

Church Ministry in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era in the City of Medan-North Sumatra-Indonesia

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Abstract—The church has been one of the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, we want to see opportunities as a church strategy in serving as its main task even in the midst of the pandemic. The method used in this research is through observation of the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through electronic media in the form of news in the city of Medan. by building an attitude of concentration on people and not on activities and then using online-based technology and the creation of teaching the Word with videos, these are choices that really help the church in carrying out the noble task of serving God and His congregation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords— church, pandemic, strategy, serving

I. INTRODUCTION

The church has been one of the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic[1]. Because covid 19 has shaken up various aspects of life, including the area of religiosity and spirituality. Various restrictions on human movement have a direct impact on the church which is a community institution that is oriented to the development of the spiritual life of the community through various activities that are associations, both large and small associations. This habit is the biggest challenge in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because one of the very strict protocols to be implemented as an effort to avoid the spread of the corona virus is to keep a distance from

each other without caring about any relationship with that person and also to avoid crowds as published by Kompas media to decide the spread of covid-19[2].

At its vocation, the church cannot stop at the current situation. Because the task of the church should be increased in the midst of the challenges faced by the people. Spiritual guidance amidst the fear of many people facing the corona virus is the main nature. Therefore, this is a dilemma for the church's task of being committed and consistent in building people's lives to remain strong in the midst of a crisis. It can be said that this is precisely the right moment to return to the essence value as the body of Christ, namely helping and raising social solidarity among all elements of society[3].

According to WHO, Covid-19 will continue to exist (look for articles/news) as a marker for the church to develop new ways to effectively serve the congregation in the midst of new habits. With the issuance of a circular by the Medan city government regarding the adaptation of new habits to deal with covid 19 by maintaining distance and avoiding crowds[4]. So in relation to the implementation of duties and vocations in the midst of challenges, the church must come up with strategies that are suitable for people's lives in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic. A serious phenomenon that occurs side by side with victims who died due to covid-19 is a high tendency for people globally to use online channels for

various lines of life activities. even if it has to be in a pattern that fits the situation

In this study, we want to see opportunities as a church strategy in serving as its main task even in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic.

II. METHOD

The method used in this research is through observation of the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through electronic media in the form of news in the form of videos, as well as print media in the form of newspapers and articles containing the development of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. and especially in the city of Medan. Then compare it with the patterns of church services carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic with various activities that are in accordance with the health protocols launched by the government, both onsite and online. Based on the study, it is compared with existing developments and thoughts generated through writings published in the era of the covid-19 pandemic, which then tries to determine the essence of the comparison through proposals that allow the church to carry out services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

III. ANALYSIS

1. Concentrate on People

The church in its tradition cannot be separated from the activity of gathering together in its religious rituals, as has been mandated by the scriptures and exemplified from generation to generation by the Israelites and Christians from the first century to the present day. However, the emergence of covid 19 has forced the church to learn to adapt to the patterns that are forced by the situation that threatens many people's lives. The application of the habit of worship that involves many people, actually becomes a serious problem in the community, and will even face legal risks whose regulations have been firmly established by the government. Thus the church must come up with new ways that do not have to force the implementation of religious rituals with a gathering pattern, and one option that is relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic is that the church must be oriented to the personal, not to the association. This means that the ministry of the church must try to serve people even though it is not in a large gathering, but individuals can be served with existing limitations. This will prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The church should build concentration on people instead of the usual celebrations. It is indeed very difficult to change the habits that have been built up for years and even centuries in Christian life from generation to generation in their worship activities which are patterned by gathering or fellowshiping with others. However, there must be a

transformation in the way of thinking that for the safety of the people, it is necessary to have an attitude of thinking to consider the health of the congregation and also to build the life of the congregation by preaching God's word addressed to individuals.

2. Utilization of online-based technology

Technology is one of the most helpful instruments during the COVID-19 pandemic. It must be admitted that the facilities presented by the sophistication of online-based technology such as zoom applications, YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp media and others can connect people face to face even in cyberspace. without the risk of person-to-person transmission of covid 19. Church servants not only through worship in the church, but the church can use the internet media. Serving through the internet can be done, for example the church needs to send daily devotional materials, articles. Through cellphones by sending Biblical messages to members of the congregation[5].

Historically, The use of digital technology has become a standard in worship services. For decades now, churches have played CDs and MP3 recordings in worship, to enhance music, dance, and drama ministries, and to fill in when musicians are not available. Video clips and PowerPoint presentations are used to help ministers drive home the sermonic focus, especially for those who may be visual learners. They are also used to lend a contemporary feeling to worship, saving us from using hymnbooks or worship bulletins. Services are recorded and made available on CD and DVD for those who might want to view it again, and now, some churches are using digital technology to live-stream their services. If you can't get to the church, the church comes to you. Many, if not most of us, would agree that the use of digital technology in worship has positive aspects and results[6].

This opportunity actually does not weaken the church theologically, but instead strengthens the influence and ministry of the church even though the world is full of massive social restrictions. Each other can interact emotionally with each other without having to be afraid of the spread of covid-19. Therefore, the church must open itself to embrace technological means to continue to carry out its service tasks in the midst of society. The facilities that can be used are through online worship using YouTube (live streaming), Facebook and for services that involve interaction, participants can use the ZOOM application to the fullest.

The church in dealing with the spread of covid 19 must take strategic steps to maintain the work of church services during the pandemic by maximizing the use of online-based technology to maintain communication relations between the church and the congregation.

3. Video-based Word teaching creations

The covid 19 pandemic which limits the movement of many people is forcing many people not to leave the house and more to stay at home to avoid the transmission of covid 19. The real result of this is that people have a lot of time to connect with things that are on line.

This is a good opportunity to think about breakthroughs in building the spiritual life of the people through sermons and Bible teachings through videos of sufficient duration to meet the needs of the people to study God's Word. The opportunity for these videos is very large due to the availability of a lot of time for people who have to stay at home because of covid 19. The effectiveness of using video media because it can stimulate one's feelings, thoughts and desires, as can be compared with learning for students with video usage[7].

The development of worship creations and video-based teaching of the word is closely related to the pandemic situation which locks everyone's space to socialize with one another, especially worship that is gathered between congregations. It can be said that the opportunity is very large to be implemented because the interest of the congregation to engage in online communication is getting higher. According to research conducted by the online fellowship of Indonesian Churches, 95% of 2767 agreed with online worship[8]. Worship and Word Teaching using video will be a means for the congregation to be served well even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. CONCLUSION

Covid 19 has changed many aspects of human life habits around the world. The church is one of the communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact is not only on the church's economy, but also on the essence of ecclesiastical activities, namely worshipping together in the same room. Social restrictions due to covid 19 forced the

church to be able to build a strategy to survive in the midst of the existing challenges. Therefore, by building an attitude of concentration on people and not on activities and then using online-based technology and the creation of teaching the Word with videos, these are choices that really help the church in carrying out the noble task of serving God and His congregation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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