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Mediatorship Office as an Alternative Dialogue to Indonesian Muslim: An Exercise to the Christology of John Owen

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Abstract

Indonesia contains research materials together with its diversity that interesting to be explored. Heterogeneity is the unique feature offered. Mainly speaking, Indonesia is the most Muslim population globally, which opens possibilities and controversies in their engagement to Christians. In response, the tension requires discussion that could connect Christians as a minority to Muslims in Indonesia. Christology receives less attention as a topic of dialogue to other faith due it contains fluctuation. Throughout decades, it becomes the center of attention of academicians because it reflects massive wrestling. Indeed, Christology serves the possibility to bridge contributive discussion to faith and religions. This essay is a systematic interreligious study that attempts to evaluate the mediatorship of Christ. The expectation is, this treatise could offer alternative dialogue to Indonesian Muslims. John Owen's knowledge leads this treatise to gain several notions concerning the mediatorship of Christ that may help Christian to renovate better life for Muslims in Indonesia. The unconditional and initiative love is the main attribute of mediatorship work that shares the possibility for dialogue with Indonesian Muslims.

Keywords: christian-muslim relationship; christology; interreligious; mediatorship; socio-religion; systematic theology.

Abstrak

Indonesia merupakan ladang penelitian yang memiliki keragaman yang layak untuk dipelajari. Heterogenitas merupakan salah satu kekhasan yang ditawarkan. Secara khusus, Indonesia merupakan negara dengan populasi orang Islam tertinggi di dunia membuka peluang interaksi maupun kontradiksi dengan kelompok Kristen. Menanggapi fenomena ini, maka diperlukan suatu objek diskusi yang dapat menjembatani interaksi orang Kristen sebagai minoritas dan kaum Muslim di Indonesia. Kristologi menerima kurang perhatian sebagai diskursus dialog dengan agama lain karena mengandung kontroversi. Selama berabad-abad, tema ini menjadi pusat perhatian para akademisi karena merefleksikan pergulatan yang hebat. Namun, Kristologi menawarkan probabilitas untuk menjembatani diskusi yang konstruktif bagi interaksi agama-agama. Itulah sebabnya, dengan menggunakan pendekatan interreligious-sistematika, penelitian ini mencoba untuk mengevaluasi peran perantaraan Kristus dan donasinya bagi ilmu pengetahuan. Ekspektasinya adalah, riset ini mampu menawarkan alternatif dialog terhadap orang-orang Muslim di Indonesia. Gagasan John Owen menuntun penelitian ini mendapatkan berbagai pengetahuan sehubungan dengan perantaraan Kristus yang dapat menolong orang Kristen dalam membangun kembali hubungan yang lebih baik dengan orang Muslim. Sebagai kesimpulan, nilai-nilai perantaraan Kristus merefleksikan sumbangsi yang kaya terhadap hubungan Kristen-Islam di Indonesia. Kasih tanpa pamrih dan inisiatif Kristus adalah tema utama dari pekerjaan perantaraan yang memberikan peluang diskusi dengan orang Muslim di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: hubungan kristen-muslim; kristologi; interreligi; perantaraan; sosial-agama; sistematik teologi.

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Introduction

Indonesia offers massive study material as a multi-religious country,¹ explicitly speaking, theology, and religion discussion.² Islam as the dominant religion, followed by Protestantism in the second place, leads to consistent public square relations. Therefore, several topics are considered as possibilities to bind them. On the Christian side, an empathetic approach has been placed to open interreligious conversation. As the center of Christian doctrine, Christology shares less opportunity because it contains controversy,³ even more, potentially leading to schism. Significantly, Christology separates Christian and Muslim faith where the Bible testifies Christ's divinity while the Qur'an against it, including his sacrifice in the cross and role as a savior. Muslim considers him simply as a prophet.⁴

