Biblical Humanism as the Basis for the Transformation of Christian Education in the Digital Era

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Abstract. Various facts reveal that the application of acts of love for others in human life is fading in this digital era. Today, believers tend to adopt secular values of humanism that exalt humans and ignore God. This is contrary to the biblical value of humanity. Biblical Humanism asserts that the way God sees human beings, this is how humans should see the neighbors. Related to this problem, Christian education is called to be the solution. This study aimed to describe the importance of transforming Christian education based on Biblical humanism with examples of its actualization. Through this, it is hoped that Christian education will be able to restore the meaning of humanism in accordance with the teachings of the Bible for the sake of the birth of generations who have the image and likeness of God. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with a literature study approach. The findings are that in this digital era Biblical humanism is very important to be used as a foundation for the transformation of Christian education because it contains the concept of unconditional compassion for others as God has done for humans. Some examples of the implementation of transformative efforts that can be carried out are: first, strengthening the role of the church, family and community. The church needs to form itself as a family church. Second, transforming learning in educational institutions by changing Christian education learning methods and materials with a focus on implementing Biblical humanism. Third, church and family collaboration strengthen the Christian digital community in society.

Keywords: Christian education, educational transformation, biblical humanism, foundation of transformation, educational foundations

1   Introduction

The dynamics of life in the digital era bring humans to various fundamental changes, one of which is a shift in the values of life adopted by society. Human values as the basis of humanism have begun to fade in actualization in life in this era [1]. Indeed, for God's people, humanism is the fulfillment of His mandate to humans as an image and partner to manage the earth and its content. Biblical humanism is absolutely applied by the believer according to the grace of his free will. Loving God with all one's heart—soul-power-mind, and love for one's neighbor is the great commandment that man may

experience eternal life [2]. Loving God is an essential foundation of the actualization of biblical humanism. It can simply be stated that biblical humanism is actualized through acts of love for others by viewing and glorifying man as God does.

God sees man as precious (John 3:16) and is willing to give His life. This is the perfect picture of biblical humanism which is the imperative decree for every one of God's people throughout the ages. But in fact, the times encourage changes in human life, especially in the current era of digital technology. The value of biblical humanism began to fade and the development of humanism that was not in line with the Christian faith [3]. This happens to all circles of society, especially the younger generation who tend not to consider the interests, feelings, and needs of others in interacting on social media.

The essence of relations and interactions between people has been disrupted which originally had the substance of building human quality in essence according to God's will, now it has become a means of satisfying personal interests as free human beings. Evidenced by negative narratives and violations of general ethical norms that are increasingly common [4]. The growing individualism, egocentrism, narcissistic behavior and materialism, above all, exceeds the interests of humanity [5]. Hate speech, hoaxes and cyberbullying are increasing [6]. Video sharing media, such as YouTube for example, are used by the general public, politicians, and even spiritual leaders as a vehicle for insulting each other, conveying bad narratives and attacking [7]. The bad conditions of this era of openness is exacerbated by the behavior of believers who harm the humanism that God teaches with deviant behavior.

For example, there was a very shocking case occurred in July 2022, namely the murder of a police officer with the rank of brigadier with the initials J. According to official information from the police, the incident was categorized as premeditated murder and as the brain was the direct superior of the victim [8]. This case brings deep concern because the main perpetrators are Christians. The question arises among believers, how can this be done by a person who has accepted the teachings of the Lord Jesus? This fact is only a small part of the picture of the current decline in human values. The various cases that occurred set a bad example for the entire nation, especially the younger generation [9]. Therefore, serious efforts are needed to anticipate and overcome this through the world of education considering that the educational process can return believers to their essence and as a place to form the man Christ. In order for this goal to be actualized, a transformation is needed in Christian education.

