

Martin Luther and The Concept of The Reformation of a True Church (An Analytical Study and Phenomenon On The Denominations Of Church)

Syamsul Hadi Untung*
Universitas Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor
Email: syams.untung@gmail.com

Khoirunisa*
Universitas Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor
Email: nisawidodo96@gmail.com

Abstract

Church reforms carried out by Martin Luther centered on Christians who wanted to be saved from the teachings of the deviant Catholic church. One of Martin Luther's thoughts in reforming the church is his unique understanding of the problem of sin and his acceptance of God's presence. This research uses the library research method which is sourced from the works of Martin Luther and the text of the Holy Bible. The approach used by the author is the historical-historical approach (analysis-history), with this approach the writer can arrange and conceptually arrange the course of the history of the Catholic Church and Martin Luther. The purpose of this writing is to read the events that Martin Luther has done in reforming the church, he has a different influence on Christianity today. Their forms of belief differ from the way in which the Scriptures are conveyed. So the author can conclude that the ideas of Martin Luther appeared to submit 95 theses of criticism for the teachings of the church which according to him to deviate and after the success of Martin Luther in reforming the church. The church denomination was created after reforming the Catholic church. So some Christians feel worried about the denominations of the church around them that will only make them divided and united until now.

Keywords: *Reformation, Martin Luther, Church, Denominations, Teachings.*

*Dean of the Faculty of Usuluddin, Darussalam University of Gontor, Jl. Raya Siman Km. 06, Ponorogo, Tel. 0352-483762. Fax: 0352-488182.

*Student of the Faculty of Usuluddin Darussalam University Gontor Campus 5 Kandangan, Kediri

Abstrak

Reformasi gereja yang dilakukan oleh Martin Luther berpusat pada orang-orang Kristen yang ingin diselamatkan dari ajaran gereja Katolik yang menyimpang. Salah satu pemikiran Martin Luther dalam mereformasi gereja, adalah pemahaman unik tentang masalah dosa dan penerimaannya ke hadirat Allah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode library research yang bersumberkan dari karya-karya Martin Luther dan teks Kitab suci gereja Katholik. Adapun pendekatan yang digunakan oleh penulis yakni pendekatan analisis-sejarah (analysis-history), dengan pendekatan tersebut penulis dapat merangkai dan menyusun secara konsepsi jalannya sejarah gereja Katholik dan tokoh Martin Luther. Adapun tujuan penulisan ini untuk membaca peristiwa yang telah dilakukan Martin Luther dalam mereformasi gereja, ia memiliki pengaruh yang berbeda terhadap kekristenan dewasa ini. Bentuk-bentuk kepercayaan mereka berbeda dengan cara di mana Kitab Suci disampaikan. Sehingga penulis dapat menyimpulkan bahwa gagasan Martin Luther muncul untuk mengajukan 95 tesis kritik untuk ajaran-ajaran gereja yang menurutnya menyimpang serta setelah keberhasilan Martin Luther dalam mereformasi gereja. Adapun denominasi gereja diciptakan setelah mereformasi gereja Katolik. Sehingga beberapa orang Kristen merasa cemas tentang denominasi gereja di sekitar mereka yang hanya akan membuat mereka terpecah dan tidak bersatu sampai sekarang.

Kata kunci: *Reformasi, Martin Luther, Gereja, Denominasi-denominasi, Ajaran-ajaran.*

INTRODUCTION

The term “Reformation” directly gives the impression that something, namely Western European Christianity, is being renewed. The fact shows that the term “reform” is generally accepted as an appropriate designation for this movement because this movement is associated with the recognition of the need for a thorough examination of institutions, practices, and understandings of the Western church. The term really helps to show that there are social and intellectual dimensions of the movement.¹ After the emergence of The Renaissance that made civilization in science, but has not been able to overcome the pain of society from the confines of the church, there emerged a movement that fiercely opposed the deviant church dogmas, namely the reformation movement of the church.

Dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church grew in the 15th century and reached its peak in 1517 when Martin Luther (1483-1546),

¹Alister E. McGrath, *Sejarah Pemikiran Reformasi*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 8th edition, 2016), 2.

a monk from the Society of Augustine who worked in Wittenburg, Germany, hung 95 “theses” at the door of the palace church in the city that. He criticized the Catholic Church for selling indulgences to increase funds to be used to rebuild St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.² Luther was excommunicated in 1521. Luther rejected many religious doctrines and practices which did not prove to have a biblical basis. The reforms were ignited in the 16th century by Martin Luther in Germany and by John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli elsewhere in Europe.³

Martin Luther began to inch his way toward his distinctive understanding of how sinners can enter into the presence of a righteous God, classically expressed in the doctrine of justification by faith. While the relationship between the emergence of Luther’s theological distinctive and the historical origins of the Reformation as a whole is more complex.⁴ From the many thoughts of Martin Luther about a reformation of the church, he had a unique understanding of the problem of sin and its acceptance into the presence of God.

Luther wrote of books to the archbishop of Mainz in 1517. The archbishop was selling indulgences to raise money for the new cathedral. Luther wrote in his letter that people were getting the wrong impression. They were buying indulgences to pay for their sins and thought this would make sure they went to heaven after they died. Some even thought they did not need to be sorry for their sins and that no sin was too great. Luther said no priest or bishop could guarantee that a person would be saved. Only Christ could do that. He said it was much better for people to do good works than to buy indulgences. In the same year, Luther made lists of all the things that were bothering him about the indulgences and called it the 95 theses. He nailed this list to the door of the Wittenberg Church.⁵

The way Martin Luther dealt with the problem of the sins of Christians by writing a warning letter to the archbishop (to) not to sell indulgences to pay for the sins of Christians. This received special attention from Luther because Christians get the wrong

²What is meant here is to give a guarantee to someone to be able to go straight to heaven after death when making a contribution to the Church.

³Michael Keene, *Kristianitas*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 68.

⁴Alister E. McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1985), 17.

⁵Martin Luther, *Reformation and Enlightenment 1500-1800*, (United States: McDougal Littell, 2002), 32-33.

impression and assume that if they have bought indulgences, then the person will go to heaven. From this statement, Martin Luther's idea emerged to put up 95 theses of criticism for the teachings of the church which he thought were devoted. After the success of Martin Luther in reforming the church. A new case arises, namely church of denominations created after the reformation of the Catholic church.

A denomination is potentially one of God's good gifts to the church. A denomination is a form in which Christians can live out varying understandings of faith in Jesus Christ and of what that faith requires in terms of the right belief and right practice. Denomination provides a form in which new insights into the faith, or new applications of old insights to changing contexts and circumstances, can be tested by being lived out.⁶ Some Christians feel anxious about the church denominations around them which will only make them divide and not unite until now. And that is the reason, the writer wants to discuss these issues more deeply.

The Concept of Christian Reformers on Reformation of Church

John Calvin was a leader of the church reform movement in Switzerland. He was the second generation in the ranks of pioneers and leaders of the 16th-century church reform movement, but his role was very large in reformist churches. Churches that follow the teachings and governance of the church outlined by Calvin are spread throughout the world. The churches are named after the Calvinist church.⁷ Calvin was the best theologian and exegete among the Reformers. He never abused reason, like Luther, but assigned it the office of an indispensable handmaid of revelation. Philip Schaff constructed with his logical genius the severest system of Protestant orthodoxy which shaped French, Dutch, English, and American theology, and fortified it against Rationalism as well as against Romanism.⁸

Out of the Lutheran church arose another, which was called the reformed, and which was founded by Ulrich Zuinglius, a native of

⁶Paul M. Collins and Barry Ensign-George, *Denomination: Assessing an Ecclesiological Category*, (London: T&T Clark International, 2011), 14.

⁷F. D. Wellem, *Riwayat Hidup Singkat Tokoh-Tokoh Dalam Sejarah Gereja*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2002), 49-50.