The tension consequences less opportunity to employ Christology as an alternative way to offer hospitality, love, charity, and generosity to Muslims. Christ's incarnation aims to save a human being as the redemption plan; Christology may bear a positive legacy for Christian relationships to other faiths. The opportunity to discern some alternative contribution, however, probably prepared in a limited amount. Therefore, John Owen states that Christian has to endeavor after receiving freedom,⁵ encouraged to gain formula to reach their Muslim neighbor. As salvation was given without charge, receivers

¹ See, Lyn Parker, Chang-You Hoon, and Raihani, "Young People's Attitude Towards Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Socializing, Courtship and Marriage in Indonesia," (*South East Asia Research*, vol.22, no.4, 467-486, 2014, DOI: 10.5367/sear.2014.0230), Asep Muhammad Iqbal, Desi Erawati, Abdul Qodir, Khairil Anwar, "Constructing Third Space in A Multi-Religious Society: A Preliminary Account of Interreligious Relations between Muslims, Christians and Kaharingan Adherents in Kalimantan Tengah, Indonesia," (*Kalam*, vol.12, no.2, 2018, DOI: 10.24042/klm.v12i2.3394), and Sintha Wahjusaputri, "Religions Conflict in Indonesia Problems and Solutions," (*Sociology Study*, vol.5, no.12, 2015, DOI:10.17265/2159-5526/2015.12.004).

² See, Syamsul Rijal and Mukhamad Ilyasin, "Religion, Theology and Terorism in Indonesia: Reconstruction of Theo-Anthropocentric Theology," (*International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 2017, DOI: 10.15640/ijpt.v5n1a4), and June McDaniel, "Indonesia, Modernity and Some Problems of Religious Adaptation," (*Wacana*, vol.15, 2015, DOI: 10.17510/wacana.v15i2.406).

³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 235. See also, Charstar Arstilo Rumbay, "Christology in Digital Era: A Socio-systematic Theology Contribution to the Sustainable Smart Society," (*PASCA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, vol.16, no.1, 2020, DOI: 10.46494/psc.v16i1.70) and "The Knowledge of Hospitality in the Redemption of Christ," (*Diegesis: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika*, vol.2, no.2, 2019). Charstar articulates how Christology shares controversies and fluctuations even in a modern context, innovative modern society and digital era. Furthermore, it potentially reflects debates to other faiths.

⁴ See, Jefrey Cerdado, *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew and the Qur'an: Commonalities and Differences* (A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate School CICM Maryhill School of Theology, Master of Arts in Theology, 2013), Warren Larson, "Jesus in Islam and Christianity: Discussing the Similarities and Differences," (*Missiology: An International Review*, vol.36, 2008, DOI: 10.1177/009182960803600305), and Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

⁵ John Owen, *The Glory of Christ*, Rev. Terry Kulakowski., ed (Zeeland, MI: Reformed Church Publication, 2009), 122.

responsible for maintaining its gift. Carl R. Trueman defines Owen as “finest theological mind England ever produced,”⁶ was born from puritans parents at Stadham in Oxfordshire. Owen pursued his BA and M.A in Queen’s College, Oxford. He has massive works in theology, especially speaking in the doctrine of God. He splits his discussion to share a clear distinction between each person of Trinity.⁷ Christar Rumbay has been worked to discover Owen’s works on the doctrine of God with Indonesian context.⁸ With this in mind, the works of Owen potentially could contribute knowledge to the tension.

Owen contributes masterpieces on the doctrine of God but also contributes wide pieces of Christology. It is interesting to see what Owen could offer in Christology's work concerning how Christians relate to his Muslim neighbor in Indonesia. This essay attempts to grasp Owen's perspective of Christology in its mediatorship office to present how Christians should reach Muslims in Indonesia. Therefore, the research question that leads this treatise is, what can be learned from the mediatorship of Christ in John Owen's thought concerning the relationship of Christian to Muslim in Indonesia?

This essay is a qualitative work that attempts to evaluate Owen's primary works on Mediatorship of Christ. Further, an empathetic analysis investigates socio-religion issues of Muslim-Christians in Indonesia. Gradually, the conversation will be shared among Owen's thoughts and current socio-religion fluctuation in Indonesia. Eventually, Owen's Christology knowledge, a cross-religion dialogue, will be constructed, renovated, and implemented into Muslim-Christian society in Indonesia.