The transformation of Christian education and humanism has been discussed in many studies. One of them is by Mariani Harmadi with the theme of effective learning for millennials [10]. In this study, it is explained that facing the era of globalization, the millennial generation needs to be prepared to excel through the reform of Christian education. The results of the study concluded that effective learning is a method of educating the younger generation to live according to God's truth in the midst of technological developments. Another study was made by Rufina Leong with the main topic of developing Christian education in the global era through strategic student-focused learning and teaching [11]. The results of the study provide input that in carrying out assignments, teachers must be creative in using appropriate learning models. Petrus Marija's study discusses the humanist-religious approach to shape the character of the

millennial generation. It was concluded that in the millennium era, it was significant to implement values, but humanist education was still not seen in reality [12].

On the basis of literature studies from various previous studies, the author established the theme of biblical humanism as the foundation for the transformation of Christian education. This choice was determined because there has been no discussion about it. This study is very important considering the growing assessment and appreciation that upholds human dignity thanks to its technological capabilities, so that people no longer need to care about or even reject the existence and role of God. Therefore, through this research, the author intended to examine how humanism can be understood correctly to anticipate the behavior of the younger generation who adopt secular humanism today. If this condition is not responded immediately by the world of Christian education, the digital generation will be further away from fulfilling the great commission of the Lord Jesus. The results of this research are needed by the world of Christian education as one of the inputs or ideas in transforming in order to produce a generation of young Christians who are qualified and have strong faith in Christ.

2   Methods

This study was compiled by choosing a descriptive qualitative method because the focus of the study was to explore the meaning of Biblical humanism and how it is actualized as a foundation in the transformation of Christian education [13]. The data for this study comes from a variety of relevant literature, starting from website articles, journal articles, YouTube shows and books. The texts in the Bible are the primary data source in analyzing the meaning of Biblical humanism and its application. The results of the analysis of several sources of the literature are presented descriptively. The discussion of this study begins with a description of the nature of Biblical humanism. The discussion continues with the importance of transforming Christian education in this digital era on the basis of Biblical humanism. The discussion ends with a description of how to apply Biblical humanism as a foundation in the transformation of Christian education.

3   Finding and Discussion

3.1   The Nature of Biblical Humanism

In general, humanism is a thought, view or way of life that prioritizes human values. In Christianity, the concept of humanism has existed since man was created. God created man in His image and likeness and placed him as the noblest being on earth (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 8:1-10). In fact, the concept of humanism designed by God aims or leads to His glory. After man fell into sin and in the development of the times, the essence of humanism underwent a shift or deviation so that the purity of the concept of humanism that God designed became faded. Man becomes more and more focused on himself and no longer on God. The concept of humanism is skewed towards human interests alone.

The reduction of human elements in social life, especially in the current era, is a very serious problem because human nature as the image of God has collapsed. For believers, the element of humanity or humanism in accordance with God's teachings in the Bible becomes absolute in life [14]. Regarding this, God expressly stated that in order to enter eternal life, man is required to practice humanism in a real way according to His teaching (Luke 10:25-37). This is what Biblical humanism is all about, which is a way of living compassionately to others based on love for God. This concept is constructed in reference to the absolute love of God who values man as so precious that he gracefully redeemed them. Biblical humanism is not just a thought, doctrine or view as secular humanism develops today, but a real act of compassion—loving one's neighbor like the Lord Jesus graciously loving humanity through His death.

Biblical humanism holds that man has dignity and value due to the fact that man was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27). Human values are found in the Bible, in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus (John 1:14), His compassion for people (Matt. 9:36), His command to love one's neighbor as oneself (Mark 12:31), and especially the parable of the good of the Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). In Biblical humanism all advances and developments in science, technology and individual freedom must be used to serve humanity which leads to the glory of God. Biblical humanism emphasizes the necessity of applying Christian principles to every area of life, private and public.

In biblical humanism, everything originates from and in Christ, not in man. All wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ (Col. 2:3) and fully aware that humans cannot live without God (John 17:3; Matt. 4:4; Prov. 3:5-6; John 6:63). Herein lies the difference between biblical and secular humanism. Secular humanists emphasize human potential, strength and dignity so that man ignores God's role in life [15]. Especially in this digital era, humans glorify their thinking ability because they have succeeded in bringing technological progress so rapidly.

