designed from Biblical principles that cover the following: (1) Cosmological Principles (Cultural Mandate); (2) Anthropological Principles (Human Nature); (3) Theological Principles (God's Sovereignty, God's Providence, and God's Justice); (4) Christological Principle (Incarnation); (5) Soteriological Principles (Universal Soteriology); (6) Theocratic Principles (Present Theocracy); (7) Ecclesiological Principles (Church Nature); and (8) Eschatological Principles (Multiculturalism).

(1) Cultural mandate

Genesis 1: 28 is known as the 'cultural mandate' by which God instructs people to fill and conquer the earth. The word "conquer" (*kabash*) means: to manage, to arrange, and to preserve nature. This means that humans are given the responsibility to manage all potential in nature to sustain their livelihood. The responsibility of humans should be able to be realized in concrete actions and patterned being-for so that it becomes I-for-You (asymmetrical), should not be reversed into a being-with so that it becomes You-to-I (reciprocity/mutuality) (Dami et al. 2019). The

cultural mandate had been given before humanity committed a sin; thus, it applies universally. Even after humanity sinned, the mandate was never nullified. Therefore, all people, even though they are sinful, whatever their ethnicity and religion, still have the responsibility to carry out that cultural mandate. This common responsibility towards nature as a common residential place necessitates all humans to relate with one another in materializing God's cultural mandate. In her book, *Theology and Ecology*, Celia Deane-Drummond explains that the role of humans over other creation is 'stewardship'. According to her, humans who were created in God's image have a unique relationship with God. This uniqueness of God's relationship with humanity has created an understanding of 'stewardship'. Being created in God's image enables humans to become stewards and implementers over creation (Deane-Drummond 1999).

God has appointed humans to be stewards over creation. In the New Testament, in accordance with God's plan, this concept of 'stewardship' is clearly mentioned as a function of the Church (1 Cor 4: 1). The emphasis on 'stewardship' is on the responsibility to use God's resources as a service to God (McKim 1992). This common responsibility demands that all people from different ethnicity and religion are united in managing the earth for their livelihood and that of future generations in glorifying God. The Church today must still carry out this cultural mandate; therefore, it must have relationships with fellow human beings. Cosmologically it is impossible for people not to relate with their fellow humans regardless of their ethnicity, religion and other groups. All people have a universal responsibility to work together without exception. Christian leaders must also understand this common responsibility, to apply internally (Church congregation) or externally (communities outside the Church).

(2) Human nature

Genesis 1: 26 says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'". Literally 'man' refers to a "wise creature, able to control

other creatures” (PBDPN 2008). The word *Adam* means ‘man’ or ‘mankind’. The word ‘*Adam*’ is the essential term because it was used initially during the creation before man committed a sin. Humans are believed to be God's image who is “uncomplicated (human is only God's image, not God) spiritual and eternal with physical strength, and intellectual, with moral integrity of correct knowledge, truth and holiness” (Buttrick 1962). The Hebrew word for ‘image’ is *tselem* which means “to shade, a phantom, illusion, resemblance, hence, a representative figure”. This word is derived from the root word *tsalam* that means “to cut, hew” (Strong 1997). That root word indicates an activity (to cut and hew) by someone to shape something (picture or statue). The word *tselem* can be interpreted that there is a similarity between God and humans, such as a picture resembling the original object. Meanwhile, the Hebrew word for ‘appearance’ is *demut*, which means “resemblance, model, shape, like(ness), fashion, manner, similitude”. This word comes from the root word *דמה* (*damah*) meaning “to compare, to resemble, liken” (Strong 1997). Therefore, the word ‘appearance’ intends to explain the similarity between God and human beings. This likeness involves traits like “spiritual, intellectual and moral” (Clintock and James 1981). These three traits enable humans to relate with God, with themselves and other human beings. Humans reflect their Creator so that they can perceive Him, acknowledge His creation and together with their fellow human beings await God's sustenance (Ps 104: 27-30) (Wright 1996). Therefore, God considers humans as His most valuable creation. Consequently, humans should consider other human beings just as God values them. For this reason, humans are 'social creatures'. God designed humans naturally to have the ability to live in relationship with their fellow human beings in common existence. They always live interdependently with other humans. Verkuyl explained this as follows: Humans are not a single creature. They do not live alone in this world. They live together with other human beings. Without other humans, they are

incomplete. Furthermore, they are meaningless. They are lonely; nobody speaks to them; there is no conversation and no visitation. Therefore, there is no history and no future, because history and the future only exist as "common property" with other human beings. God created humans as a plural man. God intended for His creation to serve, assist, accommodate and equip each other (Abineno 1998).

