

# *Ecclesia in transitu*: Four characteristics of transit church in relation to *notae ecclesiae*

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The term 'transit church' describes a church that becomes a temporary church for students who migrate to urban areas for studying. GKI Delima, a Reformed Presbyterian church in Indonesia, is one of them. Unfortunately, GKI Delima is not able to adapt to its context as a transit church. Consequently, there are several issues, namely, it could not fully embrace the transit students, provide space for them to participate, involve them in any church activities or empower them to carry out the mission of God. Therefore, a transit church must respond to its context by theologically and critically reflecting on its concrete identity. As the church has a threefold existence (local, particular and universal), the local congregation that adapts itself must not be disconnected from the universal church and should not be separated from being part of the particular church. In this article, I want to propose the ecclesiology of the transit church by manifesting the four marks of the universal church (*notae ecclesiae*) – namely, catholic, holy, one and apostolic – into the four characteristics of a transit church. By using the theories of *diaclesia*, liquid church, trinitarian church and exodus church, I propose friendly, relevant, intergenerational and missional characters of the transit church. I conclude this article by stating that *ecclesia in transitu* refers to the nature of the church in its wanderings in this world, which is always in a transit situation.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** This article may contribute to the contextual ecclesiology discussion. This research can be an inspiration for other researchers to develop a transit church ecclesiology based on the context of other local churches. This research may also be developed further by discussing concrete activities that can be carried out by transit churches, such as intergenerational transit church liturgies, curriculum for members of the congregation to instil a missionary mindset, efforts to adjust church orders in the context of local congregations and the formation of small communities that provide space for friendship between the members and non-members of the church.

**Keywords:** *ecclesia in transitu*; ecclesiology; *notae ecclesiae*; *diaclesia*; Reformed Presbyterian.

## Introduction

Changes in this world are certain and happen all the time. *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis* is a Latin proverb which means 'times change, and we change with them'. As time goes by, change is always happening. There is no exception in church life. The church lives in an era that is constantly changing, and therefore the church must always respond to the challenges of the times and the various changing situations so that its existence is always significant and relevant. The church is always on a journey or a pilgrimage. Therefore, every church is an *ecclesia in transitu*. The church is always in a situation that makes it change or adapt.

The 21st century is known as the era of the greatest human mobility, where the movement of people from one place to another has become an important sign of this era. It is something that the church must realise and consider in carrying out its mission. The swift flow of migrants has changed the face of the church, from a church that used to be mostly homogeneous in ethnicity to a church that now has multi-ethnic members (heterogeneous). The church experiences pluralism. Therefore, the church is challenged to reformulate its ecclesiology in order to accommodate this phenomenon of migration.

GKI Delima (Indonesian Christian Church in Delima Street, Jakarta) faces the phenomenon of urbanisation significantly. It affects all the activities that GKI Delima has. Unfortunately, GKI Delima could not fully embrace the transit students – young people who migrate to Jakarta for their studies. In my observation, there are several problems that hinder the openness of GKI Delima to transit students and that hinder the involvement of transit students at GKI Delima.

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Firstly, GKI Delima was unable to embrace transit students. GKI Delima is not friendly to them as newcomers – in other words, GKI Delima has a hospitality crisis. Secondly, GKI Delima rigidly adheres to the church order which limits the involvement of immigrants in GKI Delima.<sup>1</sup> The active members of GKI Delima are decreasing but the non-member participants are increasing. Thirdly, GKI Delima is not able to manage the differences. Lastly, because of these three problems, GKI Delima does not have any role in shaping the student's spirituality. This means that GKI Delima is not able to carry out the mission of God because it is not able to empower students to be ready to serve in the church and society in daily life.

Based on these issues, GKI Delima needs to rethink its ecclesiology as a transit church. Therefore, this study constructs the ecclesiology of GKI Delima as a transit church by manifesting the four marks of the universal church, also known as *notae ecclesiae* (one, holy, catholic and apostolic), into four characteristics of the local congregation (intergenerational, relevant, friendly and missional). Firstly, in relation to the Catholic nature of the Church, I use the theory of *diaclesia* by Joas Adiprasetya to construct a friendly characteristic of the transit church. Secondly, in relation to the Holy nature of the Church, I use the concept of liquid church by Pete Ward to construct a relevant characteristic of the transit church. Thirdly, in relation to the Church as One, I use the notion of the church as the image of the Trinity by Miroslav Volf to construct an intergenerational characteristic of the transit church. Fourthly, in relation to the apostolic nature of the Church, I use Jürgen Moltmann's perspective on the messianic church to construct a missional characteristic of the transit church. This article ends with a proposal to combine the four characteristics into a constructive and contextual ecclesiology for GKI Delima.

