



Christianity and social development theory

Sonny Hermawan,<sup>1\*</sup> Carol Abiri<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jakatarub Community, Bandung, Indonesia.  
<sup>2</sup>Devine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea.  
\*Corresponding Author: [sonnyhermawan@gmail.com](mailto:sonnyhermawan@gmail.com)

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Cultural resistance; Religious values; Social policies; Social reconciliation; Theological texts.</p> <p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p>Received 2025-05-19 Revised 2025-07-06 Accepted 2025-07-07</p>	<p>This study explores the role of Christianity in social development by examining its foundational values of love, social justice, and service to others. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method, this research analyzes various sources, including policy documents, Christian theological texts, and case studies from different countries. The findings reveal that the Church plays a significant role in social development through education, healthcare, and economic empowerment, while also contributing to social reconciliation, particularly in conflict resolution and addressing social disparities. This study highlights how Christian values can serve as a basis for inclusive and sustainable social policies, despite challenges in implementation, such as cultural resistance and resource constraints. The study concludes that fostering collaboration among religious institutions, policymakers, and civil society is essential to optimizing the role of religion in promoting a more just and harmonious society.</p> <p><b>Contribution:</b> This research bridges theoretical perspectives with practical examples, offering valuable guidance for leveraging religious values in the pursuit of social progress.</p>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Religion has a fundamental role in human life, not only as a moral and spiritual source, but also as an important factor in social development (Beyers, 2021). Christianity, with its teachings of love and social justice, has become one of the main pillars in creating better social change (Sensenig, 2022). Various teachings in the Bible emphasize the importance of caring for others, brotherhood, and justice in social life (Akhtar, 2024). However, in the context of social development, there are still gaps in the implementation of religious values in social and economic policies. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the relationship between Christianity and social development theory, by examining the extent to which religion contributes to creating inclusive prosperity. In Christian theology, the teachings of love taught by Jesus Christ are the basis for human relationships. In John 15:12-13, Jesus said, *This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. There is no greater love than the love of a man who lays down his life for his friends.* This verse emphasizes that love is not just feelings or words, but must be realized in real actions (Mangentang & Salurante, 2021). This is also confirmed in 1 John 3:18, *My children, let us love not in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth.* Thus, the teaching of love in Christianity is not only a moral value, but also a foundation for building a more just and prosperous social life (Papiah, 2025).

In the context of social development, community welfare is not only determined by economic growth, but also by social factors such as justice, education, health and collective welfare. (Midgley, 2005) defines social development as a process of planned social change to improve the welfare of society as a whole. In this context, the values contained in the Christian religion, such as love, service and social justice, have a significant role in supporting sustainable social development. In Indonesia, the role of religion in social development has received attention in various public policies. (Kartasasmita, 1997) defines development as change towards better conditions through planned efforts. In this context, churches and Christian communities play a role in encouraging development policies that are more inclusive and based on social justice values. Various church organizations have contributed to education, health services and social programs aimed at reducing social inequality.

However, in practice, the use of religion in social development does not always produce a positive impact. In some cases, religion can be used to strengthen the dominance of certain groups, which ultimately creates inequality in the distribution of welfare (Junaidi et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to examine how Christianity can play a role in creating more inclusive and just social development. In the history of various civilizations, religion has always had a dual role, namely as a social glue as well as a means of controlling power. Many political leaders use religion as a means to maintain their power by claiming that their leadership has blessings or mandates from God (Endrizal & Fajri, 2023). ). In the Christian tradition, this practice can be found in the concept *Divine Right of Kings*, which developed in Europe in the Middle Ages, where kings were thought to have a divine right to rule. As a result, power becomes difficult for the people to challenge, so that welfare distribution benefits more certain groups close to the center of power (Dobski, 2024).

On the other hand, religion can also be a driving force for social reform that encourages more equitable prosperity. Religion-based social movements often emerge to oppose social injustice and inequality. For example, in world history, the movement to the abolition of slavery in the United States was supported by many Christian groups who adhered to the teachings of love and social justice. Likewise, with the civil rights movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., which used Christian values as the basis for its struggle against racial discrimination and social inequality (Birkler, 2023). In the Indonesian context, religion also plays an important role in politics and welfare distribution. As a country with religious plurality, Indonesia has a long history of using religion as inspiration for development policies (Nur, 2017). In some cases, churches and Christian communities have been active in community empowerment, education and health programs. This shows that Christianity can be a positive force in social development, as long as it is managed with the principles of justice and inclusiveness.

