

Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Reflections - The Church in the World in the Internet of Things Era

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Abstract—The presence of IoT will undoubtedly have a significant impact on human civilization, both positive and negative. This impact is not only felt by the world market but penetrated the ecclesiastical sphere. In the IoT era, churches are present in every home through virtual technology with its challenges. This paper examines how the church deals with the IoT era through a pastoral reflection of *Gaudium et Spes*. The method used in this paper is a critical theory approach to descriptively analyze the main concepts discussed in *Gaudium et Spes*, the role of pastoral and the role of the church in the world. The result was that the IoT era ultimately demanded that the church place itself dynamically rather than antipathy. Concerning religious attitudes, the church should be able to assist people in their journey using existing technology. The Shepherd must play his role as a caller, prophet, preacher, teacher, or evangelist to continue bringing and reminding the people to be in sound teaching. Not only does it stop at education, but shepherds should be able to use technology as a tool that makes it easier for them to reach troubled congregations.

Keywords—*Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral, Internet of Things

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet of Things or IoT is a technology that connects various objects to the internet media to retrieve information about them at any time. The potential utilization of IoT is very much and can be applied in multiple fields such as agriculture,

health, transportation, etc. It's no surprise that the Internet of Things is touted as The Next Big Thing after smartphones and social media in the 21st century [1].

The presence of IoT will undoubtedly have a significant impact on human civilization. Forrester, a leading market research institute, predicts transportation management, surveillance and security applications, and warehousing and retail management will become huge IoT markets. McKinsey estimates that by 2020 IoT has a market potential of US\$ 3.7 billion. Furthermore, Gartner predicts that there will be more than 20.8 billion smart objects connected via the internet. That number is nearly three times that of the world's population today. [1] This impact is felt by the world market and up to the scope of the church's life. A study conducted by Yahya Afandi through his "Digital Ecclesiology" stated that the idea of a digital church is an offer of life in the present. The church can provide new benefits for communication, community, and discipleship [2]. This is supported by Lee, who stated that the church is socially responsible for fulfilling five (5) essential elements, namely worship, evangelism, education, service, and friendship during the covid 19 pandemic that makes the congregation cannot come face to face offline. The existence of IoT plays a vital role in this situation [3].

Nevertheless, on the other hand, we cannot deny that not all areas are internet-friendly areas. People who are not yet 'technologically literate' will be further behind. Some people can only enjoy the change of network acceleration. "Tech-literate" people will indeed be luckier. However, they cannot necessarily benefit from the advantages they have by using the

development of this technology for self-development. Some people use it only for specific unproductive interests. e.g., downloading and accessing various information that is precisely counter-productive to mental development, development of knowledge, and spiritual development of society. Directorate of Cyber Crime Bareskrim Polri received 2,259 reports of cybercrime cases from January to September 2020. It noted that the spread of provocative content was the most reported, with 1,048 points reported. In addition, the public also says other cybercrime such as online fraud, pornography, illegal access, data manipulation, data/identity theft, and so on [4].

For the church itself, some issues need serious attention. In the IoT era, congregations can easily select and sort out topics of sermons that are preferred, needed, that are easy to digest, and trustworthy. Churches can also offer love, collectibles, and tithes through online payments, using QR Codes, and the like [5]. Money will move anywhere even in different currencies. Troubled congregations can connect through applications and conduct counseling or get Coaching from selected pastors and can connect live from different parts of the world without language barriers because machines easily translate various languages on earth [6]. The church became global, the era of the local church became obsolete, congregations could come from different nations, tribes, and languages. However, the congregation is not physically in the House of God, just from home with a virtual screen, perhaps three or four dimensions. The Church became present in a private home [7].

In connection with this condition, is the church able to face the IoT era in presenting the Kingdom of God and maintaining its existence as salt and light (impact) during society? Churches in religion essentially have the social power to influence individuals, and individuals affecting culture or society will condition individuals. The Church has a role as the leading actor who can make social changes in the Church community or church residents, especially in presenting the presence of God. In contrast to Afandi and Lee's research, this paper wants to examine how the church deals with the IoT era through a pastoral reflection of *Gaudium et Spes*, where *Gaudium et Spes* is a document that highlights explicitly all human activities in the world and states that the task of the church is to play an active role in maintaining the treasures of God's word, which is the source of rules in the field of religiosity and decency.

