



Theological Pretext for Slavic War and Third Reich: A Literature Study for Church's Reflection

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Abstract

The ambition of one man, namely Adolf Hitler, to initiating the massacre of the whole population of Jewish in Europe needed a pretext. In the age where the liberal thinkers and rationalist theology were wanning there had not been, seemingly, another way to mobilize the whole army of the disappointed German nationalist who lost their pride in WWI, rather than the religious narrative of the reestablishment of the Kingdom of God through the Aryan. Whether the pretext justified the massacre theologically, or the ambition served the theology coherently in praxis, is still debatable in nature. This writing will examine the formulation of theology of German church supporting the Hitler's Third Reich, and other religio-political driven narrative in Europe, especially in Slavic nations. Finally, throughout multi political changes which happened in Indonesia in the last 300 years, what can churches do to avoid such a despicable move in relation to the government.

Keyword: systematic theology, holocaust, Hitler, German, theology, church history, Russia, Ukraine.

Introduction

One might be incomprehensibly disgusted with the killing of million lives by perverted ideology, yet it might not be worse than a religious theology, so called Christian, perpetrated, and legitimized the actual massacre. Yet Christianity, historically, has taught that blood and power are inseparable ties when the two are not in check. Owen Chadwick in grievances complaint of how the religion of quiet and peace failed to stop the angst and power lust which resulted of 137 people died in basilica, the very place where the Pope conducted election for regional bishops in AD 366. Apparently, the mobs from two prospects were fighting right in the sanctuary.¹ That was the case with Hitler's Third Reich, the German Church had been viewed as the major contributor to legalize the ideology of which Hitler, initially, had poured into his writing of *Blut un Boden* (Blood and Soil) where domination, traits and superiority are transmitted by racial generations. However, Hitler believed, having learnt the Darwin's postulation of the survival of the fittest, that such dominations must be achieved by being the sole ultimate winner of the

¹ Owen Chadwick, *A History of Christianity*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).34-35.

competition.² Hitler was so infatuated with this synthesis that he was willing to kill more millions of Jews in Europe. One might ask on how Hitler could assembly such an enormous support in very short period of time, and how could he enable people to take away people's lives in such exponential rate. This writing argues that besides his charismatic persona and the back-to-back endeavor to avenge the German's devastating defeat in previous war, the support from German Church and the formulated dogma therein was instrumental in driving Third Reich into national movement.

Method

The writing will utilize literatures study on how such embedded churches theology encouraged war, especially in Third Reich, and afterward examine throughout the history how church and its theology have been utilized to expand certain political agenda. This writing will go into three general examinations on such topic. Firstly, the writing will explore the most recent war in Slavic countries between Ukraine and Russia where church's position in both nations also have part on serving the cause of wars. Some embedded theologies will be obtained from the statement from the church. Secondly, in retrospect, the literature study will examine the how Hitler's massive massacre attempt was gaining foothold nationally by Church's dogmatic position. Finally, having examined and explored the two events in history, the writing will explore the contemporary Indonesian theological Churches' posture toward war and political decisions of Indonesian government.

Findings and Discussion

Church's Theological Motivation behind Russia-Ukraine War

Back in 2014 when Putin annexed Crimea, European nations were caught off guard by such sudden movement, thus the responses to the military invasion were initially futile and disoriented. Yet, examining thoroughly to the relationship between two countries, the enmities between two had also been triggered by ecclesiastic-political motivation in the making. Having briefly understood the history of church's theology and its relationship with government, we might shed light on how such step is feasible to mobilize the masses in the eyes of the perpetrators.

Vladimir Putin back in 2017, three years after the annexation, confidently remarked that the combination between historical and spiritual origin made the Russians and Ukrainians as inseparable between two.³ That was the case for Putin, that history and spirituality are persisted pretext he used to invade Ukraine five years later. The spiritual pretext inevitably is a question begging an answer as how Russian Orthodox Church as the biggest official church in the country, could influence the public opinion and assisted the initiation of war.

There is a Russian Orthodox Church settles in Kiev which is commonly called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarch (UOC (MP)) which is considered soft tool for Russian government in Ukraine.⁴ However, UOC (MP) is the largest Orthodox

² William F Jr. Meinecke and Alexandra Zapruder, *Nazi Ideologies and Holocaust* (Virginia, 2007).