## Transit church: A case of GKI Delima

GKI Delima is an Indonesian Christian Church located in Tanjung Duren, Jakarta. This church is a Reformed-Calvinist church that has Presbyterian synodal system. The location of this church is very strategic because it is surrounded by five universities. Since 2014, GKI Delima has realised itself as a transit church because many students are present at GKI Delima whilst studying at colleges around GKI Delima. Since its establishment, GKI Delima has indeed been attended by transit students. Then, GKI Delima declared itself as a transit church. However, in the last five years before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, student attendance has increased significantly. They only attend for the duration of their studies, usually four years. There are still a few transit students who are involved in taking part in the service because the others feel like strangers. GKI Delima longs to make the students' transit period a meaningful time. Thus, students could feel welcomed, accepted and at home and

1. People who can serve in daily governance body are only the members of the congregation who got confirmation in that church. 'Those who can be elected and appointed as chairperson, secretary and treasurer of the church service body are members of the confirmed congregation, who are not under a special pastoral care' (Church Order of GKI, No. 198, Implementation Guidelines no. 26, article 8, point 2).

also have a commitment to participate in the GKI Delima fellowship.

GKI Delima held three public services every Sunday (06:30, 08:30 and 17:00) before the pandemic. In addition, GKI Delima held one youth service at 08:30, one youth service at 10:30 and one children's service in Sunday school classes at 08:30. The number of people attending services at GKI Delima continues to increase from year to year, but the percentage of attendance of members of the congregation decreases and the percentage of attendance of non-members increases. The attendance of members decreased from year to year because of some members of the congregation who moved to other cities, especially Tangerang, or because some were elderly or had passed away.

The presence of non-members, which from year to year is increasing, has not received special attention from GKI Delima until now. It is difficult to find people who want to serve from year to year. To serve the increasing number of people attending Sunday services, more ministers are needed as well. The ministers here include structural positions, namely, elders, stewards of ministry bodies and so on, as well as non-structural roles. In a Pre-Work Meeting held in October 2016 in Hambalang, Sentul, GKI Delima agreed to call itself a transit church and began to think about changes in service patterns that would allow more people to be involved in the ministry.

GKI Delima needs to think about policy changes because so far it has focused more on trying to get its members involved in services. On the other hand, non-members are only considered as guests. In accordance with the GKI's church order, the commission's daily governing body Badan Pengurus Harian (BPH) must come from members of the congregation. In fact, many students have potential but are hindered by this rule. Could GKI Delima be more friendly in welcoming and even embracing newcomer students and also adjust the regulations of this church system to be more relevant to the situation and conditions of GKI Delima? For example, could students become 'associate members' at GKI Delima because, in general, students only transit for a few years of study and not everyone is willing to become full members?

The status of GKI Delima as a transit church did not necessarily reflect that it was grateful to be a transit church. On the one hand, the elderly are grateful to see that the number of church members who worship continues to increase. On the other hand, the elderly began to worry about the change in the identity of GKI Delima<sup>2</sup> because they saw various ethnic groups arriving. The youths also did not adjust smoothly to the regulations at GKI Delima. For example, the rule for all commissions states that a programme proposal must be received at least three months before the implementation of the programme. At times, the Youth

2. I interviewed the first member of GKI Delima, Mr. Tedjalaksana (born in 1934), and the fourth member, Mr. Ukky Sidarta (born in 1939). Based on the interview, I found that they were worried that GKI would lose their identity (Tedjalaksana & U. Sidharta, pers. comm., 08 July 2018).

Commission feels that it must respond to contemporary situations in a shorter time; for example, they may feel that in just a month there is an important programme that should be implemented immediately. With the applicable regulations, such a programme could not be accepted by the Congregational Council. In the end, the Youth Commission thought their good intentions were not understood. Then they became reluctant to follow the regulations which they thought were too rigid. Maybe this issue seems trivial, but it makes it even more difficult for GKI Delima to involve young people in ministry because young people themselves feel uncomfortable in the church. As a result, some young people choose to leave the church and some who chose to stay in the church are ultimately apathetic. This is where the church needs to bridge the gap between young people and old people, one of which is by way of older people getting to know the young people who are currently known as the millennial generation.