This research aims to analyze how Christianity contributes to social development theory and its impact on societal welfare. The main focus of this research includes a study of the role of Christianity in social development based on the values of love, social justice and service to others. Apart from that, this research will also explore the relationship between Christian teachings and social development theory in the context of social and economic policy. In its implementation, there are various challenges and potentials that arise when Christian religious values are applied in social development programs in various countries, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, this research also seeks to identify obstacles as well as opportunities that can be exploited in developing more inclusive social policies.

## 2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytical methods to examine the relationship between Christianity and social development. This approach was chosen because it allows a deeper exploration of religious values in development theory and how they are implemented in various social and economic policies (Rahman, 2025). The data used in this research comes from a literature study which includes academic literature, policy documents, previous research results, as well as relevant Christian theological texts. Data collection was carried out through document analysis, where various primary and secondary sources were systematically reviewed to understand how Christian teachings about love, social justice, and service to others are integrated into social development theory. Apart from that, this research also compares various case studies from several countries, including Indonesia, in order to identify patterns and challenges that arise in the application of religious values in development policies (Ghony & Almanshur, 2012). Data analysis was carried out using an interpretive approach, where each theological concept and social development theory was contextualized to see its relationship to social practice. This analysis process includes the interpretation of Christian doctrine related to social welfare, as well as how these values are reflected in public policies and social programs. The validity of the data in this research is maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing various literature from the perspectives of theology, social sciences and public policy (Sugiyono, 2013). Thus, this research not only provides

a theoretical understanding but also presents a more holistic analysis of the role of Christianity in social development.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### The Church as an agent of social transformation

In the Christian theological tradition, the church has deep implications for the understanding of believers. Church with a capital letter refers to a Christian institution that covers the entire community of believers, whether Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant (Tănase & Dascălu, 2024). This institution has a hierarchical structure that includes ordained priests such as Bishops, Pastors or Presbyters, and Deacons, alongside Institutes of Consecrated Life such as Sisters and Brothers, as well as other lay people. In the Protestant tradition, this concept extends to the form of independent church organizations, which are usually called synods, such as GKI, HKBP, and GPIB. Meanwhile, church with lowercase letters refers more to a physical place where Christians worship, pray, and carry out various spiritual and social activities (Matošević et al., 2022). The importance of understanding these terminological differences is closely related to the role of the Church in social development. As stated by Midgley, social development is not just a complement to economic development, but an integral part that aims to improve the welfare of society as a whole (Midgley, 2005). The church as an institution has a significant responsibility in encouraging social development through three main aspects, namely *social services*, *social welfare services*, and *community development*. *Social services* refer to social services provided to the community regardless of religious background, such as educational assistance, health, and psychosocial assistance (Asamoah et al., 2023). The church in this context acts as a mediator who bridges community needs with available resources.

Besides that, *social welfare services* related to the provision of long-term social welfare services, such as economic assistance programs for vulnerable groups, empowerment of poor communities, and advocacy for marginalized groups (Simangunsong & Sihotang, 2023). The church in this role not only functions as a service provider, but also as an institution that encourages policy changes that are more favorable to people in need. In many cases, the Church collaborates with non-governmental organizations as well as governments in ensuring that social welfare efforts are effective and sustainable (Midgley, 2005). Diakonia, as one of the five main tasks of the Church or what is known as the five tasks, has a central role in actualizing the Church's mission in society. As a form of loving service, diakonia is not only an expression of concern for others, but also reflects the Church's commitment to realizing Christian values in social life. In this context, the Church is not only understood as a religious institution oriented towards worship within the Church building, but also as an agent of social transformation that exists to answer various challenges in human life (Moltmann, 2019).