³ Taras Kuzio, "Euromaidan Revolution, Crimea and Russia-Ukraine War: Why It Is Time for a Review of Ukrainian-Russian Studies," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 59, no. 3-4 (2018): 529-553, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2019.1571428>.

⁴ Victoria Hudson, "The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate as a Potential 'Tool' of Russian Soft Power in the Wake of Ukraine's 2013 Euromaidan," *Europe - Asia Studies* 70, no. 9 (2018): 1355-1380, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2018.1536780>.

Church in the world, even bigger than Russia Orthodox Church (ROC) itself.⁵ When the tension escalated in Maidan square in 2013, where the protest against the Russia backed government, resulting with the sacking of President Victor Yanukovich, the UOC (MP) was also divided between priests who want to have independent from ROC and those who hated the relation of UOC (MP) with western, in this case was Europa Union, thus supporting ROC. The tension inside UOC (MP) and the rose of progressive liberal movement under the administration of new popular president Petro Poroshenko, made Moscow to do whatever initiatives necessary to bog down the progresses, including using UOC (MP) to instigate opposition. Just like Roman Empire had *Pax Romana*, as highest upheld value as an ideal to unite the various tribes and factions under the sovereignty of the peace of Rome, so does Russia employ the term *Russkii Mir* or Russia World. Hence, the endeavor of Romans hundred years ago would involve, mostly, sending five legions of *legionnaire* to destroy and abdicate those who oppose the ideals. Seemingly the trend of violence is repeated in the modern world.

Russia World is intentionally defined in an ambiguous term, a world where various ethnics, languages, and cultures, especially those who speak Russian and live outside Russia Federation, who share the unbreakable ties beyond borders and nations.⁶ This very global ideal was adopted by theological statement from UOC (MP) to unite these people under spiritual notion of *Holy Rus'* a term of collective people of trans ethnics, language and culture of common Russian Orthodox faith, a large church which was planted by the great saints of the Russia land centuries ago.⁷ What explicit was the statement from the UOC (MP) for the diocese outside Russia:

Many of our clergy and faithful come from various non-Russian backgrounds and have whole-heartedly embraced the sacred customs and traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church. Let us not fall into the temptation of segregating our Diocese into cultural groups, because as sons and daughters of the Russian Orthodox Church, we are all citizens of Holy Russia. When we speak of Holy Russia, we are not talking about the Russian Federation or any civil society on earth; rather, it is a way of life that has been passed down to us through the centuries by such great saints of the Russian Land as the Holy Great Prince Vladimir and Great Princess Olga, Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, Job of Pochaev, Seraphim of Sarov, and more recently, the countless New Martyrs and Confessors of the 20th century. These saints are our ancestors, and we must look to them for instruction on how to bravely confess the Faith, even when facing persecution. There is no achievement in simply calling oneself "Russian:" in order to be a genuine Russian, one must first become Orthodox and live a life in the Church, as did our forebears, the founders of Holy Russia!⁸

This official statement could not be timely announced any better by 2013, exactly a year before the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the year where, the volatile politic climate which climaxed in deadly Maidan square protest. The main idea was to deny the

⁵ Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer, *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis, 2017.

⁶ Hudson, "The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate as a Potential 'Tool' of Russian Soft Power in the Wake of Ukraine's 2013 Euromaidan."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia - Official Website," accessed March 10, 2022, https://www.synod.com/synod/eng2013/20130619_enmhappeal1025.html.

faith and spiritual identity of individual if he or she was not in fervent adherence to the Russian Orthodox Church which entails of the true right of becoming a Russian. The Holy Russia supersedes the ethnicity and borders, yet the church emphasized the history of the saints of Russian Land, *Vladimir*⁹, who preached the gospel to the native Slavic centuries ago. Thus, inevitably-although the statement speaks otherwise- it is the adherence to the spiritual and contemporary geographical mother land, namely, Russia Federation, to which the church forbade diocese to make cultural group under the church, or in the other way of saying, other identity outside the theological statement is deemed unnecessary and false. Consequently, the Ukrainian found this theological statement to be problematic and thus, the strife inside UOC (MP) in Kiev was intensified. The UOC (MP) statement reiterated the ethnic identity which entails geographical land mass territory or *Russie*- which is now known in the contemporary as the nations of Russia and Ukraine as prerequisite for theological membership as a spiritual unifying factor. As much as odd this may seem, the Judaism in some extent formulating their theology as byproduct of the divine revelation, culture and ethnic identity. The words like *gentile, Israel, Kingdom of Priest* as tied to the specific tribes of Levi are, inevitably, portray ethnic identity as a prime bearer of revelation stood out from other ethnic, which ultimately determines the course of the theological development. The Russian Orthodox church seems to purport their approach in similar fashion.