## **Notae ecclesiae of the universal church**

Leo Koffeman in *In Order to Serve* agrees with Hans Dumbois who said that there are four manifestations of the church, namely, universal, particular, local and order (Koffeman 2014:45). Christians live in a specific context (local) but are aware of the global significance of faith (universal); they live the Christian faith in a particular culture (particular) but at the same time are called to be critical of that culture because of the gospel (order) (Koffeman 2014:45). Universal church refers to the body of Christ in the world. It refers to the unity of all churches. Particular church refers to regional or denominational church, such as synods.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, local church is a concrete congregation and order refers to a Christian organisation or community that commits to certain religious practices or devotions.

GKI Delima as a concrete congregation has a threefold existence, which are local, particular and universal church. As a local church that is undergoing rapid changes, GKI Delima needs to respond to existing problems and dare to realise the spirit of *ecclesia semper reformanda est*, namely, to become a church that continues to learn and improve itself in the face of changing times. At the same time, GKI Delima is a part of GKI Synod, which is a particular church. As a Presbyterian synodal church, GKI Delima is more focused on its synod policy and pays less attention to its needs as a local church. As a result, GKI Delima has not been able to exist as a significant church that is able to serve according to the needs of the people, most of whom are transit students, and as a result the existence of GKI Delima is also still less relevant to its social environment.<sup>4</sup>

GKI Delima so far is a church based on the ecclesiology of the universal church as reflected in the Apostles' Creed and

3. Koffeman (2014:45-46) mentioned the Protestant Church in the Netherlands as an example of a particular church.

4. GKI Delima once created a New Student Admissions Team in 2016–2018, whose task was to improve hospitality and the involvement of transit students. Unfortunately, it did not go well.

Nicene Creed and on the ecclesiology of the particular church as reflected in its church order. In fact, in order to become an authentic and meaningful church in everyday life, ecclesiology must not be understood as a doctrinal theory that is detached from its day-to-day reality. As Nicholas Healy (2004:50) states in *Church, World and the Christian Life*, 'ecclesiology is not a doctrinal theory that could be worked out without closed attention to the concrete life of the church'.

Healy (2004:53) stated that the response of the concrete church to its context is very important in building an ecclesiology that could help the concrete church to carry out the task of witnessing pastoral care that could answer challenges; according to the context. He emphasised that the imperative of ecclesiology is closely related to the concrete context. An ideally and systematically structured ecclesiology could not answer the needs of the church in all places and times. Ecclesiology always needs alternatives that better reflect its proper function in each context. That is why the transit church that is ever experiencing demographic changes must rethink its context and dare to revise its ecclesiology. Healy's views provided the basis for the revision of ecclesiology and the search for a suitable ecclesiological model for the transit church. There is no single model or supermodel that applies to all Christians.

The concrete church's ecclesiology approach could help the local church to become a significant and relevant church in responding to today's struggles. Building the ecclesiology of the transit church does not mean ignoring the understanding of the ecclesiology of the universal church and the particular church. I want to examine a construction of transit church ecclesiology that is meaningful and relevant here today but is still related to universal church ecclesiology and particular church ecclesiology by examining church signs known as *notae ecclesiae*.

There are four classic signs of the church that we are familiar with as they appeared in the Nicene Creed of Constantinople in 381, namely, that the church is one, holy, universal and apostolic. Howard A. Snyder and D. Runyan state that these four classic church signs do not reflect the church in its fullness, as the church is described in the Bible. They argue that the four notes are more suitable for institutional churches, but not for the church as an organic movement (Snyder & Runyan 2011:23). However, this does not mean that they suggested that the four notes should be discarded, but rather that they delineated four other accompanying notes, namely, diverse (besides one), charismatic (besides holy), local (besides catholic) and prophetic (besides apostolic) (Snyder & Runyan 2011:23).

Talking about the universal church, Koffeman, by referring to Haight and Nieman who quoted Schleiermacher, divides the church into two aspects, namely, the visible and the invisible (Koffeman 2014:18). The invisible aspect is the church as *ecclesia credita* or 'the Church we believe in', namely, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church according to the Nicene

confession of faith (Koffeman 2014:19). Meanwhile, the visible aspect is the church which is expressed in the structures, mandates, policies and all aspects of the daily life of the church (Koffeman 2014:19). These two aspects could not be separated. The earthly and spiritual dimension of the church cannot be separated.