Secular humanism rejects the idea of God's spoken truth. Unlike him, Biblical humanism holds God's word as the only truth and believes that man reaches his true potential only when he is united in a right relationship with Christ. Human free will in Biblical humanism has a demand to be harmonized with God's will. In secular humanism, human free will is used as freely as possible because freedom is considered to be in accordance with their nature.

Biblical humanism insists that every human endeavor and achievement must be God-centered. All things should be done for the glory of God and not for self-interest or pride (1 Cor.10:31). Therefore, biblical humanism demands the church to actively lead the congregation to eternal salvation by applying biblical humanism. Actualization of biblical humanism is looking at others as God sees man, being merciful and performing unconditional acts of love, even willing to sacrifice to realize that love. The demand is also placed on all believers to be educators of others and dare to be His witnesses in expressing biblical humanism everywhere.

3.2   The Importance of Transforming Christian Education in the Digital Age

The transformation of Christian education needs to be pursued seriously because in the digital era it has had an impact on humanist thinking that glorifies human interests

above all else. Humanism often leads people to depend on themselves and highly individualistic. They do not want any control from outside themselves, not even by God [16]. Various facts show changes in life patterns and behaviors that ignore others for self-interest and ignore God. Overcoming this, transformation becomes urgent because the essence of Christian education is to bring people to a right relationship with God. Christian education is not only limited to school but is a common duty of all Christians as the Lord Jesus mandated in His great commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

There are several basic reasons for the importance of transforming Christian education in this digital era, including: first, the occurrence of moral degradation that requires immediate treatment [17]. Christian education is responsible for transmitting the values so as to enable the realization of noble morals according to the teachings of the Christian faith. Second, there are global needs and challenges that need to be fulfilled immediately for intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually superior human resources. Third, moral degradation leads to the need to humanize others so that the values taught by God can be implemented correctly.

The explanation above is a strong reason for the transformation of Christian education to be carried out. Christian education is absolutely necessary to participate in providing education, both in the context of schools, families, churches, and wide communities [18]. In this era development that has led to wickedness, the foundation of biblical humanism is needed as a "way of light" so that God's people, especially the younger generation, will experience change. Biblical humanism needs to be developed in common life in order to reduce the deviant behavior of believers. It is also a form of concern for the nation and state [19]. Christian education is a strategic tool in responding to high-value human needs as a means of achieving progress in human life

3.3   Transforming Christian Education Based on Biblical Humanism

This new civilization in the digital era has brought the world community to experience drastic changes in the order of life. Change is the only constant in the digital world as the impact of technology evolves exponentially. Digitalization in various areas of life makes human life more practical, easy, comfortable and fun to live. This condition tends to form a digital mindset based on logic. This mindset promotes innovation, out of the box ideas, creativity, and focus on problem solving. According to Benny Susetyo, the humanitarian element will be reduced in technological mechanisms. With the reduction of humanist values, it results in the strengthening of exclusivity in social life [20]. The development of a strong digital mindset actually has an impact on the fading side of humanity.

Faced with such serious repercussions, the transformation of Christian education based on biblical humanism becomes an absolute. When associated with national education, the transformation of Christian education based on biblical humanism does not conflict with the human values of Pancasila which is the basis of national education, because biblical humanism is the root of human values found in Pancasila. This is in accordance with the essence of Christian education, namely an active effort to shape students into human beings who are in the image and likeness of God, the Creator.

The transformation effort based on Biblical humanism is actually the fulfillment of God's decree. Christian education must play a significant role in influencing the world with faith values that are based on the truth of Lord's word according to the concept of being the light and salt of the earth. Currently Christian education tends to be only limited to emphasizing morals and religious values, approaches through humanist education have not been seen in reality [12]. Therefore, through the foundation of biblical humanism, Christian education can lead people to learn to love others on the basis of love for God. Christian education based on biblical humanism will form spiritually intelligent people who place God as the source of life and are able to translate the truth of God's word into loving others.