Anthropologically, it is impossible for human beings to live without each other. Based on these natural requirements, every believer has an innate basis for developing a good relationship with someone from different ethnicity and religion, since they have the same valuable dignity to God. As such, this human nature demands the development of relationships to create harmony between diverse human beings.

(3) Theological principles

a. Sovereignty of God

“Sovereignty” is parallel to ‘authority, dominion and interdependency’ which indicates the presence of “extraordinary power” (Gove 1986). The Hebrew word that explains this ‘sovereignty’ in the Old Testament is *הכ* (*koah* = *power*) and *הרובג* (*geburah* = *mighty*). *הכ* (*koah*) means “power and ability”. This word is used to indicate God's power as was made visible in the splitting of the red sea (Exod 14:15-31). Meanwhile, the word *הרובג* (*geburah*) means “authority, powerful, large, astonishing’ and is quite identical with “sovereignty’ (Wojowasito 1991). Genesis 1: 1 demonstrates the almightiness of God as the beginning of everything, and Creator of all that is in existence. The word *bereshit* means ‘in the beginning’ refers to the origin of the earth (Henry 1998), or to ‘absolute’ beginning (Leopold 1984). With His power, He created (*אָרַב*: *bara*) something from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*). This means, all existence was made possible by Him and depends on Him. John H. Leith stated “positively it asserts that God as the sovereign Lord of all is the one on whom every aspect of existence depends. All things gain their existence and their life from God. No other source is ultimate” (Leith

1977). Consequently, from God's sovereignty perspective, all human multiculturalism realities are part of God's intention to achieve His eternal objectives. His sovereignty determines and unifies human diversity. Furthermore, Leith states that in His sovereignty, the diversity in all creation is united in one interdependent ecosystem. According to Leith, "If the Triune God is both 'unity' and 'diversity' (one God in Three Person), with the communion of love binding together, so the cosmos itself reflects this same unity and diversity as the expression of the creation of the Triune God" (Leith 1977).

Therefore, His sovereignty determines all human cultural differences and binds them together into one interdependent ecosystem. Based on His sovereignty, human diversity being God's creation becomes a solid foundation to express a good attitude towards fellow humans who are multicultural.

b. Providence of God

The Latin word '*providentia*' means "knowing in advance". This word is connected to God, which is understood as 'God's preservation' for His entire creation. 'Preservation' represents two aspects, 'conservation' and 'governance'. God's act to preserve the existence of His creation is through providing for and supporting its sustainability. This is realized in two forms: protection of His creation from destruction and providing the needs of the entire creation (Neh 8: 6, Col 1: 17, Heb 1: 3). While governance is God's act to guide and direct a series of events in a way that fulfils His purpose (Leith 1977). God is sovereign in creating humanity and the universe, but God is also responsible to sustain people livelihood. God fulfils this responsibility by taking care of the universe and all living creatures created. God created an ecosystem for animals and plants in order that humans sustain their livelihood. He arranged the rotation of the planets in the universe. God also arranged climate and weather to sustain human lives. His provision applies to all people, as stated in

Matthew 5: 45, "He makes the sunrise for good and bad people, and causes rains to pour down on righteous and unrighteous people" (Evans 1999). This preservation is closely related to His governance over the universe. Sproul explained the doctrine of God's preservation contains the core teaching that emphasizes God's governance over the universe. He reigns over His Creation with absolute sovereignty and authority. He rules over everything that will happen, from the largest to the smallest. Nothing occurs outside the scope of God's sovereign governance (Sproul 2000). Therefore, every human being has the right to live and to enjoy all that God has created and made available in nature. In general, there is no exemption that only Christians receive God's preservation. As God's creation, people who do not believe in God's existence also has the right to receive His care. Therefore, God also provides for people of different ethnicity and religion, and there is no reason for Christians not to relate and to do good for them. God wants every individual to care, help and complement each other's needs.