As a concept rooted in Christian tradition, diakonia has a strong theological basis. Jesus Christ himself stated that He did not come to be served, but to serve, which confirms that service is at the core of the vocation of believers (Baskoro, 2022). Therefore, the Church as the body of Christ in the world must continue this mission of service by placing diakonia as an inseparable part of its identity and duties. In the context of Church services, diakonia does not only take the form of material assistance for those in need, but also includes empowerment and advocacy for vulnerable groups, so that they can live a more dignified life (Hendriks, 2020). Thus, diakonia is not only a short-term form of charity but also a transformative strategy in an effort to create a more just and harmonious social order. In practice, diakonia can be categorized into several main forms, namely charitable, reformatory and transformative diakonia. Charitable diakonia focuses on direct assistance to those experiencing economic or social difficulties, such as providing food, clothing and health services to the poor (Gianina & Daniel, 2022). While this form is critical in addressing urgent needs, this approach is often only temporary and does not address the root of the problem. Therefore, the Church also develops reformatory diakonia, namely, service that aims to change unjust social structures and fight for the rights of those who are oppressed. This approach can be realized through education, social policy advocacy, and assistance for marginalized groups so that they can fight for their rights independently (Kirkpatrick, 2021). Meanwhile, transformative diakonia focuses more on holistic changes that not only touch social and economic aspects, but also spiritual, moral and cultural (Hamu et al., 2023). In this way, the Church plays a role in building a more just society by educating people to be able to see and respond to social problems from a deep faith perspective.

The application of diakonia in the life of the Church not only has an impact on the individuals who receive services, but also on the Church community itself. When people engage in loving service, they experience deeper spiritual growth and understand their calling as part of the body of Christ. In many studies, involvement in social service has been shown to increase solidarity and a sense of belonging among people, thereby strengthening

fellowship within the Church community. This is in line with the concept of *koinonia* or communion, which is also one of the main tasks of the Church (Gheorghe-Luca, 2021). In other words, *diakonia* and *koinonia* have a close relationship, where the service of love carried out together will further strengthen brotherhood in the body of Christ. Apart from that, *diakonia* service is also a concrete manifestation of the Church's mission to be present as salt and light in the world (Sitepu, 2022). In the context of globalization and modernization, which often widens the gap in social inequality, the Church has a responsibility to ensure that the values of love and justice remain the basis of social life. Therefore, the Church must not be focused on serving within the walls of the Church building alone, but must be active in reaching out to those on the social margins. For example, many churches have developed economic empowerment programs for the poor, such as job skills training and small business assistance. These programs not only provide short-term solutions, but also open up opportunities for marginalized people to improve their standard of living in a sustainable manner (Clarke, 2020).

However, *diakonia* services also face various challenges in their implementation. One of the main challenges is limited resources, both in terms of finance, personnel and infrastructure. Many churches that want to develop *diakonia* programs experience difficulties in fundraising and social service management. In addition, cultural and political resistance can also become obstacles in carrying out these services, especially in areas where religion has a complex relationship with social and government systems (Bosch, 2019). Therefore, the Church needs to develop innovative strategies in carrying out *diakonia* services, including building collaborative networks with various parties, including government institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector. Through this synergy, Church services can be more effective in reaching those in need and creating a wider social impact. In the Indonesian context, *diakonia* plays an important role in responding to various social challenges such as poverty, injustice and intolerance. Churches in Indonesia have played a large role in various social initiatives, such as establishing schools, hospitals and rehabilitation centers for those experiencing economic and social difficulties. Apart from that, *diakonia* is also a means of building dialogue and cooperation between religions, so that it can create social harmony in a pluralistic society (Sumartana, 2017). In this way, the Church's services not only have an impact on the Christian community but also contribute to building a more inclusive and just nation.

Theologically, *diakonia* reflects the Church's call to present the kingdom of God in the world. Through the service of love, believers are invited not only to focus on individualistic spiritual life but also to take part in building a better society. This is in accordance with the concept of liberation theology, which emphasizes that faith must be realized in real action to liberate those who are oppressed and bring about change in unjust social structures (Gutiérrez, 2018). In this way, *diakonia* service is not only an expression of love, but also a form of resistance to injustice and exploitation that still occurs in many places. Furthermore, aspects community development highlights how the Church plays a role in building community capacity so that they can be independent and empowered (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005). Through various economic empowerment activities, education, as well as moral and ethical development, the Church seeks to create a society that is not only materially prosperous, but also has a strong spiritual foundation. Community-based programs run by the Church often involve collaboration with educational institutions, the business sector, and local communities to create holistic solutions to various social challenges faced by society.

From the perspective of the structural functionalism theory put forward by Talcott Parsons, the Church as a social institution plays a role in maintaining balance and stability in society (Parsons, 2017). Parsons emphasized that social institutions, including the Church, have a function in internalizing values and norms that support social order (Parsons, 1937). This is in line with how the Church not only plays a role in aspects of ritual and worship, but also in forming a harmonious social structure. Through moral and ethical teachings, the Church helps create socially responsible individuals, which in turn strengthens social cohesion in society. The church as an institution has strong social capital in the form of trust, community networks, and norms that direct individuals to behave cooperatively and altruistically. This social capital is an important asset in social development, because it facilitates access to resources, increases social solidarity, and strengthens support mechanisms for individuals who are in vulnerable conditions (Robin & Marchella, 2024).