The Russian Orthodox church, theologically speaking, does not emphasize their theology on biblical salvation account, but mostly from history and culture. In plain language it is a Catholic church without a pope.¹⁰ The Orthodox church' which now consisted of 15 distinct churches, mostly in eastern Europe, uphold the icon of God in man, which means, in the perspective of hamartiology, the sin of man does not separate the relationship between man and God, but man have reduced the divine likeness of God in mankind. Therefore, Jesus Christ is seen as the restorer of the icon of God in man.¹¹ The Eastern Orthodox Fathers, generally, reading Book of Genesis of Septuagint. When reading the Greek translation of 1:26, the words in Greek for "image" and "likeness" invited the Greek listener to ask inevitable question, which is "whose image Adam and Eve were created?"¹² Because for Greek the phrase: κατ' εικόνα with, *kata* is strong preposition which demands explanation, especially from *eikona* which is, according to NT is the image of Christ.¹³ Moreover, the word ομοίωσιν which is likeness, entails the process nuance, which mean not a state but a relationship, especially because the suffix -σιν, requires such interpretation.¹⁴ Based on these two words, therefore, the Fathers/Patriarch envisaged the theology of Icon, which have light consequences of sin, namely, not separated but just the reduction of divine likeness. However, without promoting certain notion to blame certain dogmatic statement, objectively, one must derive his theology from the exegesis of the divine text and Book of Genesis was written

⁹ It might be surprising for non-Russian readers as we might have pre-conceived notion of Russia as a godless nation, but in fact it is very religious nation, despite any political decisions, signified by the common usage of names *Vladimir* as attribute to the founder of the nation-hence the deeds in war and other international policies. As in USA there are still many people whose names are *Christian* yet live as if God does not exist, or Brazilians with the name of *Jesus* but involved in *favela* gang.

¹⁰ Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Andrew. I. Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 2013).p.82

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

by Moses in Hebrew. Therefore, it would be such conjecture to formulate certain theology through kind of Hermeneutic which put the original text in isolation and force the LXX or *Vulgate* as the prime source of hermeneutic.

Both words צֶלֶם “image” and דְּמוּת “likeness” in Hebrew mean: “...something that is similar of men with the creator, but not identical to the thing it represents of”.¹⁵ It means man and God might have similarity, but in some characters and category, but they are completely different creature. God is creator and man is creation. It entails different moral and power between two. Wayne Grudem continued that like Seth and Adam (Genesis 5), Seth was not Adam, but Seth was like Adam, a son is like his father. And when the image of God falls, the image is still on human but distorted, thus the intelligence is corrupted with falsehood and misunderstanding, the speech is not glorifying God, and the relationship is tainted with selfishness and insecurity.¹⁶ No matter how you call it, such relationship is problematic and bring damage to the image of God and its relationship with each other’s.

Again, the problem with icon in the perspective of hamartiology is that the Scripture clearly stated that men was separated from God because of sin (Isa 59:1-2; Rom 3:23; II Thess 1:9; Ephs 2:12) and the way God atoned the sin through the Son Jesus Christ was for propitiation (I John 2:2; Rom 3:24), and his salvation makes believer to be born again (John 3:3,5), new creation (II Cor 5:16-17), to be sons of God (Rom 8:14) and inherit eternal life (John 3:16;14:6). The restoring image of God might be argued in thorough theological discussion. However, if the doctrine negates the spiritual separation from God, which make the notion of “the reduced image/icon of God in man” is true, then the restoring process of icon of God would be questionable under biblical scrutiny. Because one cannot make one premise from biblical doctrine and hope to build another premise from extraneous account out of the Scripture, thus produce incoherent biblical theology. If there was no separation between God and man, how it is that OT emphasized the distinct set of regulation of sacrifice in Tabernacle? There had no need for the torn veil in Holy of Holies when Jesus gave up His life (Matt 27:51; Luke 23:45; Mark 15:38).