c. God's Justice

The word justice and correctness cannot be separated from each other. The Old Testament uses two Hebrew words to indicate "justice and correctness", *tsadiq* and *mishpat*, while the New Testament uses the Greek word *δικαιοσυνη* (*dikaiousune*). Justice is a legal term; hence God is also called the "Judge of all the world" (Gen 18: 25). As a Judge, God's trials are always in line with His character for being fair and correct. (cf. Deut 32: 4, Dan 4: 37, Rev 15: 5, 16: 5,7). His deeds are acts of justice (Judg 5: 11, Mic 6: 5). God is not partial and is never incorrect because He is not influenced by and depending upon anything and anybody beyond Himself. In fact, Sproul said, God is not under the law, but He is the Law Himself. His basic nature binds his actions. He always acts according to His traits. His character is holy and morally perfect. God does not act arbitrarily because that is not His character. There is no higher law than God's internal attributes. Only God is '*summum bonum*' (Sproul 2002).

This also means that being Judge, God demands accountability from each individual, whatever the ethnicity and religion. In the end, God will judge each individual according to God's absolute justice. Accordingly, God does not want people to become 'judges' to each other (Matt 7: 1; Luk 6: 37). However, God wants each individual to behave fairly towards each other, without differentiating ethnicity and religion. Since justice resembles some form of love, it should be made tangible through serving and helping people who are in distress (Abineno 1998). To love others must be universal, which is an action regardless of ethnicity, religion and class (Matt 22: 39). Even Jesus asserted 'to love your enemies' (Matt 5: 44). Therefore, justice opposes any form of oppression, extortion, ethnic and religious discrimination. This is the reason why justice demands the performance of good deeds indiscriminately to all people (Gal 6: 9-10).

(4) *Incarnation*

The word incarnation is derived from Latin: *in* (enter) and *carne* (flesh), meaning "entering the flesh". This terminology is applied theologically to indicate the fact that "God became human (flesh) in and through Jesus Christ. The word $\sigma\alpha\rho\varsigma$ (*sarx*)' literally means 'flesh' and is used to affirm Jesus earnest humanity. The Apostle Paul also used the word '*sarx*' to indicate a true human being with all its weaknesses (Rom 8: 3, Phil 2: 7) (Hendriksen 1959). Aside from this literal understanding, Jesus as being human can be proven physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and his desire as generally found in human traits. Physically, Jesus' birth was natural (Matt 1: 25; Luk 2: 7), grew up normally (Luk 2: 40); was hungry (Matt 21: 18) and thirsty (Jn 19: 33). He also suffered and died (Jn 19: 33). Since mentally Jesus needed information, He had to ask questions (Mark 9: 21; Luk 2: 46-47). Intellectually, He studied the Word of God with the logic of a Jewish child. Emotionally, Jesus loved His family (Jn 19: 26) and His friends (Matt 23: 37). He could get angry (Mark 19: 26), became

sad (Matt 26: 36). Jesus also had a 'different' desire from His Father (Matt 26: 39). Spiritually, He prayed (Mark 1: 35). He had faith and was obedient to His Father (Phil 2: 8). All the above facts clearly affirmed that Jesus was indeed fully human. In being so, He also experienced several human temptations and sufferings so that He was able to help those who were sinners (Heb 3: 18, 4: 16). Even though He was human in everything, He never committed a sin (Heb 5: 15), and He never failed. Jesus was fully human, just like when a man was created in the beginning, before he fell into sin (Wongso 1988).

Jesus' life experience affirmed two essential truths. First, Solidarity. He was exalted and willing to humble Himself. He was willing to feel inhuman pain and suffering (Phil 2: 6-8). He did everything for the human race. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, forgave sinners, was a friend for the rejected and resurrected the dead. He even became a victim of injustice. He died to bear the sin of the people (Stott 1984). Second, Self Identity. His willingness to become man and to enter the world is an act of 'self-identification' with the people He served. This act is worthy for Christian missions to emulate at the present time. Stott wrote that if the Christian missions are to follow the model of Christ mission, it is inevitable that they should embrace the same demands He fulfilled, which is that we should enter into other people's universe which means, the willingness to sacrifice one's own cultural background of convenience and security, in order to be able to devote themselves to the interests of peoples from a different cultural background, whose needs we impossibly could have known or observed before. The real mission, whether evangelization or social ministry or both, demands self-identification concerning peoples' actual conditions (Stott 1984).