Multi-Layered of Religious Society

In Indonesia, Religion is considered a divine revelation recorded by a certain prophet in the scripture, which organizes the believer’s community practically and spiritually.⁹ It is a sacral dimension where it usually becomes a public discussion, and Indonesia accommodates it as a common dialogue topic. In the daily interaction, attention has been given in large portion to see possibilities of connection, even more, differences

⁶ Carl R. Trueman, “John Owen as a Theologian,” in *John Owen: The Man and His Theology*, ed. Robert W. Oliver (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2002), 43.

⁷ See John Owen’s works, *Communion with God, On Pneumatology, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, and etc.

⁸ Christar Arstilo Rumbay, “Constructing Contributive Dialogue Between the Doctrine of God in John Owen Thought and First Principle of Pancasila,” (*Dunamis: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani*, vol.5, no.2, 234-249, 2021, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30648/dun.v5i2.331>).

⁹ Michel Picard and Remy Madinier, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, Orthodoxy, and Religious Contention in Java and Bali* (London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 3.

that could lead particular faith may claim as the truth and accusing other faith as wicked. However, Indonesia demonstrates a multi-religious community, a rich source of a social experiment and material of investigation, acknowledges six official religions which is; Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, where Islam is the dominant religion in the first place, and Protestant far below in the second place. Therefore, Muslims and Christians perform regular dialogue in public life, a discussion that end to a better life, and in contrast, leads to the disintegration of those groups.

As a multi-layered country, Indonesia recognizes six official religions but practiced in many ways, for instance, Islam with mystical elements of animism as does as Hinduism in Bali and Christianity throughout the islands, in which it leads to various aspects of social relations, faiths, cuisines, arts, and etiquette, Indonesia is identified as a heterogenic country.¹⁰ The cultural legacy of Indonesian ancestors is maintained well by society; the coming of religion does not disturb the existing culture due to the combination of culture and religion throughout ancient Indonesians' history. As a consequence, Indonesia bears a multicultural identity, gives character to all religions in Indonesia. Islam in Java may diverse from Islam in Sumatra; on the other side, Christianity in Papua probably has a significant difference from Christianity in North Sulawesi; moreover, each faith in Indonesia performs broad distinction.

Separating culture from religion requires expensive effort because religion has been contaminated with cultural influence, and the culture itself is considered part of the divine dogma.¹¹ However, the way religion mixed to culture could be regarded as either contextualization or syncretism. Nevertheless, the opportunity appears here; culture could be the gate that may connect Christianity to Muslims. The subject of Christ could be covered in cultural appearance that may easier to be accepted by local people. However, the danger and obstacles are waiting because contextualization is very close to syncretism, and their process is interrelated.¹² Here a sensitive approach to Christology should be applied well without reducing its core theological nature. The Christology of John Owen is treated by contextualization to Muslim culture in Indonesia.¹³

¹⁰ Jill Forshee, *Culture and Custom of Indonesia* (London: Greenwood Press, 2006), 29.

¹¹ Hermansyah, "Islam and Local Culture in Indonesia," (*Al Albab*, vol.3, no.1, 2014, DOI: 10.24260/alalbab.v3i1.94).

¹² Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006), 3.

¹³ See Rheenen, *Contextualization and Syncretism*, 2006. Contextualization is the translation of biblical meanings into contemporary cultural context, in the other side, syncretism is conscious or unconscious reshaping of Christian plausibility, structure, beliefs and practices through cultural accommodation where cultural being dominant.