⁸Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume VII. Modern Christianity. The German Reformation*, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1882), 27.

Switzerland. Zuinglius began a successful opposition to indulgences and to the whole fabric of papacy in Switzerland, about the time that Luther began in Saxony. The Swiss reformer differed widely from Luther in many articles and was much more evangelical and consistent in his views of the eucharist, and other matters both of faith and practice. But he fell in the battle that was fought in Urich, in 1530, between the protestants and Catholics.⁹

The Concept of Martin Luther on Reformation of Church

The Reformation was a grand act of emancipation from spiritual tyranny and a vindication of the sacred rights of conscience in matters of religious belief. Luther's bold stand at the Diet of Worms, in the face of the pope and the emperor, was one of the sublimest events in the history of liberty, and the eloquence of his testimony rings through the centuries. To break the force of the pope, who called himself and was believed to be, the visible vicar of God on earth, and who held in his hands the keys of the kingdom of heaven, required more moral courage than to fight a hundred battles, and it was done by a humble monk in the might of faith.¹⁰

In a certain way, Luther should be blamed (although not alone) for the schisms within the Reformation. His opinions of other reformers, and how he conveyed it, were unacceptable, and it is, therefore, understandable that they were unwilling to walk the extra mile with him. The first colloquy designed to bring about unity among the protestant churches was that of Marburg, 1529. In spite of Oecolampadius good theological intent, Luther regarded it as an abomination to sit around a table with sectarians (Schwärmer – as he regarded the Zurichers).¹¹

1. Martin Luther's 95 Theses

On October 31st, 1517 Martin Luther attached his 95 Theses to the castle church door in Wittenberg, modern-day Germany. That event cemented the date as prominent in world history. Confessional

⁹David Benedict, *A General History Of The Baptist Denomination Volume 1*, (Albany: Hartland Publications, 1997), 38.

¹⁰Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume VII. Modern Christianity. The German Reformation...*, 37.

¹¹I.W.C. Van Wyk, *Calvin, Luther and church unity*, (Pretoria: Reformed Theological College, 2010), 7.

Lutheran churches have powerful reminders of the date, and the actions of the date, every Reformation Sunday. The 95 Theses certainly are referenced at such times. They are pointed to as the catalyst that began reform. Their posting marked the start of the Reformation proper in our minds. The actual content of the 95 Theses is often foreign to the average Lutheran. The extent of knowledge concerning them often goes no further than the recognition that they were written in opposition to indulgences. The date and the image of Luther with the 95 Theses are iconic, but anything more than a superficial look at those Theses is rare. Perhaps it is not so surprising then that the famous image of Luther pounding a nail through the castle church door is widely recognized yet historically inaccurate.¹²

2. The Doctrine of the Sacraments

The word “sacrament” is used almost universally among Christians to describe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper. The term, which is not found in the English Bible, comes from the Latin word *Sacramentum*. (“It is derived from *Sacro*, āre, to make sacred, dedicate to gods or sacred uses”).¹³ In ancient times the word referred to a pledge of money by two parties that occurred in a sacred place. In ancient Rome, various gods were invoked when swearing a solemn oath. But it is used peculiarly to denote a military oath by which soldiers bound themselves by a certain rite and prescribed words to the state and the magistrate, that they would strenuously perform what the emperor had commanded and would not desert the military standard. The post-apostolic church employed the term to signify any sacred rite or mysterious doctrine.¹⁴

The sacraments incorporate believers into the visible people of God and sustain them in that relationship. Their significance is impaired in a divided church, but they stand as a witness to the catholic and undivided character of the people of God.¹⁵

Christianity takes its place along with the other religions of the world in seeking to answer these questions and explaining the mystery of the ages. Just as every religion sets forth answers, so

¹²David H. Locklair, *The 95 Theses: Dawn Of The Reformation*, (Lakewood: Els West Coast Conference, 2017), 3.

¹³A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 588.

