



Love in Action: Pastoral Theology as the Manifestation of the Law of Love in Public Space

Eunike Nova Dwi Floren Rindani Nussy¹, Yakub Hendrawan Perangin Angin²

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Berita Hidup, Karanganyar, Indonesia,

Email Korespondensi: eunike.rindanussy93@gmail.com¹

Abstract: This research Based on the fact that many Christians still lack a complete understanding of and practice of Pastoral Theology, as evidenced by the limited number of Pastoral Theologies implemented by churches that have influenced public policies and social life, this study aims to demonstrate the role of Pastoral Theology in the public sphere by emphasizing love as the application of law and love in social life. Pastoral theology, rooted in Christian teachings on love, is not only the foundation of church life but must also be translated into concrete actions in society. The law of love serves as a driving force for churches and individuals to actively engage in solving social problems, fighting for justice, and building a more harmonious and inclusive life. This study aims to explore how Pastoral Theology can be applied in public policy, social services, and interactions between individuals in the public sphere. Through a library research approach, it is hoped that it will provide insight into how churches and Christian communities can contribute more to creating a society based on the principle of love. The findings of this study are expected to provide suggestions for the implementation of Pastoral Theology that is relevant to the social challenges and needs of today's society, particularly in creating interfaith dialogue and advancing social justice.

Keywords: Pastoral Theology; Public Space; Law of Love .

Article History:

Submitted: August, 04, 2026 | Reviewed: August, 28, 2026 | Accepted: August, 31, 2026

Copyright:

© 2026. The Authors.



Licensee: This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Introduction

Jesus' statement in Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord! will enter the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On the last day many people will say to Me: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name also? At that time I will be frank with them and say: I never knew you! Get away from before Me, you who disobey Allah's commandments!" From the beginning, the Lord Jesus has given warnings so that believers who follow Him always obey and consistently comply with the rules and regulations of God. Jesus also in Matthew 22:37-40 stated that: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." What Jesus stated is the basis and guideline for the practice of life that should be demonstrated and carried out by those who claim to be His disciples in various aspects of life, becoming the foundation for ways of thinking and acting as well as ways of producing work in all of life, both personal life, family life, church community life, life in the work environment and in public life.

In the Christian tradition, love is at the heart of the teachings of Jesus Christ, which must be embodied in concrete actions in the public sphere. However, in reality, many social challenges, such as injustice, poverty, and interreligious conflict, test the extent to which the church and Christians live out the law of love in their daily lives. Over time, Christian faith can no longer be understood as a private conviction separate from public life. ¹Pastoral theology, as a branch of theology that focuses on service to the people, has an important role in responding to this challenge. In practice, pastoral theology is realized through discussions with congregations facing various challenges, such as economic problems, health problems, death, and others. Pastoral discussions cover such things as baptism, confession of faith, and marriage. In addition, discussions also involve congregations' attitudes toward society, their reactions to social issues in the community, and their views on the government. ².

The theme of love plays a central role in Christian theology, serving as the foundation of Christian faith and ethics. This concept, revealed in the Bible and explored in Church documents, highlights Jesus' command to love God wholeheartedly and our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). This teaching affirms that a right relationship with God and neighbor is the essence of a follower of Christ's calling. ³. Love is a concept with a very deep meaning and is often equated with love, but it is actually more than just love. Love is usually reserved for something that has been known for a long time, while affection can be given to

¹ Hendra Winarjo, "Etika Kebajikan Kristendi Ruang Publik: Keterbukaan, Kejujuran, Dan Keberanian," *Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja* Vol 6, no. No 2 (2022): 163–78.

² B F Drewes and J Mojau, *Apa Itu Teologi? Pengantar Ke Dalam Ilmu Teologi*, 4th ed. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2003).