Moreover, at first sight, tolerance is the main problem of the diverse society in Indonesia.¹⁴ Diversity lies in differences and varieties of ideas that lead to the rich contribution where only a single decision is needed; therefore, heterogenic society is susceptible to conflict compared to homogeny group. Curiously, the attribute of tolerance alive within Indonesian's original culture, even more, the six official religions present harmony and peacefulness to their followers. For instance, the Javanese equips the term *tepa slira*, which means 'treat other as well as you would like to be treated,' furthermore, Balinese claims that tolerance naturally exists in their life and have no urgency to put it into a word.¹⁵ The origin culture of Indonesia accommodates welcome treatment to other strangers in which applied to fellow religious people. An integration between religion and indigenous culture in Indonesia leads to several conclusions. First, most of the religions are the combination of local cultures; second, it is sensitive to define religion practicing syncretism or contextualization; third, the nature of religions and cultures offer harmony and peace, and the last is, the original pure culture is an alternative gate to enter Muslim community.

The Tension of Christian-Muslim Relationship

Indonesia's image displays moderate Islam, a home of pluralism where Islam and Christianity are two tangibles, separate entities that collide with or tolerate each other.¹⁶ Living in cultures and religions that offer harmony and tolerance, religious differences become a systematic and regular issue, explicitly speaking, Christian-Muslim relationship.¹⁷ The violence occurred in several places, happened periodically, encourages bombings in temples, places of worship, and persecutions to the minority. Moreover, the main central tension between those faiths is Christianization and the Islamic state.¹⁸ In response to the tension, a joint decree was issued in September 1969 where considered by

¹⁴ Sri Widayati and Eka Cahya Maulidiyah, *Religious Tolerance in Indonesia* (Conference: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Education Innovation, ICEI 2018, DOI:10.2991/icei-18.2018.155), Adeng Muchtar Ghazali and Aan Hazanah, "Understanding Religious Tolerance in Indonesia: The Islamic Theological Perspectives," (*Humanities and Social Science Reviews*, vol.8, 699-706, 2020, DOI:10.18510/hssr.2020.8184), Muhammad Farid, *Religious Intolerance and the Problematic of Religious Radicalism in Indonesia* (3rd International Seminar on Islamic Thought, 2018), and see also, Vincent Monteil, *Relationship Between Religions in Indonesia* (Archipel, Annee, 1971, 1, 35-44), 36.

¹⁵ Monteil, *Relationship Between Religions in Indonesia*, 37.

¹⁶ En-Chieh Chao, *Entangled Pietes: Muslim-Christian Relations and Gendered Sociality in Java, Indonesia* (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), 2.

¹⁷ Subehan Khalik, "Hubungan Islam-Kristen: Abad Pertengahan Hingga Modern," (*Jurnal Al-Qadau: Peradilan dan Hukum Keluarga Islam*, vol.6, 2019, DOI: 10.24252/al-qadau.v6i1.9470).

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

Christian against religious freedom.¹⁹ The main objection is establishing new places of worship where Muslims are the majority, consequently preventing Christian churches' growth. However, the decree has a similar effect on Muslims who stay in Christian's central area; Muslims are not allowed to own properties that could dominate the land and develop Islamic teaching.²⁰

On the other side, Islamic State is considered a threat to Christianity because they will be treated as the second class of citizens under Islamic state law. The early controversy lies in the battle of conservative Islam and nationalism or secular civilian Christian-Muslim. The contest between those ideologies re-emerged after the fall of communism and its effects on Christians' spiritual security.²¹ A quick conclusion here is, both Muslim and Christian battles religious freedom and state regulation; however, the law aims to accommodate the private square of its citizen, intends to offer harmony. However, it is considered against religious people's freedom due to restrictions toward several rights are deducted.

Besides socio-religion tension, theological differences play a significant role in the Christian-Muslim relationship in Indonesia and worldwide. Oddbjom Leirvik argues that Christianity distorted the image of Christ and instead follow the Greek-Roman emperor to decide how the Son should be portrayed because the intention is to fit Christian faith with the ordinary religious world.²² This common assumption to Christian applied in Indonesia quietly similar. In his work, Alexander Arifianto argues that Christianity is considered a colonized religion; it demonstrates the origins tension date from the Dutch colonial period.²³ Its development is worried could bring back the dark ages in the past where the Western world was superior in Indonesian Muslims' land. Therefore, Islamic teaching and Indonesian Muslims' theological views are avoided, especially speaking, the Christology. The image of Christ has been a sensitive issue in Christian-Muslim dialogue and interaction. Christianity assumes that Mohammad is the poor copy of Christ while Muslims consider Christ a secular emperor's portrayal.²⁴

¹⁹ Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened: Muslim-Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 58-59.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 61.