Furthermore, in the context of the church as a place of worship, the material and symbolic aspects of the worship space also have an impact on the social life of the congregation. Mircea Eliade's sacred space theory states that places of worship are not just physical buildings, but also have transcendent meaning that connects people with higher spiritual values (Eliade, 1991). The Church, in a physical sense, functions as the center of community life, a place where individuals experience religious experiences that strengthen collective identity and solidarity. Therefore, although in terms of terminology there are differences between the Church as an institution and the church as a physical building, both are closely related in forming a wider social ecosystem. Meanwhile,



the church as a place of worship becomes a space where spiritual values are internalized and implemented in daily life.

### **The basis of the Scriptures regarding the ministry carried out by the Church**

As a shaper of social values and morality, the Church has a role in instilling the principles of life based on love, justice and peace. These values are the main foundation for a harmonious social life. The teaching to love others as oneself (Boba & Saingo, 2023), is not only personal but also has broad social implications. When individuals in a community adhere to the principle of love, social relationships will be closer and full of respect. Apart from that, the concept of social justice taught by the Church encourages people to play an active role in fighting for the rights of the oppressed. Thus, the Church is not only a place of worship, but also an institution that instills social ethics in social life (Steele, 2021). Furthermore, the Church plays a role in encouraging social solidarity and cohesion. Through various activities such as prayer groups, social services, and community events, the Church creates space for people to share and support each other. The solidarity taught by the Church is very important, especially in facing social crises. For example, in various natural disaster situations, the Church is often the center for coordinating humanitarian aid. Apart from that, charity activities and social services carried out by the Church are a concrete form of how this religious institution contributes to building a more harmonious social life (Putnam, 2000).

Apart from that, the Church has a role in improving social welfare through various economic empowerment, education and health programs. Many religious organizations operate in the social sector to help those on the fringes of society. For example, the Catholic Church through organizations such as *Charity International And Jesuit Refugee Service* has provided assistance to vulnerable groups in various parts of the world (Massaro, 2022). In Indonesia, Church institutions such as Socio-Economic Empowerment (PSE) have established schools, hospitals and orphanages to support community welfare (Busari, 2023). Thus, the Church not only plays a role as a religious institution but also as an agent of sustainable social development. On the other hand, the Church also acts as an agent of social change. History has recorded that many large social movements were inspired by religious values. Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister, became one of the main figures in the struggle for civil rights in the United States (Birkler, 2023). His struggle against racial discrimination was based on Christian teachings about human equality before God (King Jr, 1963). Likewise, Archbishop Desmond Tutu played an important role in ending the apartheid system in South Africa by bringing a message of reconciliation based on Christian values (Pali, 2019). In Indonesia, Father Mangun participated in advocating for the rights of poor people who were threatened with eviction, proving that the Church has a strategic position in fighting for social justice (Mangunwijaya, 1999). In this way, the Church is not only a place of worship but also a forum for social movements that bring change to society.

Apart from being an agent of change, the Church also acts as a source of social healing. In societies experiencing conflict or instability, the Church's teaching on forgiveness and reconciliation becomes an important tool in restoring social relations. For example, after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Christian churches played a major role in the national reconciliation process by helping people forgive and build a life together (Longman, 2009). In Papua, local churches often act as mediators in various social conflicts that occur between local communities and the government. This proves that the Church does not only exist as a spiritual institution, but also as a bridge for peace in a divided society. Apart from that, the Church also builds awareness of social justice in society. Church teaching often emphasizes that justice is part of active faith. By emphasizing the importance of fighting for individual rights, the Church plays a significant role in inclusive social development. Matthew 5:6 teaches, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled (Bible, 2020). This verse shows that the struggle for justice is an inseparable part of the Christian faith. For example, the courage of Sister Laurentina and Pastor Merry Kolimon in East Nusa Tenggara in opposing human trafficking shows that the Church can be a voice for the weak and oppressed.