³ Imerlina Laia et al., "Analisis Perbandingan Konsep Kasih Dalam Ajaran Katekismus Gereja Katolik Santa Maria Tarutung Dan Konsistensi Terhadap Ajaran Alkitab," *Pediaqu : Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4 (2025): 12.

something or someone that has only just been met.⁴

The emergence of public space as an arena for pluralistic and open social interaction requires the church to consider innovative ways to participate amidst societal diversity. The church can be an agent of social change through advocacy on issues of justice, peace, human rights, and social integrity. Furthermore, the church can facilitate interfaith dialogue, which can reduce tensions and strengthen relationships between different religious communities. Within the context of the Christian community, Christian participation in the public sphere is crucial.⁵

Previous relevant research includes: *First*, Melinda Siahaan with the research title "Pastoral Counseling in Indonesia: Individual and Communal Options", states that: Pastoral Counseling has become a major program of study, particularly on campuses under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Pastoral counseling, a development of pastoral care, requires a more professional approach to assist clients in facing crises. This paper explores the long history of pastoral counseling anchoring itself in Christian values and encouraging inclusiveness in its application. The results of this study represent an attempt to contextualize individual pastoral counseling within a communal context, as the spirit of the pastoral calling, which is the *care* and healing of souls, transcends individual boundaries.⁶ *Second*, the research title Pastoral Counseling as a Means of Effective Communication in Congregational Ministry discusses the role of pastoral counseling in facilitating effective communication in congregational ministry. Pastoral counseling is an important tool in helping individuals or groups overcome spiritual, emotional, and social problems. Effective communication in pastoral counseling is the main key in creating a relationship of mutual trust between the pastor and the congregation. Various communication techniques such as a client/congregation-centric approach, the use of case study methods, confidentiality, and the use of social media are important elements in the counseling process. Challenges faced in implementing pastoral counseling as effective communication include cultural differences, social stigma, counselor qualifications, theological views, ethics and confidentiality, and limited resources and time. To overcome these challenges, proposed solutions include training and professional development for counselors, efforts to reduce social stigma, balancing theological and scientific approaches, a deep understanding of counseling ethics, effective time management, provision of adequate facilities and support, and collaboration with mental health services. A holistic and multifaceted approach to counseling is also emphasized, including counselor training, building strong relationships with the congregation, using appropriate communication techniques, leveraging technology, providing evaluation and feedback, and providing organizational support. It is hoped that implementing these solutions will improve the quality of pastoral counseling services,

⁴ Andri Setiawan, "Hukum Kasih Sebagai Dasar Kekristenan Sejati," *PERSISTOR: Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah Teologi* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1–9.

⁵ Jeniffer Pelupessy Wowor, "Partisipasi Pendidikan Kristiani Di Ruang Publik Dalam Menunjang Deradikalisasi," *KURIOS (Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen)* Vol 7, no. No 1 (2021): 108–22.

⁶ Melinda Siahaan, "Konseling Pastoral Di Indonesia: Pilinan Individu Dan Komunal," *ABARA: Jurnal Konseling Pastoral* 1, no. 1 (2023): 69–93.

provide greater benefits to the congregation, and strengthen the relationship between pastors and the congregation in supporting their spiritual growth and emotional well-being.⁷

Based on several previous studies presented above, no specific research has been found that discusses the role and function of Pastoral Theology in the public sphere, so the contribution of this study is to provide understanding to believers who follow Christ and the church about the role and function of Pastoral Theology in the public sphere which must be realized in love in the practice of daily life as a form of obeying God's commands correctly and consistently.

Methods

This research uses a library research method. The sources used include the Bible, theology books, and journal articles that discuss pastoral theology, specifically pastoral theology in the public sphere. The first step is to review themes related to the title of this research, found in textbooks and journal articles related to the topic being studied. The second step is to collect relevant data and information. The third step is to study the Bible to find teachings that form the main foundation of this research discussion. The fourth step is to analyze and discuss all the sources that have been collected and separate the important parts. Then, synthesize and what contributions can be conveyed in this research that are relevant to the needs of the lives of believers in Christ and the church as a true response to God's commands.