²¹ *Ibid*, 105.

²² Oddbjom Leirvik, *Image of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 2nd edition (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 1.

²³ Alexander Arifianto, "Explaining the Cause of Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Indonesia: Tracing the Origins of Kristenisasi and Islamisasi," (*Islam and Christian-Muslim Relationship*, 20(1), 73-89, 2009, DOI: 10.1080/09596410802542144).

²⁴ Leirvik, *Image of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 1.

However, Qur'an approaches Jesus with the dogmatic resolution, historical approach, soteriology, and classical controversies. Further, Qur'an pays more attention to Old Testament; figures in this book receive more attention than Jesus. For instance, Abraham and Moses participate in several passages in the Qur'an rather than the suffering servant Jesus,²⁵ and the common debate addressed to the deity of Jesus. Indonesian Christian-Muslim serves similar tension on Jesus. Theological difference provokes the harmonious relations of religious people. Islam considers Jesus as Adam; God created from the dust, servant of God, and simply a messenger for human beings.²⁶ This fact concludes that Jesus plays a distinctive role in Islam; it could bridge to Christian or creates a gulf.²⁷ With this in mind, building a positive dialogue with the subject of Jesus is potential. Besides the negative prejudice of Muslims toward Christian Christology, a positive contribution is still available from this subject, intended to offer better discussion and dialogue.

Owen's Christology Contribution for Indonesian Context

The relationship between Christ and sinful man is described as a fellowship where Christ, as the God's representative, is considered a blessing for a human being.²⁸ Owen employs the common language of the human being to give comprehensive knowledge of this particular connection. The fundamental difference of Christ, the Son, with the other divine person is its relationship level. Because the Father is superior, he takes his role as the initiator, leader of divine person but equal to other; moreover, a significant gap exists between the Father and man; therefore, the Son acts as the mediator.²⁹ However, mediatorship is very common in secular activities, bears a positive contribution to both sides. With this in mind, Christ considers the human being as his fellow friends with no barriers and obstacles and intends to connect with the Father, who attributes divine decree to the highest level. Like Christ, a single person with dual natures, divinity, and humanity³⁰ allow him to be a true mediator. The first stage is; Christ should be introduced

²⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

²⁶ Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany, NY: States University of New York Press, 1991), 7.

²⁷ Leirvik, *Image of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 3.

²⁸ John Owen, *The Person of Christ* (Lafayette: Sovereign Grace Publisher, 2001), 65.

²⁹ John Owen, *Of Communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1965), 27, 31.

³⁰ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 237. See also, Christar Arstilo Rumbay, "The Dualistic Nature of Christ: A Comparison Study of Herman Bavinck and Ellen White Thoughts," (*BIA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen Kontekstual*, vol.3, no.2, 2020).

as a fellow who can work as a mediator for the human being; afterward, it could open the possibility to lead Indonesian Muslims to the next level of knowledge of the Son.³¹ The term mediatorship is not strange due it is equipped by the secular emperor,³² the king in which considered as God, and his people, commoners, need a mediator to link them. The Emperor system in Indonesia displays a similar tone due the leader is regarded as the representative of their unknown gods.³³