II. METHODS

The method used in this paper is the *acritical theory* approach to descriptively analyze the main concepts discussed in *Gaudium et Spes*, the role of pastoral and the role of the church in the world. To realize this, this paper first explains the concept and history of *Gaudium et Spes* and then uses the thoughts in the document to be an idea for the creation of pastoral attitudes in the IoT era. Several library studies are needed to conduct critical studies, especially in describing the practical implementation of key concepts of *Gaudium et Spes*. The entire paper was done exploratively as Zaluchu intended

[8], primarily revealing its correlation with the role of pastoral and church in the IoT era.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Gaudium Et Spes*

The Second Vatican Council, the Church generally shut down the world, reacted, and even denounced the world. This is due to the sense of danger experienced by the Church when knowledge is rapidly developed is considered able to explain everything so that no more explanations are needed from the Church. The practical product and energy of technological science trigger a situation that promises a prosperous life. The world no longer recognizes the power of the Church and God. However, a small group of theologians in the Church posit the view that the advancement of science, technology, and politics is not seen as a threat, but rather the Church can be positive towards the world. This then became the originator of the establishment of the Council as seen in the documents it produced, among others *Gaudium et Spes* [9].

This situation is then further evident from the unrest that arises when it finds that only one of the 70 documents proposed to the commissions, relating to social issues in the world as a concern of the Church. This is quite surprising, especially to see that the theme of the Church and the world is the two parts that became the thinking of John XXIII on September 11, 1962, regarding the task of *ad intra* and *ad extra* Church [10].

Dom Helder Camara, an auxiliary bishop in Rio de Janeiro, was disturbed that all the council documents were too focused on internal Church matters. Dom Helder, several cardinals, bishops, and theologians began urging to form a special commission that explored and examined the themes of the Church and the world. Montini, who succeeded Pope John XXIII, was involved in the establishment of this commission. I need to tell you a document that speaks of the renewal of the Church inward but also needs to talk about the problems that are going on in the world at large. This proposal was later accepted and designed a separate document on the role of the Church in the open modern world.

Not only that, but the commission also then had a dialogue with Protestant theologians. One of the most critical inputs to this commission was Luke Vischer of the Faith and Order Commission of the Council of The World Churches. In addition to the theological views that deepen the meaning of Christian hope for the world, the input provided is also very influential to formulate more clearly some of the Church's attitudes to actual issues. This openness to the contribution of ideas from other Churches eventually encouraged the Catholic Church, to acknowledge and appreciate what the Churches and other religions have done concerning efforts to address the problems of the human race. *Gaudium et Spes* is not only the product of Western European bishops and theologians, but extends throughout the region such as India, Japan, Africa, Brazilian, Poland, and Chile.

Gaudium et Spes is the longest Council documents. The document consists of 93 numbers divided into four parts. The closely related matter of the *Gaudium et Spes* Document relating to this writing is in the second section no. 40-45 which contains the Church's call to play a role in the modern world. This section broadly displays the interpretation starting with a description of the basis of the Church's relationship with the world (GS, art. 40); The Church's concrete attitude towards the world in particular towards human dignity (Gs, Art. 41), human society (Gs, art. 42) and human activities (GS, art. 43), what the Church expects from the world (Gs, art. 44), Christ's beginning and end as the center (Gs, art. 45). These five sections can serve as a director for the Church in addressing, presenting, and answering the modern world [14].

Gaudium et Spes give a clear picture that the church must not be self-centered but also see out itself, to lead every people of God to be able to face all forms of challenges that occur in events in the world that are currently growing rapidly. This document states that man will always develop all his potential despite his difficulties. Even thanks to the science and technology inherent in humans today, man will continue to expand its scope to the top of the universe. All of that can be achieved not because of the active role of one nation's internals alone, but due to the exchange of information between nations that gradually become a world society. If in the past man expected strength from above, now man can work on his own. Nowadays the task of the church is to play an active role in maintaining the treasures of God's word, namely the source of rules in the field of religiosity and decency, Indeed the church is not always ready in answering each of those questions. The Church must continue to strive to combine the light of revelation with the expertise of all, to be the light of the path that has recently begun to be pursued by human society.

B. Church in the World

The Church is obliged to fulfill the pastoral call attached to itself in dealing with various excesses caused by advances in information technology and various other scientific developments because the church is in direct contact with parishioners or church residents who are also part of the community directly affected by the IoT era.