Results and Discussion

The Concept of Pastoral Theology

Pastoral theology is a discipline within theology that examines pastoral care in all aspects of the Church's activities and roles, as well as the duties of pastors, and then develops theological conclusions based on these observations. Since the Protestant Reformation, the term "pastoral" has been used in two senses. First, as an adjective related to "pastor," meaning that the pastoral care carried out by a pastor is directly related to the concept of pastoral care itself. Second, pastoral care is understood as a field of study that examines the intricacies of pastoral care.⁸

In this discipline, pastoral theology focuses on pastoral care in the various activities and roles of the Church.⁹ Seward Hiltner explains that pastoral theology is a branch of theological knowledge and research that focuses on the pastoral perspective in all activities

⁷ Firman Blessing Lantaa et al., "Pastoral Konseling Sebagai Sarana Komunikasi Efektif Dalam Pelayanan Jemaat," *Atohema: Jurnal Teologi Pastoral Konseling* 1, no. 3 (2024): 47–60.

⁸ Anton Siswanto et al., *Teologi Pastoral Dalam Beragam Sudut Pandang* (Sulawesi Tengah: Feniks Muda Sejahtera, 2023).

⁹ J.L.Ch. Abineno, *Pedoman Praktis Untuk Pelayanan Pastoral*, Ed 5 (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006).

and functions of the church and pastors. This theology then draws theological conclusions based on reflection on the observations made.¹⁰

Pastoral theology is essentially synonymous with the theology of shepherding. As a branch of theology, pastoral theology focuses on actions that begin with theological questions and end with theological answers. Therefore, pastoralism can be understood as a branch of theology that affirms its existence as "Pastoral Theology." Pastoral theology itself focuses on the pastoral perspective, encompassing all activities and roles of the church and pastors, with the goal of drawing theological conclusions based on observations.¹¹

Pastoral theology aims to facilitate the congregation's interaction with the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd (John 10:1-19). In practice, this theology involves discussions with the congregation about various challenges such as economic issues, health, death, as well as social issues and views on government. Pastoral discussions also include sacraments such as baptism, confession of faith, and marriage.¹² Pastoral theology provides a strong spiritual foundation for Christian leaders, ensuring that the decisions and guidance given by leaders are based on religious principles. Pastoral theology also strengthens the understanding of the spiritual needs of congregation members, enabling leaders to provide appropriate comfort and guidance in church ministry.¹³

Marthen Nainupu explains that pastoral theology is always present and never absent in the life of church ministry, even though its systematic formulation is not yet fully clear. Although the term "pastoral theology" has only recently become known, the practice of shepherding existed long before the term emerged and has existed throughout the history of the life of the faithful.¹⁴

Pastoral theology is often referred to as *poimenik*. This understanding, which is related to the science of shepherding, is actually not yet widely known in churches in Indonesia. In this context, pastoral theology refers to teachings related to pastoral ministry. Pastoral theology is seen as part of *Practical Theology*, a branch of theology that specifically addresses church ministry in various areas of life.¹⁵ Pastoral theology cannot be separated from pastoral ministry. Because relevant pastoral theology reflections in Indonesia are derived from real experience, pastoral ministry is an important aspect in implementing pastoral theology in Indonesia. If the understanding of pastoral ministry is limited, the scope

¹⁰ Seward Hiltner, "Pengantar Untuk Teologi Pastoral," *Dalam Teologi Dan Praksis Pastoral: Antologi Teologi Pastoral* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992).

¹¹ Harianto GP, *Teologi Pastoral, Pastoral Sebagai Strategi Penggembalaan Untuk Menuju Gereja Yang Sehat Dan Bertumbuh*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi Offset, 2020), 6.

¹² Drewes and Mojau, *Apa Itu Teologi? Pengantar Ke Dalam Ilmu Teologi*.