The mediatorship of Christ is the reflection of his obedience, bears universal, holiness, and perfect nature. Further, the most prominent discussion relates to the Son's willingness to be sacrificed because the Father owns the initiative, but the decision belongs to Christ.³⁴ This mediatorship leads Christ to the suffering in which he deserved to be glorified,³⁵ in the other word, Christ's participation to take human flesh by incarnation has no direct positive impact on him, the motivation to comply cosmic order in which relates to the salvation of human being. However, the etiquette of Indonesian governs harmony, social interaction and respected and considered extremely important.³⁶ Therefore, generosity and hospitality are influential and respected as the social glue that could bring peacefulness and better life. Transforming love, kindness, material and spiritual resources develop solidarily. The suffering of Christ which is not acknowledged by Muslim theologians that intends to offers salvation, a gift, enables dialogue to Indonesian Muslims. Employing local people's etiquette, the tradition of Indonesian Muslims opens the possibility to bridge positive conversation. A systematic theological concept of Christ translated into local etiquette, common beliefs of social interaction. The delicious and delight gifts of Christ, which are covered in social appearance, could be offered.

³¹ See, Firman Panjaitan and Hendro Hariyanto Siburian, "Misi Kristologi Dalam Konteks Kebudayaan," (*Logia: Jurnal Teologi Pantekosta*, vol.1, no.1, 2019, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37731/log.v1i1.19>), JB. Heru Prakosa, "Gugatan Imanuel Terhadap Doktrin Trinitas: Jembatan Bagi Hubungan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia," (*Jurnal Orientasi Baru*, vol.13, 2000), and Wahyu Satria Wibowo, "Kristologi Dalam Konteks Islam di Indonesia," (*Jurnal Gema Teologi*, vol.33, no.1, 2009).

³² *Ibid*, 233.

³³ The emperor system does not only popular in ancient Java and Bali kingdoms, but other regions share similar hierarchy system. See, Ulber Silalahi, "Kedudukan dan Kekuasaan Raja Dalam Kerajaan Tradisional Dari Satu Masyarakat di Sumatra Utara: Masyarakat Batak Toba," (*Research Report: Humanities and Social Science*, vol.2, 2012), Rusdianto, "Kesultanan Tarnate dan Tidore," (*Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality*, vol.3, no.1, 44-53, 2018, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30984/ajip.v3i1.631>), dan Anzar Abdullah, "Kerajaan Bone Dalam Lintasan Sejarah Sulawesi Selatan: Sebuah Pergolakan Politik dan Kekuasaan Dalam Mencari, Menemukan, Menegakan dan Mempertahankan Nilai-Nilai Entitas Budaya Bugis," (*Lensa Budaya: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Budaya*, vol.12, no.2, 15-28, 2017, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34050/jlb.v12i2.3047>).

³⁴ Owen, *The Glory of Christ*, 66-67.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 68-69.

³⁶ Cathie Draine & Barbara Hall, *Culture Shock! Indonesia, A Guide to Custom and Etiquette* (Portland, Oregon: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1986), 16.

Owen articulates Son's relationship as a garden and connoisseurs, equips the environment to reach human knowledge that could help sinful thought to understand the special relationship. It is pleasant for Christ to enjoy the garden where useful, delicious, beneficial, and even medical.³⁷ The language here employs a shared sense of ecology, allows the humility of Christ down to human nature, and impacts a man to identify Him correctly. However, the problem with other gods or ancient faiths of Indonesian lay in its superiority where the bottom level, human being, has no confidence to reach their idols; therefore, employing mediator or inanimate objects is required to make worship liturgy becomes real. In the previous chapter, it was discussed that in certain places, Indonesian Muslims maintain their ancient beliefs and combine to Islamic teaching where eventually they own unique Islamic tradition identity. However, Christ receives elegant comparison to all things in the whole creation, the lion, sun, star, rose, and lily.³⁸ Two options are suggested here; first, Christ is introduced as a person within the ecology system that allows Indonesian Muslims to interact with him. Second, contextualization could be applied due Christ is analogized as an eminence being in the universe.