The solidarity and self-identity characteristics that Jesus had in His incarnation period become the Christological basis for having good relations with all people in terms of multi-culture, multi-ethnicity and multi-religion. Christian leaders

have an obligation to show their solidarity and willingness to self-identify with their fellow human beings despite differences in ethnicity, religion and class.

(5) *Universal soteriology*

The main objective of Jesus coming to the world is to save sinners. After falling into sin, man has become an 'enemy of God' (Rom 1: 21). Basically, however, God does not want anyone to die; therefore, each individual has an opportunity to repent, which is to reconcile with God and each other. To understand the concept of this salvation, the Old Testament uses the Jewish word *khapar*, which means "to cover by making expiation". Whereas the New Testament uses the Greek word *καταλλαγε* (*katallage*) that means "reconciliation" (Archibald 1974). Reconciliation is a central part of Jesus salvation ministry, which already had started during the Old Testament. Dami has asserted that the word reconciliation has a theological power transforming the people of God and the nation when used in the process of personal and social change (Dami 2019). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul explained extensively about this subject, such as found in Romans 5: 10-11 and 2 Corinthians 5: 18-20. In both readings, Paul used terminology that means 'atonement'. This word originates from the verb *καταλασσω* (*katallassō*), meaning 'to reconcile'. The New Testament applies this word to two different perspectives: between husband and wife; between God and humans (Kleinknecht in Kittel, 1997: 255). The word *καταλασσω* is derived from "*αλλασσω* (*allasō*)" which means to change. Whereas *αλλασσω* originates from the word '*αλλως* (*allōs*)' that means: other, another. Essentially, *καταλασσω* expresses the basic understanding of "to change to another" (Thomas 1981). Within the context of people's salvation, *καταλασσω* means to change humanity from "God's enemy" to "God's beloved" (*αγαπητος*). For this purpose, Christ came to the world to save whoever believes in Him (Jn 3: 16).

This work of salvation is available to all people (universal). Therefore, before He ascended to

heaven, Jesus gave the Great Commission to His disciples to become His witnesses from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Matt 19: 19-20, Acts 1: 6). This Commission "...confirms that the Gospel being the only universal truth, should be delivered to all mankind in every place and at any time (universal)" (Surbakti 2006). In addition, the Gospel is intended to restore the relationship between humanity and God as a consequence; there will also be the restoration of relationships between fellow human beings.

This universal salvation becomes the foundation of multicultural relations because any ethnic and religious individual has the opportunity to believe in Christ and receive salvation. Therefore, multicultural relations should be outright considered from two perspectives. The necessity to live in peace with one another; and to take advantage of this multicultural relations as an opportunity to spread the Gospel to all people. Therefore, the Gospel must also be preached through other people's culture. Within this context, Christian leaders must have the interest to live peacefully with all people (Rom 12: 18), even with adversaries (Matt 5: 25). Precisely relationships in harmony offer great opportunities to share the message of salvation to all people.

(6) *Present-theocracy*

Theocracy means 'government of God' where God reigns as 'King in His Kingdom'. In other words, Theocracy describes 'God's kingdom', which is called *βασιλεια του θεου* (*basileia tou theou*) in the Greek language. The Greek word *βασιλεια* is derived from *βασιλεύς* (*basileus*), which means 'king' (Klappert 1976). In the Greek mind, *basileus* refers to a legally legitimate king and generally hereditary from generation to generation as a religious leader of the citizenry (Kleinknecht 1997). Meanwhile, the word *βασιλεια* (*basileia*) means, firstly, "royal, power, kingship, dominion, rule". Secondly, "a kingdom". The first meaning expresses 'power or authority of a king'. The second refers to a 'territory' under the king's authority.