¹³ Alvrianti Palallang and Oktavianus P, "Menganalisis Teologi Pastoral Dalam Membentuk Semangat Kepemimpinan Kristen Pada Era Postmodern: Tinjauan Yesaya 40:1," *Humanitis: Jurnal Humaniora, Sosial Dan Bisnis* Vol 1, no. No 4 (2023): 360–72.

¹⁴ Marthen Nainupu, *Teologi Pastoral: Suatu Pengantar Bagi Pelayan Pastoral Konsep, Karakteristik, Dan Implementasi* (Malang: Media Nusa Creative, 2019).

¹⁵ Abineno, *Pedoman Praktis Untuk Pelayanan Pastoral*.

of pastoral theology will be narrow. Conversely, if the understanding of pastoral ministry is broadened, the reach of pastoral theology will also be broader.¹⁶

Based on the understanding explained, the author concludes that pastoral theology is a branch of theology that focuses on shepherding in all church activities and functions, as well as the role of pastors in providing guidance based on religious principles. This theology aims to facilitate the congregation's interaction with the teachings of Christ, assist them in facing the challenges of daily life, and address social issues and church sacraments. In the pluralistic context of Indonesia, pastoral theology must be responsive to social dynamics, such as intolerance and injustice, in order to create inclusive services and relevant theology.

The Practice of the Law of Love in Christian Teachings in Public Space

The law of love taught by Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40 is a fundamental principle of the Christian life. This verse states that love for God and love for others is the most important law and the foundation of all Christian teachings. Matthew 22:37-40 reads: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. That is the greatest and first commandment. And the second commandment, which is the same, is: Love your neighbor as yourself." Love is a theme frequently found in the Bible. The Bible teaches that love is something we need to cultivate. Love is not merely a desire to do good; it is also a decision and an attitude to do so. Because God has loved us, we who have experienced His love, in the form of His grace, mercy, kindness, and help, should also love others, even if it means sacrificing ourselves for it.¹⁷

Love as the foundation of the Christian life reflects the understanding that a righteous life in God is not based solely on laws or rules, but also on a loving personal relationship with God and others. As C.S. Lewis explained in *Mere Christianity*, "Love is the decision to desire the good of others, even when it is in our own best interest." This love is not just an emotional feeling, but also an action involving sacrifice, service, and forgiveness.¹⁸ The basis of Christian ethics is the love of God who accepts humans as His children unconditionally. God loves humans despite their sin and rebellion against Him. Although "love" and "love" are often used with various meanings (including storge, philia, eros in the Greek tradition), the Bible emphasizes agape as the fundamental and distinctive concept of Christian love. Agape needs to be internalized in other understandings of love and understood through the experience of love. Christ and love of neighbor (1 John 3:16)¹⁹.

¹⁶ Anouw Yulian, *Pendampingan Pelayanan Pastoral* (Sulawesi Selatan: CV. Ruang Tentor, 2024).

¹⁷ Rencan Carisma Marbun, "Kasih Dan Kuasa Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Etika Kristen," *Jurnal Teologi "Cultivation"* Vol 3, no. No 1 (2019): 663–72.

¹⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Inggris: Wildside Press LLC, 2019).

¹⁹ Malcolm Brownlee, *Pengambilan Keputusan Etis Dan Faktor-Faktor Di Dalamnya* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012).

Public Space

The word "public" comes from the Latin *publicus*, meaning "relating to the state; carried out for or on behalf of the state; common." In the context of Roman society, *publicus* referred to something owned by the people and used for the common good.²⁰ Habermas clearly emphasizes that the public sphere is an area of social life open to all citizens, where the process of collective opinion formation occurs. Every individual has a role in shaping the shared life in the place where they live, work, and carry out their activities. Habermas also states that this process can be carried out, but it can be hindered or even stopped by anyone in the society, because everyone has equal access to express their personal opinions to a community wider than themselves or their group.²¹ The concept of public space provides an opportunity for every individual to realize that they have an important role in the formation of public culture, state policy, and in the process of implementing government.²²