Furthermore, in his work, Owen offers Christ's knowledge by linking to the term of genderism, where two different sexes, a man and woman, a husband and wife, a married couple commit for a special relationship and glued by love.³⁹ A key factor of gender issue dissemination in Indonesia relates to government ideology, school curricula, and religion. Its dogma significantly influences Muslim women's role and globalization, mass media, and abroad experience.⁴⁰ The discussion on gender is fundamental, not subordinate to any social formation, but consistently receives debate and chaos.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the main focus of tension is addressed to Muslim women's position where politics may provide strong influence,⁴² or culture legacy that could change religious dogma.⁴³ However, the danger of exposing Christ as a person who bears specific gender will not accommodate Indonesian Muslims because it is an empathetic discussion. However, the divine side of Christ probably bears a chance that could be engaged to religious people due to its lack of

³⁷ Owen, *Of Communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, 27.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 28.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 30.

⁴⁰ Sharyn Graham Davies, *Gender Diversity in Indonesia: Sexuality, Islam, Queer Selves* (New York: Routledge, 2010), xiii – xiv.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 207.

⁴² Sonja Van Wichelen, *Religion, Politics and Gender in Indonesia: Disputing the Muslim Body* (London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 22-41.

⁴³ See Davies, *Gender Diversity in Indonesia*, 2010. She argues that certain culture in Indonesia is superior than Islamic tradition.

gender. Therefore, bearing not a specific gender enables Christ to link Muslim society cross-gender; furthermore, the love of Christ offers a delicious taste that may consequence addiction, leads to sick of love. Owen employs the term sick of love to announce the feeling of taster after having experience with Christ.

Hereunto the love in which offered to man derived from God, the Father, the initiator who performs the Son as a gift to redeem sins. The mediation of Christ presents eternal love,⁴⁴ through his human nature, the love becomes effectual in all inclination and acting.⁴⁵ For Owen, the foundation of Christ's work lies in the act of divine love or good pleasure, which Christ came as the second man, and last Adam. Bringing restoration, reconstitution, and glory to the universe into an existence that surpasses its original form; however, the first step of this invention requires the restoration of individual sinners and entire human beings who could regain full fellowship with God. The heavenly and earthy family must be brought together as a glorious united family in which Christ himself acts as the head.⁴⁶ On the side of Christ, incarnation's motivation lies in his obedience to his Father and the sacrificing love he owns, bridging the society in heaven and earth. On the other side, the Father bears initiative, love, and willingness to let his beloved Son crucified. Those attributes of love are revealed in the mediatorship event. However, a mediator has two possibilities, it bears either positive or negative contributions, but the motivation always intends for better dialogue. Here the role of Christ as a mediator to total Christianity plays its mission, becomes the center of attention that can draw Indonesian Muslim and Christian community. Christology should not always be a place of controversy; instead, it is a gravity, a neutral meeting point, offers goodness and kindness to the stranger. Instead of drive Muslims to Christian dogma, a heavy spiritual character, the love, and mediatorship of Christ have the probability to be accepted. The tendency of acceptance opened widely due to Christ's humanity who perform love has a strong effect on sinful man, due it is considered love transforming and sharing between human beings, human Christ, and Indonesian Muslims.

The mediatorship office only possible if Christ has a human nature because he could not die in divinity; therefore, God prepared human flesh to actualize the intention. The benefits of his sacrifice would be meaningless if he did not incarnate in the

⁴⁴ Owen, *The Glory of Christ*, 61-62.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 63.

⁴⁶ Dinu Moga, *A Consideration of John Owen's Teaching on the Heavenly Session of Christ* (Scienco: Perichoreris Vol. 17, Single Author Supplement 1 (2019): 3–20), 4.