### **Church social programs in education, health and economics**

The church has a significant role in improving social welfare, not only as a religious institution but also as an agent of sustainable social change. The Church's social teachings emphasize the values of social justice, concern for the poor, as well as the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, which are then realized in various economic, educational and health empowerment programs (Cahill, 2021). The Church not only provides charitable assistance but also empowers people to be economically independent, obtain proper education and access

adequate health (Internationalis, 1897). In this way, the Church plays a role in creating a more inclusive and just social environment for the wider community.

In the aspect of economic empowerment, the Church has developed various initiatives to improve the standard of living of the community, especially those in weak economic conditions. At the global level, organizations such as *Charity International* and the *Jesuit Refugee Service* have played a major role in providing assistance to vulnerable groups such as refugees, disaster victims, and poor communities by providing job skills training, providing business capital, and social and psychological assistance (McPherson, 2024). In Indonesia, the Church, through the Socio-Economic Empowerment (PSE) institution, participates in establishing community-based cooperatives and micro-enterprises, which aim to strengthen the economic independence of the community (Budiman et al., 2024). This program not only provides capital for small businesses but also provides entrepreneurship training and assistance in business management so that businesses started by the community can develop sustainably. In addition, many churches support community-based economic efforts such as organic farming, animal husbandry and home industry as concrete efforts to improve the economic welfare of the community.

Apart from the economic sector, the Church also has a major contribution in the world of education, which is the main instrument in creating an independent and prosperous society. Since colonial times, the Church has established schools that provide access to education for various levels of society, including those who are less fortunate. At the global level, organizations such as *Jesuit Schools Network* has played a role in providing quality education in various countries by emphasizing ethical values, leadership, and social service (Lee, 2024). In Indonesia, the Church through the Catholic Education Foundation has established various schools, from elementary to tertiary level. Church-managed educational institutions are often known to be of high quality and focus on character development and service to the community (Madur, 2021). Apart from that, the Church is also involved in non-formal education such as skills courses, literacy programs for adults, and inclusive education for children with special needs. The Church's involvement in education increasingly shows that the Church is not only oriented towards teaching spiritual values but also towards forming an intelligent and highly competitive society (Mentang & Mua, 2022).

Furthermore, the Church also plays a crucial role in the health sector which is a fundamental aspect in improving social welfare. Catholic Church via *Catholic Health Association* (CHA) has managed various hospitals and health centers that provide medical services to millions of people around the world, including those who do not have access to proper health services (Santos, 2024). In Indonesia, the Church also plays an active role in the health sector through the establishment of hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. Catholic hospitals spread across various regions have provided health services to the general public without distinction of social status or religion, making it a real form of the Church's concern for the welfare of humanity. Apart from that, the Church also runs community-based health programs such as posyandu, free health checks, and infectious disease prevention campaigns. The Church's contribution in the health sector became increasingly visible when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, where many churches opened their facilities as vaccination centers, provided health education to congregations, and helped the community access medical services (Wau, 2020).

Not only does it play a role in economic, educational and health aspects, the Church also functions as an agent of sustainable social development that fights for social justice, protects the environment and builds inter-religious dialogue. The church often becomes a voice for those who are less heard, fighting for the rights of the poor, and supporting social policies that favor the welfare of society at large. Pope Francis, through the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, emphasized the importance of protecting the environment as part of social and spiritual responsibility, which was then implemented by various Church communities through greening programs, waste management, and environmental awareness campaigns (Mourao & Martinho, 2021). Apart from that, the Church is also involved in building social harmony through collaboration with other religious organizations to create a more inclusive and tolerant society. The Church's efforts to encourage cooperation between religious communities show that social welfare cannot be achieved separately, but must be carried out collectively by involving various elements of society.

Based on the various roles that have been explained, it is clear that the Church has a very large contribution to improving social welfare through economic empowerment, education and health. By running cooperative programs and entrepreneurship training, the Church helps improve people's living standards. Through the establishment of schools and scholarship programs, the Church provides broader and better quality access to education. In the health sector, the Church contributes to providing medical services for the poor as well as community-based health programs. Apart from that, the Church also plays a role as an agent of sustainable social

development that fights for social justice, protects the environment, and builds interfaith dialogue (Wau, 2020). Therefore, the Church not only functions as a religious institution but also as a pillar in inclusive and sustainable social development. This role reflects the Church's commitment to continue serving and empowering the community, thereby creating equitable prosperity for all levels of society.