Gusti A. Menoh emphasized that public spaces should protect cultural, religious, and social diversity through dialogue and meetings that bring together diverse worldviews and beliefs in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and learning. In this way, public spaces can support the creation of solidarity and social equality within a diverse society (Menoh, 2015: 88).²³

Implementation of Pastoral Theology in Realizing the Law of Love in Public Space

After understanding the theoretical foundations of pastoral theology and the law of love, we can see how these two concepts relate to each other in the context of the public sphere. Pastoral theology serves as a guide for the church in realizing the law of love in concrete actions in society. The church, as part of society, has a social responsibility to engage in resolving social problems based on love. Pastoral theology calls the church to translate love into social action that involves all elements of society, such as in social services, public policy, and other humanitarian initiatives.

Pastoral Theology in the public sphere is not only for Christianization, but as a space for learning together between religions and society, in order to reach a consensus that supports justice and freedom.²⁴ Love in pastoral theology is not only an internal teaching but must be realized in real actions in the public sphere.

Public spaces are arenas where various social and religious groups meet and interact. In these public spaces, Christians are called to apply Jesus' teachings of love, as recorded in

²⁰ F. Budi Hardiman, *Ruang Publik: Melacak "Partisipasi Demokrasi" Dari Polis Sampai Cyberspace* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2010).

²¹ Habermas Jurgen, *"The Public Sphere" Dalam Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, Peny. Robert E. Gooding & Philip Pettit (Canberra: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

²² McKee Alan, *The Public Sphere: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²³ Menoh Gusti, *Agama Dalam Ruang Publik: Hubungan Antara Agama Dan Negara Dalam Masyarakat Postsekuler Menurut Jurgen Habermas* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015).

²⁴ Jan S Aritonang, *Teologi-Teologi Kontemporer* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018).

Matthew 22:37-40, by loving others in concrete actions that contribute to building a more just and compassionate society.

Pastoral theology in the public sphere does not only talk about love in a personal or church sense, but also touches on broader social issues, such as intolerance, injustice, and marginalization of certain groups. Therefore, the application of pastoral theology in the public sphere must be responsive to social situations and ready to provide solutions that build peace and justice in society. Pastoral theology is a theological approach that emphasizes the application of Christian faith in real-life contexts.²⁵ Teaching that love is not only to be practiced in the church, but must be manifested in concrete actions in the public sphere. Here are five key roles of pastoral theology in realizing the law of love in the public sphere:

Speak for truth and justice

The church is called to be courageous in rebuking or voicing concern when injustice, discrimination, or violence occurs in society. The church has a crucial role in speaking up for truth and justice in society. Pastoral theology teaches that when injustice, discrimination, or violence occurs, the church must not remain silent. Instead, the church is called to be a voice for those who are oppressed and to fight for social justice. This is very relevant to the teachings of Jesus, who emphasized that love must be expressed in truth, as written in John 8:32, "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."²⁶ The church plays a role as an active moral voice in highlighting issues of social and economic injustice and encouraging significant change. The church is expected to fight for these rights, both within its own community and in wider society, while affirming that social justice cannot be separated from the concept of solidarity and equality before God.²⁷

Educating the congregation to live in love

Pastoral theology also teaches the congregation to live in love, not only in the church but also in everyday life. True love must be seen in the way we treat others, both those of our own faith and those of different faiths. As written in Matthew 22:39, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," the church is expected to be a place to educate its congregation to love others regardless of ethnicity, religion, or social status. In practice, this includes teaching patience, empathy, and understanding toward others. As written in 1 John 4:7-8, "Love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." This responsibility is rooted in the moment when Jesus was about to leave the world and gave His disciples a new commandment to love one another. This love is not limited to a particular group such as one's own tribe or nation, but rather a love that is open and extends to all

²⁵ Suyono et al., , *Pendidikan Agama Kristen Di Tengah Arus Zaman: Sebuah Refleksi, Etika, Dan Transformasi* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit KBM Indonesia, 2025).