In the Bible, the word 'kingdom' is linked to God; therefore, it is called the Kingdom of God: *η βασιλεια του Θεου* (*he basileia tou theou*). Jesus used the Kingdom of God in His preaching as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, which is a synonym of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 4: 17,5: 3; Mark 1: 15; Luk 6: 20) and Father's Kingdom (Matt 26: 29). Universally the 'Kingdom of God' can mean God's government, God's authority, and God's sovereignty (Ps 103: 19; 145: 11,13; Dan 2: 37; Lk 9: 11-12). In Biblical terminology, the definition of the 'Kingdom of God' refers more to His position as King or His government and His sovereignty (Ladd 1999). This Kingdom of God establishes that Christ as King had already come, who started His Kingdom and will come in the future. Therefore, *basileia tou theou* is not only understood as The Kingdom of God but as God's Kingship. The Kingship of God refers more to a wide-ranging situation covering an entire existence in which God reigns as King. Within this understanding, God is the owner of the entire existence of life at the present time and in the future (Sairin 2006). Darmaputera added that in Christian theology the 'Kingdom of God' refers to "a situation or reality, in which God will completely reign and enforce His will, which is justice, truth, peace and welfare encompassing all of humankind (Darmaputera 1996). This means that the Kingdom of God is not only futuristic but also involves the present time. John the Baptist already manifested this when he shouted, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!" (Matt 3: 2). Indeed it can be said that the Kingdom of God is "already near" but also equal to "not here yet".

The presence of the Kingdom of God became more evident when Jesus embarked on His ministry in Galilee and said, "The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Gospel!" (Mark 1: 15). The Greek word for 'time' is *καιρος* (*kairos*) which means 'moment' or 'certain time', not *χρονος* (*chronos*), which is perpetual time that goes on continuously. Jesus used the word '*kairos*' to express the fulfilment

in Him. Ridderbos explained the meaning of '*kairos*' as follows:

"Therefore, *kairos* means the great moment of commencement of the great future appointed by God in His counsel and announced by the prophets. By the side of 'is at hand' there is already the 'is fulfilled'. No doubt, the two expressions should be understood in connection with each other. 'At hand' in the expression 'is at hand' does not mean the same thing as 'has come', 'is present', as clearly appears from the purpose of John's preaching" (Ridderbos 1973).

Thus, "the time has come" means that through Jesus presence, 'the future' is starting. Jesus confirmed this when he preached in Nazareth (Luk 4: 16-30). During worship in that synagogue, He read the prophecy of Isaiah (61: 1-2) about "the year of the Lord's favour". At that moment Jesus proclaimed "Today this scripture is fulfilled..." (v. 21). With this confirmation, Jesus pointed out to Himself as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. This means that 'the Person whose God anointed and accompanied by the Holy Spirit', as Isaiah mentioned is Jesus Himself. He is the One who would preach the Good News to the poor, freedom to captives, open the eyes of the blind, free the oppressed and declare the year of God's favour.

In addition to the evidence of the presence of God's Kingdom today above, the 'Kingdom of Christ' can be understood in two ways: *regnum potentiae* and *regnum gratiae*. *Regnum gratiae* is Christ functioning as Spiritual King over His people or His Church. The characteristics of this Kingdom is spiritual, based on Christ redemption. This spiritual Kingdom is already here now as well as in the future (Berkhof 1998) whereas *regnum potentiae* is meant as Christ authority over the universe, which is His providential and judicial reign over everything that is related to the Church. Furthermore, Berkhof illustrates that as King over the universe, the Intercessor (Jesus Christ) leads and determines each individual from social communities and nations, to ensure growth, gradual cleansing and final fullness of His congregation, which He redeemed with His blood. "Christ now rules

the life of each individual and nation within the church that He unified through His blood..." (Berkhof 1998).

As *regnum potentiae*, Christ's reign over the universe has the authority to rule all nations in protecting His people. The inseparable connection between His people and the nations is obvious in this case. Therefore, churches should not attempt to separate themselves from multicultural nations; on the contrary, they should intensify their relationship with the nations. In this case, churches declare their social harmony as part of the realization of God's Kingdom at the present time. The Church has a social responsibility to unite with society. The Church and the community cannot be separated, but they must complement each other (Troeltsch 1958). Meeter confirms that indeed "heaven was brought into the real world". Its spiritual dimension illuminates the material (social) world to enable restoration. God delegates believers to build and maintain social order (Meeter 1975). Consequently, this present theocracy establishes the basis for believers (Christian leaders) to relate in the best possible way in multi-religion and multi-ethnicity. It means that the existence of God's Kingdom must be interpreted for the future as well as for the present time.