¹⁴Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1997), 338.

¹⁵New Dictionary of Theology, ‘Sacrament’, 607.

the Christian maintains that all solutions to ultimate questions are answered in Jesus Christ. The revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture deals with the eternal mystery. Christianity claims that all other religious teachings are spurious.¹⁶

“There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12), just as Christianity demands that all individuals come to God through Christ: “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6).

Mystery makes the Christian church different from social clubs, political organizations or any other fraternal gathering. As a stranger walks into a building called a church, he notices it looks different from other structures in town; its furniture is emblematic, as are its windows. Religious symbols are etched in stone, wood, and cloth. For the unoriented, the meaning behind the church building is obscure. When listening to a sermon, he hears strange words in the vocabulary of the minister: regeneration, faith, propitiation, and atonement. The minister uses “God-talk.” Christians claim that a living personal God created this earth and sustains it through His personal power; God is imminently interested in every person and desires intimate fellowship with a human man. God wants “saved persons” to come and abide with Him in heaven after this life is over.¹⁷ The Sacraments are amongst the most visible forms of outward expression in Christianity, coming as they do with significant variations, both in number and in practice. Focus on the two main sacraments as practiced in Protestant Christianity, Baptism and Holy Communion.

The Impact of Martin Luther’s Church Reform

According to Professor Hans-Peter Grosshans of Protestant Theology Department, University of Munster, Germany the absolute power of the Pope will grip the lives of Christians, no priestess, not allowed to use singing time of worship, no acculturation and assimilation of Christianity and local culture and freedom is many ways is an impossibility.¹⁸

¹⁶Elmer L. Towns, *Is The Day Of The Denomination Dead?*, (Nashville, New York: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1798), 49.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁸Yuangga Kurnia Yahya, Phenomenological Approach in Interfaith Communication: A Solution to Allegation of Religious Blasphemy in Indonesia, *in Al-*

Denominationalism hinders revival when believers in a given local area are so disunited that they refuse to cooperate across denominational boundaries then revival is undoubtedly hindered. Denominational structures encourage disunity between believers in a local area and to the extent that they do so then revival is hindered. On the other hand, the formation of a vital local area network of believers loving each other, praying together and cooperating in the spread of the gospel is a very good sign of an effective church.¹⁹

When the denomination is unable to find a reason for existence, the whole superstructure drifts and there is no internal strength to hold it together or to give it a new direction. Voices within the denomination cry for a return to the original precepts, yet these prophets appear to have a hollow cry because no one will heed them. One has observed that such denominations have an identity crisis. People lose interest because their spiritual needs are not satisfied; attendance drops and with it the resulting decline in offerings. After attendance goes down, then membership declines and next there are economy moves to cut back programs and close down missions and churches that cannot meet the budget.²⁰

When the denomination is unable to find a reason for existence, the whole superstructure drifts and there is no internal strength to hold it together or to give it a new direction. Voices within the denomination cry for a return to the original precepts, yet these prophets appear to have a hollow cry because no one will heed them. One has observed that such denominations have an identity crisis. People lose interest because their spiritual needs are not satisfied; attendance drops and with it the resulting decline in offerings. After attendance goes down, then membership declines and next there are economy moves to cut back programs and close down missions and churches that cannot meet the budget.²¹

The parable of the life-saving station has an amazing parallel with the Christian church. A dynamic purpose of saving life slowly erodes into a social club. Dedicated workmen brave the elements to seek drowning, helpless victims. The unfolding drama of men against the sea changes over some time. The men no longer go to

Tahrir Journal of Islamic Thought, Vol. 18, No. 2 December 2018, 316.

¹⁹John Edmiston, *Beyond Denominations – The Networked Church*, (American: Lockman Foundation, 1999), 11.

²⁰Elmer L. Towns, *Is The Day Of The Denomination Dead?...*, 60.