This is different from education so far because what is done is only limited to the transfer of knowledge involving the scientific role of teachers. In such a learning process, the teacher does not bring students to understanding, but only transfers a number of formulas or postulates to be memorized [21]. Therefore, it can be said that the transformation of Christian education based on biblical humanism is an urgent need in this digital age.

3.4   Actualization of Transformation Based on Biblical Humanism

Transformation in Christian education based on biblical humanism must be comprehensive, emphasizing love for others based on love for God. There are three transformative efforts that can be applied in Christian education in promoting biblical humanism. First, strengthening the role of church, family and community in implementing and developing Christian education with the foundation of biblical humanism. Second, the transformation of learning in schools by changing Christian education learning methods and materials that focus on biblical humanism. Third, strengthening the Christian digital community in society.

Following are some examples of detailed activities that can be applied in efforts to transform Christian education. First, related to efforts to transform the role of the church, family and community can be done by efforts to form a "family church" that has a deep and personal relationship with each congregation member [22]. Through this, the church transforms actively and tangibly involved in the life of the congregation and overcomes the problems of the congregation's life. This is a manifestation of the compassion that the church expresses to the congregation. So, the church thus sets a real example. Church support for Christian families in implementing Christian education based on biblical humanism can be in the form of compiling guidebooks for families and providing continuous assistance or counseling.

Second, related to efforts to transform learning in schools. It is necessary to adjust the learning material to focus on the implementation of Biblical humanism. Students are taught how to see themselves as the image of God, so that they can become a generation that fears God [23]. This is important because the development of reason combined with faith will produce man in essence [24]. As for the chosen learning method that can stimulate the building of love for others, such as directly involving students in social projects with project-based learning or inviting them to conduct research on nearby environmental problems. This can be done with research-based learning

methods. Team building and learning together in the open air can be attractive options for practicing of compassion for others.

Third, regarding transformative efforts to strengthen Christian digital communities in society. In this case, church and family can be the driving force of the surrounding environment [25] and actively participate in the formation of digital communities. Church and family collaboration can shape and guide youth digital communities, for example, creating online content that promotes Biblical human values and implements them directly. This digital community can provide an example in ethics and promote compassion for others in establishing social interactions in cyberspace. This digital community is expected to provide a different color in cyberspace, and can even shift the dominant secular values with biblical humanism, namely love for neighbor as the Bible taught.

The transformation of Christian education implemented in all contexts – whether in churches, families, educational institutions or communities – will be a driving force for biblical human values to influence the pattern of life in society in this digital era. Actualization needs to be carried out continuously in accordance with the nature of education that cannot leave the learning of human values [26]. Therefore, believers, especially the digital generation, will be able to fulfill the function of "salt and light" in the midst of the human condition which on the one hand increasingly glorifying self and on the other hand ignoring others. As part of national education, Christian education can contribute to overcoming the nation's problems and at the same time can produce superior quality generations who are able to reflect the God's glory in public life.

4   Conclusion

The developments of technology in this digital era encourage humans to adopt behaviors and lifestyles that ignore others. The noble values of humanity were replaced by individualistic and materialistic values. It is the responsibility of Christian education to be able to restore biblical humanism or human values in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. Biblical humanism is most appropriate to be used as a foundation for the transformation of Christian education in this era because it contains the concept of unconditional compassion for others as God has mercy on man. Through this, Christian education will succeed in fulfilling its essence as a means of giving birth to a digital generation that understands the meaning of humanity and makes God the only purpose of life. This is very important because today the younger generation tends to increasingly glorify their own interests and dignity above God. There are several examples of the application of transformative efforts, namely: first, strengthening the role of the church, family and community. The church needs to establish itself as a family church. Second, the transformation of learning in schools by changing Christian education learning methods and materials that focus on biblical humanism. Students are given stimulation and guidance on how to view themselves as the image of God. Third, church and family collaborations strengthen the Christian digital community in society.

Research Contribution: As input for the church in the transformation of Christian education related to man in his humanity according to the Bible. The results of this

study can also be used as a reference to formulate a digital-based faith community that functions to build faith and the desire to be like Christ for church members, especially the younger generation.

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