(7) Church nature

The Septuagint uses the Greek word *εκκαλεω* (*ekkaleō*), which means 'to call out'. From this Greek word, the New Testament uses the word *εκκλησια* (*ekklēsia*) that formed from the words *εκ* (*ek*) and *καλεω* (*kaleō*) that means: 'called out'. This word refers to Jesus' ministry, who became the Savior for sinners. Essentially the word *εκκλησια* means 'the fellowship of people who are called out of this world to become God's property' (Berkhof 1998). Therefore, the word *εκκλησια* is connected to God, in and through Christ. *Εκκλησια* also means 'God's congregation', with the same meaning as *qahal Yahweh* in the Old Testament.

Jesus' comprehension about 'God's

congregation' was visible in the mission of His ministry and teachings, which sustains the understanding of the Old Testament. Jesus focused His ministry on Jews, whom He called "the lost sheep of Israel" (Matt 15: 24), which is essentially the same as 'God's congregation'. However, Jesus then expanded this understanding of 'lost sheep' to apply to His disciples who were "scattered" (Lk 12: 32; Mk 14: 27; cf. Zech 13: 7). Although Jesus directed His salvation ministry to the Jews, He was also aware that in the end, they would reject Him. Therefore, the understanding of 'God's people' was transformed; it does not only apply to 'Israelites', but also to His disciples and all who believe in Him (cf. Mt 3: 9; Lk 3: 8). Jesus did not refer *εκκλησια* to a certain organization, but He used that for a group of people He considered as His people, belonging to Him, and who is represented by His disciples (Guthrie 1992).

In reality, the 'Church' is 'God's people' or 'God's congregation', those who are called out of the world through Jesus ministry. They are to be in fellowship with Him at present and in the future. This Church is 'universal' as it includes all believers of the world. Consequently, the presence of the Church in the world is charged to become God's representation to proclaim salvation from God through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Christ cannot be separated from the Church. Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Church is His people. He reigns in and through His Church. The Church as the "holy people" were called out of the world, but now are sent back to the world. Contextually, the Church is in the world. As an integral part of the world, the Church must correlate with the social and cultural conditions within its surrounding communities. As Head of the Church reigning His Kingdom, Christ also does not want His Church to be away from the context of social life in the community. Kraybill confirms that the Scriptures do not consider this Kingdom as being isolated from other parts of the community, geographically or socially. Jesus does not recommend that we avoid or retreat

from social life. He also does not assume that the Kingdom and the world are clearly separated in distinct areas. The kingdom actions take place in the center of social life (Kraybill 1993).

Therefore, the nature of the Church makes it impossible not to interact with its context. This interaction is materialized in activities together with others, which are not only of the same ethnicity, religion and class. In this regard, the Church must be creative in conducting its calling to believe and to minister equally in the world. The Church has a major responsibility to be fully involved in social life, just as valuable as the spiritual aspects (Rasmussen 1956). Christ has called His Church to come out of the world, but He sends it back into the world and wants His Church to interact through real works in the midst of society. This reality of the nature of the Church can become the foundation to interact with multi-ethnicity and multi-religion.

(8) Eschatological multiculture

The redemption by Christ that was followed by the dynamics of the Holy Spirit has given birth to the 'multicultural' New Testament Church. In its development to the present, the Church has become more 'multicultural', as signalled by Satyaputra.

In the last few years, the issues of culture and pluralism have become very serious problems in the whole world (this is also related to migration and globalization). Currently, many churches are in a situation where their congregations come from a diverse culture, encouraging the Church to become more multicultural (Satyaputra 2002).

This multicultural condition of the Church will continue through eternity (eschatology). During the eschatological period, when the Church has been sanctified after Christ, the Head of the Church, comes for the second time, His Church will also enter a period of glory at the throne of the eternal Father. There the Church multicultural brightens the atmosphere of glory, as illustrated by John in Revelation 7: 9-10, "After this, I looked and there before I was a great multitude that

no-one could count, from 'every nation, tribe, people and language', standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robe and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'.