²⁶ Yohanes 8:32, *Alkitab Terjemahan Baru* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2015).

²⁷ Abdon Arnolus Amtiran, *Gereja Dan Perjumpaan Di Indonesia* (Jawa Barat: MEGA PRESS NUSANTARA, 2024).

humanity. This new commandment emphasizes that true love is a willingness and readiness to accept and embrace others within our sphere of concern. ²⁸.

Helping through real action

Love in pastoral theology is expressed through concrete actions, such as helping those in need. The church is expected not only to speak of love but also to support those who are weak, poor, or suffering. This social action can take the form of aiding disaster victims, providing free health care, or providing shelter for the homeless. In this regard, pastoral theology views social service as an integral part of the church's calling to love others.

Building interfaith dialogue and cooperation

In a public space filled with diversity, the church is called to open itself to interreligious dialogue. Pastoral theology teaches that Christ's love must be seen in an open attitude and cooperation with adherents of other religions for the sake of creating peace and mutual understanding. This is in line with Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Interreligious dialogue is not only about tolerance, but also about building mutually supportive relationships for the common good, especially in facing complex social challenges. The church in a pluralistic society is required to maintain its Christian identity while engaging wisely in interreligious dialogue, so that it can build meaningful relationships with other communities and be an effective witness to the Gospel. ²⁹.

Driving societal change

Pastoral theology focuses not only on short-term solutions but also on broader social change. The church, through its teaching of love, is called to encourage the transformation of society to be more just, inclusive, and compassionate. This is in line with God's words in Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" Thus, the church is not only a place of worship, but also an agent of change that actively fights for human rights, social justice, and equality in society.

²⁸ Nainupu, *..Teologi Pastoral: Suatu Pengantar Bagi Pelayan Pastoral Konsep, Karakteristik, Dan Implementasi*.

²⁹ Zulkarnain and Andri Vincent Sinaga, *Gereja Sebagai Ruang Bersama Sebuah Perspektif Teologi Kristen* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit KBM Indonesia, 2004).

The Application of the Law of Love in the Practice of Pastoral Theology in Public Spaces

The application of the law of love in pastoral theology does not stop at the spiritual aspect, but is manifested in concrete actions that address the needs of society. The church is called to be an agent of love in the public sphere through social services, education, health, economic empowerment, and social policy advocacy, with the following explanation . *First*, Direct Social Service : The church is present through concrete actions, such as distributing basic necessities, disaster relief, providing shelter for the homeless, and serving orphans and widows. This social service is a manifestation of Christ's love that transcends church boundaries, addressing the urgent needs of society. *Second* , Education and Training : The Church also plays a role in formal and non-formal education, such as Christian schools, courses, and skills training. The goal is to empower marginalized people to have a better chance at life. *Third* , Health and Welfare Services : The Church runs clinics, provides counseling, provides free health services, and provides psychosocial support. This is a concrete manifestation of the law of love, which also touches the physical and mental dimensions of the congregation. *Fourth*, Economic Empowerment: In addition to charitable assistance, churches are also called upon to engage in economic empowerment, such as supporting congregational cooperatives, providing entrepreneurship training, or mentoring MSMEs. This helps communities escape the cycle of poverty. *Fifth*, Advocacy and Social Policy : Love in pastoral theology does not stop at direct service, but also encourages the church to engage in the fight for just public policies. The church must boldly advocate for justice for vulnerable groups in the areas of education, health, and human rights.

Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing Pastoral Theology in Public Spaces

Although pastoral theology offers many opportunities for application in the public sphere, it faces several challenges, particularly those related to social and religious pluralism. The Church must be able to adapt to the cultural, religious, and economic diversity that exists in society. This requires an inclusive and sensitive approach to diversity, while remaining steadfast in the principles of love that prioritize justice and peace. The Church needs to maintain a balance between providing love to all without exception and avoiding potential divisions caused by differences in belief and culture.

However, despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for the church to expand its role in creating a better society. Through love-based pastoral action, the church can play a more active role in building social justice, reducing poverty, and improving community well-being. Thus, pastoral theology can strengthen the church's role in creating a loving, peaceful, and inclusive society.

Conclusion

theology, based on the law of love, as taught by Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40, plays a crucial role in realizing love in everyday life, especially in public spaces. This law of love

extends beyond personal relationships with God to encompass social relationships with others, with the goal of creating a just, peaceful, and inclusive society. Pastoral theology serves as a foundation for the church's active involvement in addressing various social challenges, such as injustice, poverty, and intolerance. The church is called not only to speak of love but also to implement it in concrete actions that can positively impact society at large.

However, the church faces various challenges, particularly in the pluralistic context of Indonesia, where religious and cultural diversity often creates tensions. Nevertheless, the church continues to play a crucial role as an agent of social change. Through the application of inclusive pastoral theology, the church can foster interfaith dialogue, advocate for social justice, and support policies that favor marginalized groups. Overall, pastoral theology, with its focus on the application of the law of love, plays a role not only in church life but also in broader social life. The church is expected to be an agent of change that positively impacts society and, through concrete acts of love, can realize universal justice, peace, and love .

Acknowledgements

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

The authors acknowledge the use of AI-based tools in limited aspects of manuscript preparation, specifically for translation assistance and the identification of relevant academic references. These tools were not employed to replace the authors' scholarly reasoning, develop the principal arguments, analyze research materials, or generate the conclusions of the study. All information and language produced with AI assistance were subsequently reviewed and validated by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and academic integrity of this article.

Author Contributions

Eunike Nova Dwi Floren Rindani Nussy: Led the development of the research idea, contributed to the formulation of the research framework, conducted the principal literature exploration, drafted the manuscript, and participated in the subsequent revision of the article.

Yakub Hendrawan Perangin Angin: Contributed to the refinement of the research design, evaluation and interpretation of relevant scholarly sources, critical review of the manuscript, and improvement of the theoretical and analytical discussion.

Both authors reviewed the final manuscript, provided their approval of the version submitted for publication, and accepted responsibility for the integrity of the work.

Funding Statement

The authors received no financial assistance specifically allocated to the conduct of this research or the preparation of this manuscript. No grants, institutional sponsorships, or other forms of external financial support were obtained for this work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests that might have affected the design, conduct, interpretation, or reporting of this study. No financial, personal, or professional circumstances are known to have influenced the preparation or submission of this manuscript.