Through online channels, social media is present as a means of association where users can very easily participate in the outpouring of thoughts, dissemination of information, to the impediment of emotions, hobbies, lifestyle, product marketing, and so forth. Social media should also be understood as a media that is vulnerable and prone to crime and a variety of information that is doubtful. This is due to the rapid flow of information from social media users themselves. In addition to being disseminated by many parties, messages on social media are also not controlled--without consideration of the code of ethics, regulations, and social responsibility. The Church in this case plays a role in providing counseling to the citizens of the church as a sorter or filter in determining when to spread the news, as well as when to determine the opening of messages and interact with information received. Indeed, not all news on

social media is positive. Among the various news that circulates, there are also fake news, fake news, hoaxes, and other negative news. Social media can also be influenced by certain parties as a vehicle to smooth certain purposes and purposes

Nowadays, almost all individuals take advantage of advances in information technology that do not infrequently also affect the lifestyle and habits of its users. Highlighting this information technology cannot be separated from individual relationships. The real impact is the occurrence of miscommunication between individuals. This fact presents another face of the risks of the development of information technology. Therefore, the church and pastors should guide the people as often as possible in providing counseling and make the most of social media to build communication relationships with church residents conductively. The acceleration of the IoT era can be an unavoidable tsunami wave, except by doing "spiritual surfing waves" as Rick Warren says in the foreword to Cox's writing [16]. This means that the church, in this case, cannot ignore the technological society nor fight it. The Church should be capable of playing the medium of technology.

The failure of the theological church contextually in the face of the IoT era makes the church will lose the opportunity to reach many souls to be transformed by the Lord God. This is because contemporary ministry today borrows leadership, not from scripture, but the surrounding culture --pastors becoming CHURCH CEOs, as psychotherapy teachers, or as political agitators. It is further described that shepherds instead become rulers of the media, political negotiators, therapists, managers, and social activists. In its development, the internet also benefited the church for a variety of things: [18] (1) Seeking new expressions of the conventional church with discussions, exchanges of opinions, and theological debates; (2) Fostering "communities," which are particularly attractive to those who are "disillusioned" with mainstream Christianity; (3) "Evangelism" is open; (4) Fraud (instant ordination for church leaders, building funds, fake investments, false miracles, etc.); (5) Other functions, which do not have to be related to the life or mission of the church, include "Christian" dating and counseling. The function of the church should be (1) Outreach--reaching out to the soul outside the church (evangelism, mission); (2) Inreach--reaching out to the soul in the church (encouragement, fellowship, and responsibility); (3) Upreach--the church reaches out to God (praise, worship, prayer); (4) Downreach--the church rooted down (Bible study) [18].

C. Pastoral Role

The pastoral role of the shepherd needs to be reaffirmed in this IoT era. The biblically appropriate pastoral role can still keep up with the times by utilizing IoT and encouraging pastors to develop their capacity to utilize IoT without having to change their role as shepherds or in shepherding.

Willimon argues that the biblical shepherd's pastoral role is: (1) The Shepherd as the priest. In this case, the shepherd becomes the leader of worship in both Sunday worship and priesthood service such as the sacrament. (2) The priest is the

shepherd. What is meant is that the shepherd leads the worship in the content and context of pastoral mentoring. (3) The Shepherd as the interpreter of scripture. The sheep were formed with the Bible as a teaching center. The Shepherd plays a role in actualizing the Bible according to contemporary conditions while remaining true to the principles of scripture. (4) The Shepherd as the preacher. Preaching the truth of the Bible is a gift, but preaching it is an art to be learned. (5) Shepherd as a counselor. In this pastoral role, the shepherd guides and directs the souls while putting the centrality of the Bible first. (6) Shepherd as a teacher. As a teacher, the shepherd plays the role of shaping people into disciples who truly become Christians. (7) Shepherd as an evangelist. In this role, the shepherd seeks change in the disciple through rebirth. (8) Shepherd as a prophet. The prophetic news is the glad tidings, through words and deeds, that God will draw all things to Jesus Christ. (9) Shepherd as a leader. As a leader, shepherds fight as bold and visionary transformers. (10) Shepherd as a figure. It is also an important pastoral role that through its pastoral practices, shepherds become moral examples for the community. (11) Shepherd is a disciplined Christian. This pastoral role demonstrates consistent shepherding in the service [17].

IV. CONCLUSION

The presence of the Internet of Things or IoT not only changes various information systems in society. Both information systems manufacture financial information systems, accounting information systems, management information systems, and information systems in church ministry. This condition requires the church to be able to place itself dynamically rather than antipathy. Because the church must be able to answer the needs of an increasingly complex society due to the presence of IoT. Concerning pastoral attitudes, the church should be able to assist the people in their journey using existing technology. Shepherds must be able to play their part, both as dreamers, prophets, preachers, teachers, and evangelists to continue to bring and remind people to be in sound teaching. Not only does it stop at teaching, but shepherds should be able to use technology as a tool that makes it easier for them to reach troubled congregations.

The Church is God's co-worker in realizing God's great plan for the salvation of mankind. As God uses the church according to the structure and technical prevailing in his day, then God also uses the present church according to the current structure and technicality. Therefore, the church should not be apathetic to technological advances, but it also does not mean that technology is the master of the church. By being in the world, the church must remain in existence without losing its purity and purity because it compromises with the world in rolling out its ministry.

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