humiliation of flesh.⁴⁷ The humanity of Christ should be offered in advance, leading the communication and dialogue. A dialogue would be linked to an equal degree, and interaction will be convenient due to Christ's deity against monotheistic teaching, notably in Islamic tradition. The Son's modesty coming to the lower cluster, humble himself, and incarnation in human appearance could be accepted as a humanitarian attitude that may receive a warm welcome. Furthermore, Owen articulates the mediatorial work with the threefold office of Christ, the king, priest, and prophet in which fits the common sense of Indonesian Muslims. The responsibility to reveal the will of the Father employs his office as a prophet, a mediator who works to pass God's knowledge to man; in this sense, Christ fulfills the prophet's attribute. Christ kingly office deals with the doctrine of dual nature of Christ where the Son always a king during his incarnation, explicitly speaking, he is the king by delegation, within the mediation structure.⁴⁸ Furthermore, lastly, Christ as a man represents people who stand as a priest in the covenant of redemption.⁴⁹ With this in mind, Christ mediatorship's theological reflection could be translated sociologically and anthropologically to the Indonesian context. Christ could be regarded as a sachem or headman who acknowledges as the chief of ritual activity and fatFather prosperity, which leads the group to survive. A leader is a wealthy, well-educated, and supernatural ability where the followers submit to their leader.

The main intention of mediatorship, his incarnation, is to recover and save poor sinners.⁵⁰ It articulates multivalent in function and multidimensional in form,⁵¹ accommodates the Father's order and facilitates the communication between two different natures concerning salvation. Redemption, however, has a close connection to soteriology, a future expectation that becomes the most significant issue of religious people, even for scientists, because mystery remains in all human knowledge and prediction about the future. Even for the ancient citizen, modern community, theologians, and all groups of people, no one has to prove or owns an absolute estimation due it does not happen yet. A question of the end of the world and human life after death leads to confusion. The fact now is, acknowledge by all religions in the universe, that sin had been damaged and spoiled man's original nature. Therefore, the urgency now is to restore the real life of human beings. Redemption from sins provides promise that could be gained in

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

⁵⁰ John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ.*, William H Goold (Johnstone & Hunter, 1850), 13.

⁵¹ Moga, *A Consideration of John Owen's Teaching*, 4.

the future, and the whole system of redemption was occurred in the cross by Christ, a certainty to all sinful flesh, an expectation in which reality will be realized in the end time. Offering promise, a better life, and a fundamental expectation of life to Indonesian Muslims probably will result in a connected conversation that could develop a better society of religious people, predominantly Christian to Muslim in Indonesia.

Standard etiquette governs the expectation of response after receiving resources from the giver. In wealth sharing, the host wishes to earn feedback from the guest, basically, no free dealing at the human level. It is the will of the Father to send His Son; therefore, Christ was doing his Father's business for the sake of man.⁵² The Father and Spirit are linked by eternal counsel and approval to the Son.⁵³ Christ as a present is offered by the Father without any expectation of receiving feedback that may benefit him. The participation of Christ in the sinful world should not be considered as a transaction in the market or business partner in which both sides will gain benefits. The motivation of the incarnation of Christ purely for man's sake, the Father, Son, and Spirit have no advantage by participating in this universe event; further, Christ as the center of attention, earns no support from another divine person except advice and approval. It presents a priceless gift with no good miniature, the guest, the Father who proposes a gift, Christ, to the guest, human being. The only task of man is merely to accept or avoid it. The approach here should be linked with the local knowledge of Indonesian Muslims, the title of Christ as a free offering placed in the high display of dialogue, a topic of discussion where do not require any cost.

Conclusion

The Christology of Owen supplies rich knowledge on mediatorship office. In particular dimension, it occupies the possibilities of bridging dialogue to Indonesian Muslims. Firstly, mediatorship's motivation is to transform and share the initiative love of the Father and sacrificing love of the Son without any expectation of feedback. It enables the receivers to accept without burden because this gift's nature is free and less of responsibility. The etiquette in which governs horizontal interaction requires the attribute of openness, hospitality, generosity, and humility fit to the nature of mediatorship office of Christ. Furthermore, the theological concept of Christ needs to be articulated in socio-religion where positive contribution impression of the mediatorship office could be

⁵² Owen, *The Death of Death*, 26.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 27.

accepted as common sense to the local culture of Indonesian Muslims. In conclusion, the mediatorship of Christ in the work of John Owen remains the opportunity to reach cross-religious society, explicitly speaking, Indonesian Muslim.

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