The icon or images, occasionally, are not a problem for the Catholics and the Protestant in the west, their main concern was what do you do with the icon.¹⁷ The Icon theology also brings consequences of how church sees the role of state. While the western churches, mainly opposed the union between church and state, the Orthodox, conversely, sees the state as an institution to restore the icon of God in expansive and exponential manners. There was why, when Constantine was converted and established his ruling on the unity between church and state, the Orthodox was in tumultuous joy because they saw the emperors as the conduit between God and earth, and the empire as a manifestation of heaven on earth.¹⁸ This tendency is understandable, because after the great schism in 1054, the Western church, the Latin speaking people, with its pope was yielding political power and at the other side, the Eastern Church of Greek speaking people, established the ecclesiastical leadership of the emperor in Byzantine. The emperor, however, often involved in theological debate, which then forced the emperor to take side and demolish

¹⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academics, 2000).pp.442-443

¹⁶ Ibid.p.444

¹⁷ Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day* (Peabody: Prince Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*.

the opposite mobs.¹⁹ The theological debate of the unity of the flesh and divinity of Jesus Christ, or Christological debate in 400 AD was known as the main reason of the split. Other debates like the use of the images, the pneumatology and (600 years later) the tension with Roman Catholic Church of adding the word *Filioque* in the creed did perpetuate the conflict especially the east.²⁰ The situation prior to the schism was exacerbated when Arab invasion isolated the relationship between West and East, thus the Orthodox Church moved to north east where the Slavic people occupied the region, and this was the pinnacle achievement of Orthodox Church who successfully penetrated the Russian territories with the gospel by indigenous convert, The Great Vladimir.²¹ The eastern, especially in Russia, having survived the invasion from Islam, Mongol and other invaders, viewed the fall of Byzantine as punishment from the Lord, and then declared itself as the “Third Rome” with patriarch leadership.²² Therefore, the church’s theology, in this case of ecclesiology, is heavily formulated by long history of geopolitics and warfare which also supporting the leadership of emperor of the state as the head of the church to which their Western counterpart despised. The East’s scorn toward the fall of Constantinople, might also be rooted from the corruption and fighting between nobles and dukes in Christendom which left the Byzantium King alone defending the wall from the Seljuk.

In the 20th century the raised of Marxism damaging the church, the patriarch (leader) and the followers were heavily persecuted, and the meetings were forbidden. In this trial time there was Tikthon, the current patriarch and his successors, who paid allegiance to Uni Soviet until its dissolve. Thus, for the Orthodox churches outside Russia, like Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev in Ukraine, they found the Russian church and the Tikthon successors as a cowardice, slave to the Soviet Union and therefore, they claimed to be the true heir of Orthodox church in eastern Europe.²³ Having understood the theological understanding of the church, state and its history, it is understandable that the Russian Orthodox views of the saints and the state is geographically and ethnically exclusive to Saint Vladimir and the Holy Russia land, which is, arguably, now will view Russia Federation under Vladimir Putin administration as the closest manifestation of the agent of the restoration of the icon of God in man. This, with the theological statement from UOC (MP) is a perfect pretext to challenge the independent of Ukraine from *Russkii Mir*.

This does not mean that the entirety of Eastern Orthodox Church theology, especially the Russians Church promotes the current Russian’s military move to Ukraine. It was the dogmatic statement from UOC (MP), in that particular time, which supported Russia Federation invasion of Crimea in order to hold the Russian Orthodox’s flocks as one Holy Russia, and continually perpetuate the spiritual pretext to move forward invading Kiev now. This is a Political Theology at its best serves the war.

¹⁹ González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day*.

²⁰ Ibid. González argued that the theological debate was worst in east because the varieties problems within the ethnicity in the eastern Europe, the Levant and the Crescent Moon regions. These Christian people were not only concerned about theological differences, but also by long unresolved blood spilling history from the former pagan Roman Empire who treated them with typical treatment of suzerainty relationship with the vassal states, and the Christian West had not done anything to abolish the memory. In the west the theological debate was put aside by geopolitic problems like countering the Barbarian invasion from Danube river and surrounding Germania.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Williston Walker et al., *A History of The Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985).

Third Reich from Theological Perspective

Similar posture with Russian Orthodox who called themselves as the “Third Rome”, Hitler proposed the Nazi as Third Reich, as the third continuation after the First Reich: Holy Roman Empire of German (962-1806), Second Reich: Hohenzollern empire (1871-1918). This movement also as a bitter counter response of the failure of Weimar Republic’s leadership post disgrace defeat in World War I.²⁴ The Reich was propagated by, not only, theological and historical discourse, but also by nationalism and nostalgia of the past Germanic empire, where the land of German people, and peasant life with abundant harvest and healthy offspring.²⁵ Yet the reality as defeated people, as once a herald of the dream of prosperous nation, seemingly was stung so hard at the heart of many German people which motivated them to fight to resurrect their utopia once and for all. This pain was a momentum Hitler caught and subsequently cooked with theological dogmatic from German Christian with finesse, thus, formed a perfect sack of salt poured into a fresh wound of thousands of Germans.