²¹*Ibid.*

the sea in ships. The act of rescue is pantomimed on a stage before audiences; the boatmen are play-actors; the lost victims only repeat lines to convince the hearers of their sincerity. Thus, saving the lost becomes an empty ritual surrounded with symbols and meaningless pledges. Many mainline denominational churches simply play-act salvation; few people are ever converted.²²

Each broad family of denominations Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventist Churches, and the like has notable distinctions. In each chapter, I have included a brief section noting some of the primary distinctions.

a. Adventist Churches

The Advent Christian Church is one of the denominations that emerged when Adventists regrouped in 1845 following "the great disappointment" of 1844. William Miller, though not the founder of this denomination, nevertheless provided the doctrines that serve as the theological backbone of the group. The first Advent Christian General Conference was held in 1860. Bible. The writings and prophecies of Ellen G. White are rejected. The Bible alone is inspired and is considered revelation from God. God is the Creator and is eternally existent in three persons the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ.²³

Jesus is the Son of God. In the Incarnation, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died for sinners, was bodily resurrected, and ascended into heaven. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the divine Comforter, whose ministries include convicting the world of sin, sanctifying believers, and sealing them for the day of redemption. Sin and salvation. Though man was created to experience immortality, he forfeited this blessing through sin. Because of Adam's sin, death spread to all humanity. The church is an institution of divine origin and includes all true Christians, of whatever name. Local churches must be independent of outside control (not in submission to a bishop or pope). The sacraments. Baptism is for believers only and is by immersion. The Lord's Supper constitutes a memorial

²²*Ibid.*, 60.

²³Ron Rhodes, *The Complete Guide To Christian Denominations*, (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2005), 28.

celebration in recognition of the significance of Christ's death.²⁴

b. Jehovah's Witnesses Church

Jehovah's Witnesses is a Christian denomination, millenarian, restorationist who was formerly named Bible until 1931. This religion was organized internationally, better known in the Western world as Jehovah's Witnesses or Jehovas Zeugen, who tries to realize the recovery of the first century Christian movement carried out by followers of Jesus Christ. The first advocate of Jehovah's Witnesses initially considered Jehovah's Witnesses not a sect, they never separated themselves from any church or large group. The highest authority of their lives is based on the laws and principles of the Scriptures or the Bible. According to historical data, Jehovah's Witnesses began more than a hundred years ago. Starting from a simple Bible study group pioneered by Charles Taze Russell. He was born in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1852. He was educated in a public school with a family background as an active member of the church.²⁵

The Presence of Jehovah's Witnesses which has contradictory concepts has harassed mostly Christian people, but it attracts many people to join this group. Even nowadays this denomination has significant progress in some populations. This Christian denomination becomes an international religious movement and has been assured in the 1945 Constitution as well as gets recognition from the government as a religious organization that has equal rights. In Yogyakarta, this group is also accepted; this is a picture of Yogyakarta as a multicultural city and a town with high tolerance. In contrast, other Christian's denominations have rejected this sect because it has different basic theology. The emergence of new denominations is caused by the absence of limitations in this open room. Therefore, it needs a "re-thinking" whether to leave this phenomenon free or to create a rule to control this situation so as to create harmony in managing religious life.²⁶

²⁴*Ibid.*, 28.

²⁵Arifuddin Ismail, The Contradiction of the Presence of Jehovah's Witnessess as Christian Denominationin Yogyakarta, in *Journal "Analisa"* Vol.19. No. 01 July - December 2012, 7.

²⁶Arifuddin Ismail, The Contradiction of the Presence of Jehovah's Witnessess as Christian Denominationin Yogyakarta..., 3.