The multicultural eschatology in front of the Lamb (Christ) also becomes the eschatological foundation for present believers, that God seriously provides a place for His people's multiculturalism. This becomes a motivation for churches at the present time to continue to establish relationships and proclaim the Good News to all nations and ethnic groups (multiethnic).

The Implication for Indonesia Christian Leaders

According to the theological principles above, we find implications for Christian leaders in Indonesia.

- 1) The mandate of culture is a responsibility for all human, from various ethnic and religion. They are united to manage the earth for the sake of her life, future generations of human beings and for the glory of God. The Church today still has to carry out the mandate of culture; therefore, she must be related to his neighbour. Thus, cosmologically, it is impossible for human not to relate to each other whatever their ethnicities and religions are, because all humans have a universal responsibility that must be done together, without exception. That why, all Christian leaders must understand this principle in the context of shared responsibility internally (inside the Church) or external context (of the community outside the Church). It means that Christian leader must join together with other leaders and peoples, whatever their differences, religion and ethnic, to manage the world. In this way, it is no place for radicalism.

- 2) Anthropologically, men and women are 'social being', so that they cannot live without the others. On the demands of this nature, each believer finds a basis upon himself to build a good relationship with other people of different ethnic and religion, because it has the same precious dignity in the sight of God. Christian leaders also must able to make a relationship with other leaders and to give appreciation for others. By doing this, the Christian leaders have actualized themselves as a human that God had created.
- 3) God's sovereignty determines all human cultural differences and ties it into an ecosystem in which each depends on others. Thus human diversity as the grace of God by his sovereignty is a solid foundation for a good attitude towards multicultural fellow human beings. That means all differences in human are created by God and is still controlled by God. Because of that, the differences in humankind are under the total authority of God. No one can change the reality of plurality. We just can accept God's determination. Christian leaders must realize this fact and accept the differences as God's work in his sovereignty.
- 4) God creates all things, including all humankind, and He maintains all creations by his providence. Thus every person has the right to live and to enjoy all available in nature created by God. There is no dispensation for Christians only to receive God's providence in general. People who do not believe in the existence of God have the same rights as believers to administer the earth because they are the same creations of God. Therefore God also nurtures other ethnic and religious differences; then there is no reason for Christians to do good and does not relate to them. God wants every person to take care of each other by helping each other and provide for each other's lives. Christian leaders have a significant role in maintaining all their followers and also all the outsiders of her or his leadership's cycle. By doing that, the Christian leaders can have opportunities to influence all people to understand God's mercy of them.
- 5) God reigns the world injustice. He will be a Great Judge toward all people. As a Judge, God asks each person, regardless of ethnicity and religion. In the end, God will judge every person according to the absolute justice of God Himself. Therefore God does not want a man to 'judge' each other. But God wants every person to be fair to each other, regardless of ethnicity and religiosity. Because justice is a form of love, then it must be realized to serve and help people living in distress (Abineno, 1998: 82). Therefore, justice goes against all forms of oppression, exploitation and ethnic and religious discrimination. On the other hand, justice requires good deeds for everyone. Christian leaders are urged not to become a judge for others, but to do justice for others by loving them in word and work.
- 6) The incarnation of Jesus gives us two principles: "solidarity" and "self-identification". The two principles must be implemented in Christianity today as a value while we dwell among the differences people. The Christian mission also should follow the model of Christ's mission. Christian leaders also should have solidarity toward others. Solidarity means to pay more attention to others by good speak and good deed. The solidarity will open doors for others while we are among the people that have difference religiosity and ethnicity. Then, the Christian leaders also should be able to make 'self-identification'. It means the leaders have the willingness to leave their own cultural background, in order to devote themselves to the interests of people from other cultural backgrounds, whose needs can be impossible to know before. Real mission, whether evangelism or social services or both, require the identification of self with the people in their actual situation. The principle of

solidarity and self-identification with Jesus in His future is the incarnational-Christological foundation for a good relationship with all the people in a multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious either.