Karl Barth²⁶ described the German Protestant, otherwise known as *German Christian*, during the insurgent of Nazi as the shameful generation of the Christian in Germany, as he saw strong support theologically to the revolution in 1933.²⁷ Barth challenged the liberal and conservative alike who compromised their theology for the support of Nazi. The Nazi supporting German Christian in general was in opposition with *Confession Church* (collective churches movement in Germany which opposed Nazi), and the Nazi supporter’s goal is to unite the Christianity with National Socialism in a racially pure “people’s church.” This distinct theology would impose the antisemitism, anticommunism, and ultranationalist as the prerequisites of purging people to be the pure of church people.²⁸ This theology however was problematic. JinHyok Kim, argued that the German Christian’s error in their theology could be seen, in Karl Barth’s objection of the ‘new revelation’.²⁹ Their theology would include to purify the gospel from any “oriental” influence, this is a precursor to antisemitism, thus this promulgated theology will allow them to replace OT with a new German nation’s history and its contemporary politic. New revelation is then required in such form as German people’s special history, its authoritarian form of state and, of course the *Führer*.³⁰ Hitler imagined himself as

²⁴ Meinecke and Zapruder, *Nazi Ideologies and Holocaust*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The writer is fully aware of the general categorizing of Karl Barth as a Neo-orthodox or dialectical theologian or fideism which derived much of his theology from the *Kierkegaard’s* existential revelation and, at some extent, Hegel. Although Barth strongly opposed natural revelation and objective truth for the recipient of the truth, he was, historically, the individual of only few theologians who opposed the German Christian, and actively wrote toward its theology formulation and against the hatred toward Jew. Therefore, his name is put here to help discover the antithesis of theological formulation of German Christian during Third Reich.

²⁷ Arne Rasmusson, recorded the Karl Barth’s despise toward his Christians contemporary as *als die letzte, vollendetste und schlimmste Ausgeburt des neuprotestantischen Wesen* or “the best of the worst offspring neo-Protestant” (“Historiography and Theology. Theology in the Weimar Republic and the Beginning of the Third Reich,” *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 20, no. 1 (2007): 155–180)

²⁸ Matthew D. Hockenos, *Church Divided : German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004).

²⁹ JinHyok Kim, “Prolegomena to Any Evangelical Political Theology?: A Review Article,” *Torch Trinity Journal* 21, no. 2 (2019): 341–352.

³⁰ Ibid.

leader- *Führer* – or savior.³¹ How can such conjecture be legitimized by German Churches at large? To formulate such theology, one need a theological formulation and a prominent theologian who can make coherent assertion that “new revelation” is necessary. Subsequently, it was Gerhard Kittel, a theologian who supported the preservation of German *Volk* (people) as the true holy and divine institution, therefore it must be protected and nurture with whatever means necessary, regardless of other countries. This included Jew, because he said there was no evidence of Jewish people supporting the unity and welfare of human being in history.³² According to Siegfried Leffler, relating with first commandment, “thou shall not kill”, people must abide by that, but because of the protection of the Volk, it is the highest priority supersedes Matthew 5:21-26 and Ten Commandment, as Christ would like them to do.³³

That was the case when in 1939, scholars associated with pro-Nazi Thüringan German Christian movement started the research institute of removing the legacy of Judaism from Christianity. The aim of the institute was to conform the Christianity with the militarized National Socialism and antisemitism, in doing so the institute was hopeful of producing resources which will be adopted in worship and ritual of the churches. Located in Eisenach, the institute drew prominent theologians like Wolf-Meyer Erlach, Siegfried Leffler and Walter Grundmann who offered their expertise and guidance in the six years of existence of institute.³⁴ Their publicized *magnum opus* was *Die Botschaft Gottes* (The Message of God-BG). The BG was aimed to serve the soul of German people in the middle of world war, and a radical departure from NT original text. It consisted of four sections to which the first section contains various gospel accounts, while the next two sections contain Pauline letters and Act of Apostles and finished with the version of Gospel of John. The BG translation removed any Jewish related contend like genealogy in Matthew, while Jesus’ criticism toward Pharisees was emphasized and sharpened with clever editing.³⁵