Koffeman (2014:132–133) proposed four characteristics of the church in its visible aspects which correspond to the invisible aspects. Koffeman called these four characteristics four markers of the quality of the church, namely, inclusiveness, authenticity, conciliarity and integrity, which are directly related to the catholicity, apostolicity, unity and holiness of the church. Firstly, inclusiveness refers to the purpose of the church. As a community, the church is called to and longs to embrace everyone. Secondly, authenticity refers to church sources. The church is built on the revelation of God in human history, in Jesus Christ. Thirdly, conciliarity refers to relations within the church itself and between churches. The true commitment of the members to the whole body is of fundamental importance. Fourthly, the integrity of the church refers to the boundaries of the church. The church's way of life was inspired by what it understood to be God's view of 'the good life' (p. 133).

By using Snyder's approach and the theory of Hans Dombois, which is also used by Koffeman, I try to construct four characteristics of the transit church that are parallel to the four universal church signs and also in relation to the manifestations of these four signs in the particular church. These four transit church signs are expected to become an ecclesiological model that could answer the real problems of the GKI Delima as previously described.

## Being a friendly church

As part of the catholic nature of the church, the church must be inclusive and open to everyone. The Catholic Church 'breaks through' all barriers. The Catholic Church is not present only for one group, but is open to anyone. The church does not discriminate against people based on ethnicity, race, class, tradition, social status and so on. In this perspective, GKI Delima transit needs to be a church that could fully embrace transit students from various places and ethnicities. However, as a church that was originally homogeneously Chinese in ethnicity, GKI Delima had problems when it became a multi-ethnic church. GKI Delima as a transit church has not succeeded in showing hospitality to the diverse transit students.

Some of the old members felt uncomfortable when they saw students from various ethnic groups coming to GKI Delima, and sometimes they lost their sense of security. They worried that GKI Delima would change its identity from a church with a majority of Chinese members to a multi-ethnic one. The *diaclesia* theory of Joas Adiprasetya reminds us of the church's calling, especially how to behave towards foreigners. *Diaclesia* theory could help GKI Delima to continue to learn to be an inclusive and friendly church with everyone

regardless of their background. This theory is used to construct the face of a friendly transit church based on the catholicity of the church as one of the *notae ecclesiae*.

*Diaclesia* is a neologism that was coined by Joas Adiprasetya in his attempt to describe the identity of the wider church. This idea arose when he juxtaposed the words *ekklesia* and *diakonia*. The word *ekklesia* which has been popularly understood as determining the identity of the church, which means 'a called-out fellowship' (*ek+kaleo*), causes the ontological separation of the church and the world, thereby hindering the church's missionary movement into the world. *Dia* literally means 'passing through'. Therefore, *diaclesia* is a church that passes through the boundaries. The idea of *diaclesia* breaks down the dichotomy between church and world and demonstrates the close intertwining between the church and the world.

*Diaclesia* as a church concept that transcends boundaries is used by Adiprasetya in his study of the word *pandocheion* in the Acts of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37) (Adiprasetya 2018:187). This word is translated as 'inn'. In his study, Adiprasetya stated that the church should be a *pandocheion*. The nature of the inn as *pandocheion*, or house for all, can easily help us construct an open ecclesiology that sees the church as a welcoming space for everyone.

In addition to highlighting the Greek word *pandocheion*, Adiprasetya highlighted the word *dechomai* in the story of the Good Samaritan. He explains, *dechomai* is used 23 times in the Bible, for example, Luke 9:5; 10:8–10 and 9:46–48. *Dechomai* in Luke 9:48 is used to refer to the act of accepting and welcoming others, which means the same as accepting and welcoming Jesus (Adiprasetya 2018:189). The word *dechomai* is used to express the hospitality of the innkeeper. Adiprasetya also mentioned that the owner of the inn had a radical hospitality to the victims, even more than that shown by the Samaritans, as he opened his doors to everyone and invited them to stay regardless of their social status, religion and cultural background (Adiprasetya 2018:188). Although it is not mentioned how long the victim stayed at the inn and what happened after he recovered, the two dinars the Samaritan gave were certainly only a small amount compared to all the efforts and sacrifices made by the innkeeper (Adiprasetya 2018:188). This story is often told and heard but focuses only on the Good Samaritan. By considering the role of the innkeeper, this story shows that the innkeeper who is often not discussed actually has a very important role. They could even be a role model for the *diaclesial* church. Adiprasetya (2018) said:

The story of the Good Samaritan and the good innkeeper is one of healing. Yet the healing would never happen if the ones who saw the wounded stranger with mercy do not overcome their own fear. Compassion will be powerless if it is encapsulated by fear. 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear', says 1 John. In the midst of the growing culture and politics of fear, the open church has to overcome its fear of strangers by learning to pass through and cross over its self-imposed boundaries. It is at the margin of their circle of safety that the people of an open church meet and embrace the wounded other. (p. 199)

This story shows that the inn became a home of hospitality that brought healing. The church is not only an open space but also a healing site. However, we need to understand that the church is not the healer. Otherwise, the church becomes superior over others, even over the world. With the church, 'wounded' people walk together as they go through the healing process. The church does not heal but the church participates in the healing process. Adiprasetya (2018) further explained:

The church is a *diaclesia* in the sense that it is a community that crosses over or passes through all barriers. A rigid ecclesia could demonstrate superiority in relation to people from other faiths. In contrast, diaclesia offers a risky openness that passes through all boundaries and meets religious others. *Diaclesia* approaches, welcomes, and invites the wounded and sinned-against to cross over their own traumatic situation. A non-diaclesial ecclesia will easily turn us into escapist, which makes us ignorant of those who suffer. On the contrary, a non-ecclesial diaclesia could be dangerous by diminishing its very identity as Christ's people who are not of the world. (p. 200)

The idea of *diaclesia* does not invite the church to remove these boundaries but to dare to cross them. *Diaclesia* offers a church that dares to cross boundaries, takes the initiative to say hello and is willing to learn from others. Thus, the term *diaclesia* describes *ekklesia* that 'passes' or 'traverses'. *Diaclesia* is a church that transcends all boundaries to meet others without including or being included by others. This framework proposes a friendly church, one that is willing to cross the line to make friends with strangers.

## Being a relevant church

The characteristics of the holy church as one of the *notae ecclesiae* are shown by establishing certain regulations, which is called the church order. These regulations are then developed into a church legal system in order to maintain its institutions. Unfortunately, the church system, which is the legal system, tends to be applied rigidly, formally and legalistically. At GKI Delima, the church system often limits the participation of transit students. As a result, GKI Delima as a transit church has not been able to involve transit students in ministry. For example, the GKI's church order regulates that the daily governing body (BPH) of all the church's commissions must consist of those who are already members of the congregation. The non-members, in this case many people from the millennial generation, feel hindered and a few of them finally lose interest in serving. I am optimistic that Pete Ward's theory of liquid church could contribute to solving this problem.

By calling the church liquid, Ward (2002:15) wanted to state that the church must be like water which is flexible, liquid and could change. In his opinion, the traditional view of seeing the church as a place where Christians gather to worship at a particular time needs to be expanded towards a dynamic notion of the church as a series of relationships and communication (Ward 2002:18). Ward asserts that the idea of a liquid church is an attempt to imagine a different way of

being church – different from the solid church concept (Ward 2002:1).

Ward uses the term 'solid church' to describe the existence of a church which, according to him, has so far limited the understanding of the church to only certain definitions and must follow certain rules that tend to be rigid, for example, the understanding that the church is a fellowship held at a certain location and place with the main purpose of carrying out a certain liturgy communally (Ward 2002:18). In a later book entitled *Liquid Ecclesiology* (2017), Ward argues that the idea of a solid church shows a narrow meaning of the church, where the church is assumed by various theological assumptions, but it becomes almost impossible to describe the church as something that is not a meeting (Ward 2017:10). The limitation of the definition, which is often only related to the presence of people at a service, ultimately limits the meaning of the church to a solid organisation (Ward 2002:18).

Ward coined the theory and used the term 'liquid church' because it was inspired by the thoughts of a Polish sociologist named Zygmunt Bauman. Ward notes that Bauman, in his book *Liquid Modernity* (2000), describes that a change from a congested form of social and economic life to a more flexible form and more fluid relationships needs to occur in today's modern world so that changes in culture and relationships within the community need to occur (Ward 2017:9). Changes become a natural part of existing in the modern world. Ward reflected on that writing and eventually realised that the church should also become more fluid. Bauman himself is still very sceptical about the growth of fluidity in society, so Ward in this case wants to prove that the church could be an example of a fluid community that could grow naturally (Ward 2017:9).