### **The Church as a mediator of conflict and reconciliation**

One clear example of the Church's role in reconciliation occurred in the early 2000s in Maluku, when social conflict involving Muslim and Christian communities reached a critical point. This conflict not only caused casualties, but also left deep social wounds for the local community (Sihotang, 2024). In this situation, Church leaders work together with Muslim figures to build a space for dialogue, bringing both parties together in an effort to create deeper understanding. This approach is carried out by building sustainable communication, bringing together religious leaders, and creating joint programs to remove social barriers formed as a result of conflict (Turmudi, 2021). As a result, slowly, people began to understand that peace is not just about stopping physical violence, but also an effort to rebuild trust between previously warring communities.

Not stopping at the conflict mediation aspect, the Church also plays an active role in post-conflict recovery. After the violence subsides, the next challenge is how to restore the socio-economic conditions of the affected communities. In many cases, conflict causes community separation, loss of access to economic resources, and increased social inequality (Saul, 2022). To overcome this, the Church plays a role in facilitating rehabilitation programs, both in the form of psychosocial support for trauma victims, rebuilding public facilities such as schools and places of worship, to community-based economic empowerment (Singer, 2024). This role emphasizes that the Church not only functions as a mediator in resolving conflicts, but also as an agent of social transformation that helps rebuild a more stable and harmonious societal structure.

Apart from playing a role in conflict resolution and social reconciliation, the Church is also active in various charity activities and social actions aimed at improving community welfare (Mangunwijaya, 1999). These activities are not just a form of social responsibility, but also a real implementation of the teachings of love which are at the core of Christian values. On various occasions, the Church initiated programs oriented towards community empowerment, such as providing humanitarian aid, support for victims of natural disasters, as well as education and health programs for vulnerable groups.

For example, when the tsunami disaster hit Aceh in 2004, various churches in Indonesia participated in recovery efforts by providing assistance in the form of basic necessities, volunteers and health services for the victims (Pratama, 2023). Although Aceh is known as an area with a strong Muslim majority, the assistance provided by the Church shows that human values trump religious differences. This shows that the teaching of love is not only exclusive to the Church's internal community, but also extends to everyone regardless of religious or ethnic background (Desportes et al., 2024).

Not only in the context of disasters, the Church's social action is also visible in sustainable community development programs. One aspect that receives special attention is the education sector. Many churches in Indonesia have established Christian-based schools that not only serve Christians, but are also open to people from various backgrounds (Madur, 2021). These schools often offer quality education with an approach that instills moral and ethical values in everyday life. The education provided is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also towards the formation of character and strong human values.

In the context of a multicultural society, one of the biggest challenges is building understanding between religions to avoid friction that has the potential to trigger conflict. In this case, the Church also plays a strategic role in strengthening interfaith dialogue. Awareness of the importance of interfaith communication has encouraged many churches to initiate discussion forums, seminars and educational programs aimed at increasing tolerance and mutual understanding between religious communities (Hickman & Silva, 2018). These programs are often realized in the form of joint activities involving various religious communities. For example, in several large cities in Indonesia, the Church has become a facilitator in interfaith cooperation programs covering educational, social and environmental fields. One concrete example of this initiative is cooperation between Christian and Islamic communities in environmental rehabilitation programs in disaster-prone areas. Through projects like this, people are not only taught about the importance of protecting the environment, but also about how to work together with people from different religious backgrounds to achieve the same goals (Sianipar, 2020).

On a broader scale, the Church also contributes to building public policies that are inclusive and based on social justice values. Many Church leaders are active in advocating policies related to social issues, such as human rights, economic justice, and religious freedom. With this involvement, the Church shows that spirituality

is not only related to an individual's relationship with God, but also with social responsibility towards others and the surrounding environment (Northcut, 2004).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Church, as a religious institution, not only functions as a place of worship but also as an agent of social transformation that contributes to various aspects of development, such as education, health, economics and social reconciliation. The findings of this research show that Christian teachings can be the foundation for inclusive and sustainable social policies, especially in efforts to reduce social inequality and improve community welfare. From this research, it can be developed further, so that Christian values can be implemented in social development theory and provide a new perspective on the role of religion in public policy. This study also highlights the challenges faced in integrating religious teachings into development practices, such as cultural resistance and limited resources. Therefore, collaboration between religious leaders, academics and policy makers is very important in designing social development strategies based on spiritual values. By understanding the role of religion in social development, it is hoped that this research can provide insight for policymakers and religious communities in creating more just and equitable social welfare.

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