Reference

- Abineno, J.L.Ch. *Pedoman Praktis Untuk Pelayanan Pastoral*. Ed 5. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006.
- Alan, McKee. *The Public Sphere: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Amtiran, Abdon Arnolus. *Gereja Dan Perjumpaan Di Indonesia*. Jawa Barat: MEGA PRESS NUSANTARA, 2024.
- Aritonang, Jan S. *Teologi-Teologi Kontemporer*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018.
- Drewes, B F, and J Mojau. *Apa Itu Teologi? Pengantar Ke Dalam Ilmu Teologi*. 4th ed. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2003.
- GP, Harianto. *Teologi Pastoral, Pastoral Sebagai Strategi Penggembalaan Untuk Menuju Gereja Yang Sehat Dan Bertumbuh*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi Offset, 2020.
- Gusti, Menoh. *Agama Dalam Ruang Publik: Hubungan Antara Agama Dan Negara Dalam Masyarakat Postsekuler Menurut Jurgen Habermas*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015.
- Hardiman, F. Budi. *Ruang Publik: Melacak "Partisipasi Demokrasi" Dari Polis Sampai Cyberspace*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2010.
- Hiltner, Seward. "Pengantar Untuk Teologi Pastoral," *Dalam Teologi Dan Praksis Pastoral: Antologi Teologi Pastoral*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992.
- Jurgen, Habermas. "The Public Sphere" *Dalam Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, Peny. Robert E. Gooding & Philip Pettit. Canberra: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- Laia, Imerlina, Hery Santoso Simanjuntak, Apri Twenty Sirait, Iman Peris Toan Siba, and Liyus Waruwu. "Analisis Perbandingan Konsep Kasih Dalam Ajaran Katekismus Gereja Katolik Santa Maria Tarutung Dan Konsistensi Terhadap Ajaran Alkitab." *Pediaqu : Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4 (2025): 12.
- Lantaa, Firman Blessing, Nadia Vebriani Tataung, Devrats Makagansa, and Shelomita Rawis. "PASTORAL KONSELING SEBAGAI SARANA KOMUNIKASI EFEKTIF DALAM PELAYANAN JEMAAT." *Atohema: Jurnal Teologi Pastoral Konseling* 1, no. 3 (2024): 47–60.
- Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianit*. Inggris: Wildside Press LLC, 2019.
- Malcolm Brownlee. *Pengambilan Keputusan Etis Dan Faktor-Faktor Di Dalamnya*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012.
- Marbun, Rencan Carisma. "Kasih Dan Kuasa Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Etika Kristen." *Jurnal Teologi "Cultivation"* Vol 3, no. No 1 (2019): 663–72.

- Nainupu, Marthen. *..Teologi Pastoral: Suatu Pengantar Bagi Pelayan Pastoral Konsep, Karakteristik, Dan Implementasi*. Malang: Media Nusa Creative, 2019.
- Palallang, Alvianti, and Oktavianus P. "Menganalisis Teologi Pastoral Dalam Membentuk Semangat Kepemimpinan Kristen Pada Era Postmodern: Tinjauan Yesaya 40:1." *Humanitis: Jurnal Humaniora, Sosial Dan Bisnis* Vol 1, no. No 4 (2023): 360–72.
- Setiawan, Andri. "Hukum Kasih Sebagai Dasar Kekristenan Sejati." *PERSISTOR: Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah Teologi* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1–9.
- Siahaan, Melinda. "Konseling Pastoral Di Indonesia: Pilinan Individu Dan Komunal." *ABARA: Jurnal Konseling Pastoral* 1, no. 1 (2023): 69–93.
- Siswanto, Anton, Chandra Han, Denny Rope, Enggar Objantoro, Gatsper Anderius Lado, Joni Aihery, Karlitu Dias Markes, Ronal Tahioloan Pasaribu, and Yunus D.A Laukapitang. *Teologi Pastoral Dalam Beragam Sudut Pandang*. Sulawesi Tengah: Feniks Muda Sejahtera, 2023.
- Suyono, Hendrik Legi, Ester Sugiarsi, and Demsi Yanto Sinlae. , *Pendidikan Agama Kristen Di Tengah Arus Zaman: Sebuah Refleksi, Etika, Dan Transformasi*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit KBM Indonesia, 2025.
- Winarjo, Hendra. "Etika Kebajikan Kristendi Ruang Publik: Keterbukaan, Kejujuran, Dan Keberanian." *Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja* Vol 6, no. No 2 (2022): 163–78.
- Wowor, Jeniffer Pelupessy. "Partisipasi Pendidikan Kristiani Di Ruang Publik Dalam Menunjang Deradikalisasi." *KURIOS (Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen)* Vol 7, no. No 1 (2021): 108–22.
- Yohanes 8:32, Alkitab Terjemahan Baru*. Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2015.
- Yulian, Anouw. *Pendampingan Pelayanan Pastoral*. Sulawesi Selatan: CV. Ruang Tentor, 2024.
- Zulkarnain, and Andri Vincent Sinaga. *Gereja Sebagai Ruang Bersama Sebuah Perspektif Teologi Kristen*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit KBM Indonesia, 2004.