Ward also drew inspiration about the liquid church from Daniel W. Hardy, an Anglican theologian. Hardy states that God's actions in this world could be characterised by sociality or social life (Hardy 2001:24). In other words, God's work could be seen in many forms of social life, including church and society. Furthermore, Hardy understands that the trinitarian God is the source of the forms of social life (Hardy 2001:24). Therefore, holiness refers to how God is active in the world. Hardy (2001:16) introduced the more dynamic and fluid idea of holiness as God's affective movement and action in the world. According to Ward (2017:7), the dynamics of social and cultural life in the church through God's work will eventually bring the church to the fluidity of church forms so that it could be said to be fluid. The foundation built by Hardy regarding the church as a liquid social community provides reinforcement for Pete Ward's liquid church theory.

Ward initiated an understanding of the fluid church based on theological views that are relevant to today's culture. As Nicholas Healy said, the church should consider the concrete response of the church regarding culture. Therefore, the church needs a theological analysis of culture in order to be able to connect the life of the congregation in accordance with

the local cultural context. Ward was inspired to build a theological approach related to the church, as stated by Healy, so that this approach could be applied as a result of expressing the theological values of living culture and integrating them in everyday life, especially in concrete communities in the form of churches. The liquid church will revive the church's characteristic, namely as a liquid organisation, which is built with a theological approach and closely related to culture. As Healy hoped that the church would seek a theological approach that is relevant to culture, Ward's liquid church concept was able to realise that hope.

## Being an intergenerational church

The rapid flow of urbanisation greatly affected GKI Delima as a transit church in the metropolitan city. This phenomenon makes the people who come to GKI Delima more diverse because they come from different regions, ethnicities and even Christian denominations. Unfortunately, GKI Delima was unable to manage these differences. Ethnic differences manifested in cultural differences are a challenge for GKI Delima. In addition, differences in denominations also affect church habits. The problem arises from the number of young people who are millennials who have different ways of thinking and lifestyle than older people. On the one hand, active members of GKI Delima are dominated by old people. On the other hand, the non-members who attended the GKI Delima service were dominated by the millennial generation. As a result, GKI Delima has a very large generation gap. Miroslav Volf's (1998) idea of the church as an image of the Trinity could contribute to shaping the intergenerational ecclesiology of the transit church. The intergenerational face of the church is expected to be a concrete form developed from one of the *notae ecclesiae*, namely, the one church.

The oneness of the church imitates the oneness of the triune God. The church is one because the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God. Because the Trinity is three distinct persons, the church is understood as universally one church but locally diverse. Miroslav Volf (1998) says:

To think consistently in trinitarian terms means to escape this dichotomy between universalization and pluralization. If the triune God is *unum multiplex in se ipso* (John Scotus Erigena), if unity and multiplicity are equiprimordial in him, then God is the ground of both unity and multiplicity. Only "unity in multiplicity" could claim to correspond to God. Since God is the one God, reality does not, as Aristotle's metaphor suggests, degenerate into individual scenes like a bad play; yet since the one God is a communion of the divine persons, the world drama does not degenerate into a boring monologue. Trinitarian thinking suggests that in a successful world drama, unity and multiplicity must enjoy a complementary relationship. (p. 193)

The trinitarian framework offers an understanding that breaks down the dichotomy between universality and plurality or between unity and multiplicity. Both need to be understood in a complementary relationship. Regarding this understanding, the trinitarian perspective could be a fundamental basis for understanding the relationship between the universal church, the particular church and

the local church. This perspective could also help us to understand the intertwining between unity and multiplicity in each layer of the church, whether universal, particular or local.

Volf (1998) proposed:

Conceiving the structure of the church in a consistently trinitarian fashion means conceiving not only the institution of office as such, but also the entire (local) church itself in correspondence to the Trinity. (p. 218)

Furthermore, Volf (1998) explained:

The various gifts, services, and activities that all Christians have correspond to the divine multiplicity. Just as the one deity exists as the Father, Son, and Spirit, so also do these different divine persons distribute different gifts to all Christians. That these gifts are distributed for the benefit of all, however (1 Cor 12:7), corresponds to the divine unity; the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God (the Father) are active in all these different gifts. The symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the trinitarian persons finds its correspondence in the image of the church in which all members serve one another with their specific gifts of the Spirit in imitation of the Lord and through the power of the Father. Like the divine persons, they all stand in a relation of mutual giving and receiving. (p. 218)

Instead of focusing on 'unity' in the Trinity, Volf focuses on plurality in divinity. Thus, the various gifts of the Spirit, ministries and activities that all Christians possess are understood as embodiments of divine multiplicity. The symmetrical reciprocal relationship between the persons of the Trinity is manifested in the image of a church whose members serve each other with their respective gifts.