The standout editing of the gospel was in Sermon of the Mount where it is clearly, in original text, contains high demand of ethics and, at some degree, pacifism. The inclusion of Sermon of the Mount by BG editor shows that the editor or theologians involved were not in difficulty on reconcile the ethical demands of Sermon of the Mount with the brutality of the Nazi for the racial policy.³⁶ The *Führer*’s writing in *Mein Kampf* (my struggle), *Blut un Boden* or his speech in Nuremberg in 1923, all shown Hitler’s hostility toward Jew. He kept on repeating how Jew, a race-Hitler condensed Jew as race-without a land, because of Roman’s destruction of Jerusalem force them to infiltrate to many nations in the world and slowly through their fast breeding will overtake the nations, thus, the purity of Aryan, as the legitimate race of the highest order will be polluted and, eventually will be replaced.³⁷ Therefore, when German Christian realized (forced by *Führer*) that the purging of nation from Jew was prerequisite for the establishment of German Land, the institutes adopted the notion cleansing Jew as presupposition before formulating the theology. The problem is, before one formulating such theology, one must

³¹ Meinecke and Zapruder, *Nazi Ideologies and Holocaust*.

³² Ryan Buesnel, “The Sermon on the Mount and Christian Ethics in the Nazi Bible,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* (2021): 1–14.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Meinecke and Zapruder, *Nazi Ideologies and Holocaust*.12

also have “revelation” as a source or holy text as a material for theology. This was where the theologians of the institute need a new revelation theology.

Momentously, there was Emil Brunner with his “New Revelation” and *Anknüpfungspunkt* (point of contact) which suggest human being need to have ability to understand words, thus God can speak words to them on that event of contact.³⁸ Brunner basically said that cognitive sensory ability of human is a prerequisite for the reception of Revelation in the event when Words are revealed. Event itself is not a revelation but, a revelation is, so to speak, an event when the embedded cognitive, sensory, and skills of human being as subject of the event encounter the revelation on the event.³⁹ However, Brunner’s theology of revelation does not stop or frozen in time, because he saw the Scripture as the account testimony of Jesus Christ, and Scripture does not need to be believed, because a person met Christ through the account (bible), thus he believes.⁴⁰

Brunner, consequently, although at one aspect acknowledge the authority of the Scripture, he put asides the verbatim, word- to word accuracy of the Bible, because he emphasized on meeting Christ, and put the Scripture as means to an end, and nullify the written revelation in the process. Other reason of this was when he said, “*Jesus Christ still speaks today, through wisdom and written words... bible does not possess axiomatic authority as revelation in or itself.*”⁴¹ Brunner, sufficiently, speaking that the revelation is personal and ongoing, thus rejecting, or might be disenfranchising axiomatic authority, which consequently denying objective, verbatim words of words of the Bible, which is known as the doctrine of infallibility and inerrancy among the evangelical churches, which supports the axiomatic authority of the bible by itself (Rev 22:19; Deut 4:2,12:32; II Tim 3:16-17) . This theology of revelation opens the ways for other revelation or modification of existing revelation, thus will be justified by Brunner’s theology of revelation.

JinHyok Kim argued that Karl Barth in *Bremen Declaration* encompassed the writing opposing the revelation theology or natural theology of Brunner as a whole. Jesus Christ is a person (Christocentric) bridging the relation between Christian and Jews and does not bring enmities between twos.⁴² Revelation, thus being brought back to the revelation in OT and NT which is the revelation of Jesus Christ himself, and not others revelation and negating the Bible.

Reflection for Indonesian Church

Indonesian Churches has not been involved with supporting or defaming war inside the country, because there has been no all-out war between Indonesia and other nations in the last 75 years. Yet the Council of Indonesian church (PGI) for example, had been criticized for showing objection statement in Indonesian Corruption Commission (KPK) for staff reforming.⁴³ Former chairman of Evangelical Council Church (PGLII) and prominent charismatic church leader also publicly gave support to one of candidate in Presidential election in 2014, and had been criticized heavily for mingling politics and

³⁸ Taede A. Smedes, “Emil Brunner Revisited: On the Cognitive Science of Religion, the Imago Dei, and Revelation,” *Zygon* 49, no. 1 (2014): 190–207.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 200.