- 7) The principle of the universality of salvation is the basis for multicultural relations because every person with ethnic and religion has the opportunity to believe in Christ and receive salvation. Therefore, multicultural relations should be viewed from two perspectives at once, namely: the need to live in peace with others and make use of multicultural relationships as an opportunity to preach the message of salvation to all people. Therefore the Gospel must also be made through the cultural aspects of others. Christian leaders must use this opportunity to make a relationship with others to find a possibility to share the Gospel.
- 8) So from the aspect of *regnum potentiae*, Christ's reign over the universe ruling set all nations to protect His people (Christ and His followers). In this case, the Church declared social harmony as part of the plan of realization of the Kingdom of God in the present aspect. Because the Church is not supposed to be trying to separate herself from the Gentiles (multicultural), but instead has to intensify relations with the nations. In this case, the Church declared social harmony as part of the plan of realization of the Kingdom of God in the present aspect. The Church, including Christian leaders, has a social responsibility to unite the community. Church and society are inseparable but complementary. Meeter confirmed that the material was taken to heaven. God illuminate the spiritual dimension of the material world (social) in order to restore God delegates the believers to build and maintain social order. Present theocracy in the aspect that is the basis for the believer to relate to his best in multiethnic and multireligious.
- 9) Christ has called His Church out of the world, but sent her back into the world, wants His Church to interact through real work in the community. Nature of the Church is that it can also be the basis to interact with multiethnic and multi-religion. Christian leaders, as a part of the Church, should also use the nature of the Church as characteristic of leadership in relation with others in all differences through real work.
- 10) Multiculturality in the presence of the Lamb (Christ) is also an eschatological foundation for believers today that God is giving multiculturalism as a place for his people. This is a motivation for the present Church to continue to preach the good news to all nations and tribes (multiethnic). God appreciates differences of a human being in the everlasting time (beyond history). In the same way, may Christian leaders also should appreciate many differences in humanity.
- 11) Finally, important to be noted as Howel and Markwood said "the *Missio Dei* is radically political, but that is not its end. Radical reconciliation is the greater goal, creating a new community united under the leadership of a humble king who rules in love" (Howel and Markwood 2019: 81). Christian leaders should place the King of kings as the center of their leadership among the differences of peoples.

CONCLUSION

The human diversity must be considered as God's creativity worthy of respect such as God values it as His own 'picture and image'. Human discrimination indeed is proof of an antagonistic attitude against the Creator's authority. The radical doctrine that 'solely' orients itself to a vertical truth should be accompanied by a moderate understanding. In fact, genuine truth becomes intact when both aspects are proportionately positioned. Being different is not a reason to be against and destroy each other

because to love God, and others are the truth that absolutely cannot be separated.

God alone is good for all people according to the fact that only He is the Creator of everything. God also wants human beings, who were created in His image, to do good deeds for each other. In their lifetime, all people in this world have a common responsibility; therefore, they need solidarity with each other. In fact, through good relations and interaction, it is possible to open a 'point of contact' for the Gospel. This can bring about the transformation of awareness towards the truth of the Gospel that permeates through all aspects of human life, like 'salt of the earth' for a tasteless world (Matt 5: 13). Multicultural Theology provides the foundation for a Christian attitude to build relationships with all people with all forms of differences without losing its Christian uniqueness. If all religions use this framework in their doing theology, they will produce an inclusive perspective of theology and no place for radical religious principles.

Christian leaders must have a multicultural insight in dealing with the internal Christian realities and the plural communities in their surroundings. Differences in ethnicity and religion must be managed wisely to achieve effective discipleship goals internally and witnessing externally. It was God who designed diversity since the beginning of creation, and who wants the presence of multicultural congregations in eschatology. Christian leaders should not deny diversity, but in fact, manage it as a positive potential for the present Christian ministry. Christian leaders should continue to rely on Biblical principles which are the foundation for Christian duties in developing peaceful relations with their fellow men from different ethnicity and religion. If this multicultural theological framework is implemented consistently in all religion, no place for radical religious movement will be increased.

Christian leaders should have a multicultural perspective in the face of the internal reality of her or his congregation, and the surrounding community is plural. Ethnic and religious

differences must be managed wisely in order to achieve the purpose of pastoring (internal) and witnessing (external) effectively. God designed diversity since the beginning (creation) and requires the presence of a multicultural community. Christian leaders should not deny diversity but rather to manage it as a potential positive for the Christian ministry today. Christian leaders should be based on biblical principles that underlie the Christian obligation to build relationships with each other and the different ethnicities and religion. In this way, Christian leaders can embrace religious radicalism.

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