Based on the above understanding, the relationship of each member in the local church could be understood to have a trinitarian character. Each member of the ecclesiastical fellowship relates to one another, giving and receiving. What is shared with each other is not only in the form of service or assistance in the form of material, energy or thought contributions but also each of themselves. They become one without losing their respective identities. Thus, this fellowship model could be an appropriate model for an intergenerational church. Each generation could share and learn from each other.

## Being a missional church

An apostolic church means it is built on the teachings of the apostles. The apostolic church is a church rooted in tradition. Hans Küng said, 'The apostles are dead; there are no new apostles. But the apostolic mission remains' (Küng 1967:355). The church until now has actually inherited the apostolic mission. The church is an apostolic church because it carries out its mission as the apostles were sent to preach the gospel. In other words, the apostolic church is a church based on mission. The question is, 'what is a mission?'

Talking about apostolic mission cannot be separated from God's mission because the apostles were sent by Christ. Jesus

said, 'As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you' (Jn 20:21). God's mission can be understood as God's purpose or will. God's mission is focused on the world or more precisely on his creation. For that, God is pleased to be present as a historical person, namely, Jesus. The world could see God through Jesus (cf. Jn 14:9), so the world could know God's purpose for the world through Jesus. From a biblical perspective, the coming of Jesus on earth can be understood as the coming of the Messiah. For Israel, especially after the exile, the Messiah is a figure who is always expected to bring justice and peace. Therefore, the hope of the coming of the Messiah becomes an eschatological hope because it expects something to happen in the future, that is, God's salvation.

In his ministry of proclaiming the coming of God's Kingdom or the real reign of God, Jesus brought the good news of deliverance, although it was unlike Israel's triumph under David's leadership. Jürgen Moltmann (1977) says:

The eschatological fulfillment of the liberating lordship of God in history is termed the kingdom of God. The Greek word *basileia* could mean both the actual rule of God in the world, and the universal goal of that divine rule. ... The liberating rule of God could thus be understood as the immanence of the eschatological kingdom, and the coming kingdom could be interpreted as the transcendence of the believed and experienced rule of God in the present. This understanding forbids us to banish the lordship of God to a future world totally unrelated to our earthly, historical life. But it also forbids us to identify the kingdom of God with conditions in history, whether they be already existing or desired. (p. 190)

The Kingdom of God is the eschatological fulfilment of God's liberating lordship in history. The word 'kingdom' refers to God's government as well as the purpose of that divine government. Thus, God's liberating reign could be understood as the 'immanence' of the eschatological kingdom, and the future kingdom could be interpreted as the 'transcendence' of God's reign believed and experienced in the present. Therefore, God's reign is very historical and earthly, that is, it is being realised 'now' and 'here'.

If God's mission is understood as the fulfilment of God's Kingdom and the church inherits God's mission from the apostles sent by Christ, then the church has a mission to participate in the fulfilment of God's Kingdom. Moltmann describes this view as messianic ecclesiology. Messianic essentially means Christological and Christological foundations are always directed at the eschaton (Kärkkäinen 2002:127). The church as 'the Church of Christ' lives between the memorial of his history and the hope of his kingdom so that the church is not the kingdom but the anticipation of the kingdom (Moltmann 1977:75). Thus, the church is not the same as the Kingdom of God. As the anticipation of the Kingdom of God, Moltmann called the church a 'messianic fellowship' because the messianic concept represents a categorical mediation between the Kingdom of God and history (Moltmann 1977:193).

Moltmann uses the concept of the Exodus Church to describe a church that is always walking and moving towards the

fulfilment of God's Kingdom in the last days, the eschaton. From the resurrection of Christ to the *eschaton*, the church is in active hope at the same time with Christ in this world transforming the values of Christ's teachings into values within the world. Thus, the church actively participates in realising God's government in this world. But, it is not that simple. This world is very plural in terms of culture, society, religion and politics, each of which brings its own superior value. Implementing Christian values in this world is not an easy endeavour.