⁴⁰ Cynthia Bennett Brown, “The Personal Imperative of Revelation: Emil Brunner, Dogmatics and Theological Existence,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65, no. 4 (2012): 421–434.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Kim, “Prolegomena to Any Evangelical Political Theology?: A Review Article.” p.345.

⁴³ “Urusin KPK, PGI Dihujani Kritik Netizen, Ada Apa? - INNEWS.CO.ID,” accessed March 14, 2022, <https://innews.co.id/urusin-kpk-pgi-dihujani-kritik-netizen-benarkah-ada-apa/>.

religion.⁴⁴ What will churches do if Indonesia will involve directly in some sort of war in the future? Should churches form political theology on case basis? Or the phrase political theology should not exist at all because of total separation of churches and states? Having learned of two examples in history there are three suggestions hopefully can be a relevant theological reflection.

Firstly, Churches must go back to the sound doctrine, where biblical theology is derived. **Walter Kaiser**, in formulating theology suggested, exegesis, history, deductive, and hermeneutic which let the text tells the story on its own historical context and avoid any sophisticated grid and presupposed notion into the text.⁴⁵ The writer strongly believe that the adherence to the high view of the scripture is necessary when churches relating to the states. NT clearly encourages believer to be servient toward government (Rom 13:21; 1 Peter 2:13). Yet, Paul and Peter did suffer from the atrocities of the government at the time, the command to submit before the government entails suffering, when necessary, especially in keeping the faith and preach the gospel. Secondly, separation between churches and states is an absolute. The Scripture asserts that the kingdom of God is different with kingdom of this world (John 18:36; Phil 3:20). The believer's life is momentary in the world and are looking forward to heavenly realm with new form (I Cor 15:52; Heb 11:10). Churches are called to preach the gospel to the end of the world, and bring hope to the fallen world, not to master upon it. Finally, in the time of war or persecutions, Churches must not promote violence and resist evil, and when necessary, embrace sufferings like Christ.⁴⁶ **Andrew Walls**, argued that throughout the history, suffering and persecutions of Christians made the churches grow rapidly and the lack of suffering of Christ, where money and power tainted the churches, it is where the church goes to its downfall.⁴⁷ In the time of national election in Indonesia in two years' time, what should Indonesian Churches do to ensure the stability? I believe Church must stand firm to the truth which entails obeying the government and do not involve in politics of promoting certain nominees, but to stand neutral and when necessary, embrace the cross.

Implication

The situation in Ukraine, if escalates, will inevitably yields proxy war between Europe, USA and Russia. Indonesia as the prospect of the most powerful maritime country in Southeast Asia will inevitably face a tension as a repercussion of hostility between China and Taiwan, along with North Korea and Japan, respectively. Although churches might not have leverage as strong the majority religions in Indonesia, but they are still able to voice the truth and offer hope of peace by separating churches from

⁴⁴ "300 Pendeta Dukung Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa | Halaman 2," accessed March 14, 2022, https://www.viva.co.id/arsip/513548-300-pendeta-dukung-prabowo-subianto-hatta-rajasa?page=2&utm_medium=page-2.

⁴⁵ Walter Jr Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academics, 1978).

⁴⁶ Persecution has been a mark for either growth or fall of Christian Church. The latter involved money and power which influence church's stance in many problems. For further discussion about historical literature study of persecution as growth catalyst throughout ages and places read (Daniel Trihandarkha, *The Universal Downfall Pattern of Christianity in Indonesia: Hope out of Persecution as Growth Catalyst*, Torch Trinity Journal 21, no. 2 (2018). 300–314).

⁴⁷ Andrew Walls, "The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith.," in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 7.

politics and power, thus theology formulation shall solely be biblical, and building the saints and the nations.

Recommendation for Further Study

The more thorough hermeneutic through complete exegesis of text of certain theology of church and the examination of its church history is strongly recommended. Recent data of persecution rate of Indonesian churches and well documented history of churches involvement in Indonesian politics post 1945 and prior will help to build predictive gesture for Indonesian churches toward politic and war in the next 50 years.

Conclusion

The churches and its theology will inevitably influence policy of government, whether in supportive or opposite gesture. Church as a conduit of good news and Kingdom of God should be very careful in formulating theology and response to nation's crisis. Respond must come with prayer, fellowship, and non-reactive action in biblical understanding. When churches fail to be an example of hope and self-controlled patron in time of conflicts and wars, then the nations will collapse in either bitter defeat or pyrrhic victory.

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