Moltmann realised that the modern world with its potential and limitations could be compatible with God's kingdom or against it. The church is still a 'contrast society', in the sense of contradiction with modern society, which has not demonstrated the values of the Kingdom of God. Meanwhile, the church as an exodus community is always moving towards the Kingdom of God. The church is called to be a moral community that is an example in society (Paeth 2008:195). As a 'contrast society', the Exodus Church also has an awareness of critical dialogue with modernity. This confirms that the church does not assume that modernity should be rejected. This is where the dialectical dimensions of affirmation and criticism become important in the church's role in society.

The Exodus Church has the role of witnessing the Gospel, namely, to transform together with society towards the fullness of the Kingdom of God by playing an active role in supporting efforts towards a new world. Therefore, the church must always be ready to engage in community problems and provide the best solutions creatively. Moltmann views the critical role of the church in society, not as separate from society, but as a partnership, in which the church calls on the community to realise the fulfilment of its vocation (Paeth 2008:51). This kind of church places the world as a neighbour and partner in realising the Kingdom of God.

## Epilogue: *Ecclesia in transitu*

As Nicholas Healy stated, the response of the concrete church to its context is very important in building an ecclesiology that could help the concrete church to carry out the task of witnessing and pastoral care. Therefore, GKI Delima as a transit church must respond to its context to build a relevant and significant ecclesiology. It could construct its ecclesiology by embodying the four characteristics as the manifestation of the four marks of the universal church as follows.

Firstly, as part of the catholic nature of the church, by using Adiprasetya's theory of *diaclesia*, the transit church could realise a friendly ecclesiology. Thus, the transit church needs to be a church that makes friends with transit students. Transit students are expected to feel at home. The transit church could be a temporary 'home' for transit students. By being friendly, transit students are expected to be involved and participate even though they are not members of the congregation. Transit church organisation should be maintained by friendly leadership. Millennials do not like hierarchical relationships.

They like equality. If transit church leaders understand themselves as subjects to be listened to and obeyed, then transit students will not want to participate. Millennials have a voice to be listened to, meaningful aspirations and dedicated time and energy. The friendly leadership model makes it possible to accommodate all these contributions.

Secondly, as part of the holy nature of the church, by using Pete Ward's liquid church theory, the transit church could embody the relevant ecclesiology. One of the implementations of the holy character of the church, according to Koffeman, is the church order. Meanwhile, the church order of GKI Delima limits the participation of transit students. Therefore, GKI Delima needs to understand its holiness in a liquid perspective. Thus, the transit church needs to be a relevant church for its context. The transit church could provide a safe space for transit students to participate. Transit church membership must be liquid. The church must have the courage to adjust regulations related to the management of the commission so that it could make local regulations that are relevant to the context. It needs to provide opportunities for non-member participants who are committed to become the daily governing body. In the end, transit church membership is understood not as something that has to be binding or formal, but in terms of a committed relationship.

Thirdly, as part of the one nature of the church, based on the church as the image of the Trinity according to Miroslav Volf, the transit church could realise an intergenerational ecclesiology. Thus, the transit church needs to create a comfortable space for intergenerational interaction. This could reduce the gap between generations, especially between senior church members and students who are the millennial generation. The activities carried out by the transit church must embrace diversity. The generation gap is a problem that needs to be solved with intergenerational services. However, more than that, intergenerationality must be an internalised mindset in the transit church. Thus, whenever it holds an ecclesiastical programme, the involvement of various generations becomes something that is always preferred.

Fourthly, as part of the apostolic nature of the church, by using Jürgen Moltmann's theory of the exodus church, the transit church could realise a missional ecclesiology. Thus, the transit church needs to instil a missional mindset. It should be done by challenging the dichotomy between heaven and earth, or material and spiritual. The transit church does not view the world as earthly, profane or unholy. It needs to understand itself as a transit church that is present in the midst of the world and not as a church that has to convert the world. Therefore, it must be actively involved in the daily problems of the community. In particular, it pays attention to the problems and needs of transit students in their calling in their respective fields. The transit church lives together with others to jointly realise the fullness of God's Kingdom in the world.

Finally, being a transit church is a process that never ends. The church is always *in via*. *Ecclesia in transitu* refers to the nature of the church in its wanderings in this world, which is

always in a transit situation. As a church on a journey, the church must always respond to changing situations and translate the essential meaning of the church into relevant implementation.

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