Some Christians there is a negative view of church denominations, denominations are almost completely useless because they are too slow-moving, too complex and too political by their very nature and design. No one founding a denomination and very, very few in the denominations themselves want to create slow-moving, complex and political structure. Except for a few diehards of the old school, everyone in a bureaucracy is frustrated by it. However every time you create a bureaucracy you end up with a slow-moving, complex and political structure. It comes with the turf. Why it comes with the turf is the province of areas such as organizational behavior, systems theory, and management. It's a hot topic at the moment and has lead to a lot of the "restructuring for synergies" that you have probably heard about and seen go nowhere. No matter how you try to configure or restructure a bureaucracy while it remains a bureaucracy it's a hopeless mess. *Managing The New organization* by Limerick, Cunnington, and Crowther is a reasonable primer on this topic.²⁷

The Emergence of Doctrines

In 1517, on the Vigil of All Saints Day, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg and changed history forever. Many of these facts can be challenged. Luther may or may not have posted the 95 Theses, for instance. But for teaching the Christian Intellectual Tradition, this is truly one of those "red-letter days." That's why all early modernists worth their salt is going to spend the remainder of this year and next talking about how their research throws a particularly bright light on Martin Luther, and the Reformation. Early modern or Reformation scholarship is going to be all Luther, all the time, for the remainder of 2016 and 2017. Shouldn't talk about the three Reformation *sola fide, sola gratia, and sola scriptura*.²⁸

The Protestant reformers were convinced that certain teachings of the Bible were necessary for a true understanding of the way of salvation. The Christian faith stood in jeopardy of being overthrown unless these doctrines were taught with precision, power, and

²⁷John Edmiston, *Beyond Denominations – The Networked Church*, (American: Lockman Foundation, 1999), 14.

²⁸R. Ward Holder, *The Reformers and Tradition: Seeing the Roots of the Problem*, (Manchester: Theology Department, Saint Anselm College, 2017), 1.

persuasion. They continue to be upheld in most Reformed churches today and in many evangelical churches as well. *Sola Scriptura*, the Bible alone is a final authority in every area of life because it is the Word of God. *Sola Gratia*, the grace of God alone in Christ and not works of human merit or effort is why God saves sinners. *Sola Fide*, faith alone is the means by which sinners receive or appropriate this grace of God.²⁹

Everyone who has studied the Reformations knows that Martin Luther said something like “Here I stand, I can do no other,” before Emperor Charles V, stating that he could not be moved without scripture’s witness. Luther was kidnapped soon after that interview and was secreted away to the Wartburg, a castle in Thuringia near the town of Eisenach. He had thundered at the pope that it was far past time to reform the church and the church’s doctrines according to the plain sense of scripture. It’s a stirring portrait, and we love it as much for the heroic character as for what it tells us about the history of the Reformations.³⁰

Martin Luther stood before Charles V and said, “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other.”³¹

Luther’s ideas began to get a definite shape in 1520. The three principles became the slogan of the Reformation theology.³²

1. *Sola Scriptura*

Sola Scriptura namely as the inspired Word of God, the Bible is the only authoritative basis for all Christian doctrines. The tradition of oral and written pursuits of the early church fathers and medieval theologians used to validate the sale of indulgences and other church practices, including the addition of several sacraments, should not

²⁹James I. Packer, ‘*Sola Fide: The Reformed Doctrine of Justification*’ in R. C. Sproul (ed.), *Soli Deo Gloria* (U.S.A., 1976), 11-13.

³⁰R. Ward Holder, *The Reformers and Tradition: Seeing the Roots of the Problem...4*.

³¹*Ibid.*, 5.

³²W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Membangun Wawasan Dunia Kristen*, (Surabaya: Momentum Christian Literature, 2006), 129.

be used as an authority equivalent to the Bible.³³

The concept of *Sola Scriptura* (or Scripture alone) shares in the crisis of which Pannenberg speaks. For whatever the precise content of the concept, it is clear that employing the concept makes an extraordinary claim on behalf of Scripture. The appeal to *Sola Scriptura* appears to invest Scripture with, at the very least, a unique authority. Yet, in the paradoxical social context of the modern world, with its scientific orientation at some levels and mystical preoccupations at others, the very notion of biblical authority is contested.³⁴

2. Sola Fide

The two Latin words, *sola fide*, translated “by faith alone,” declare that good works are not how salvation is attained; neither are they required nor accepted by God for granting salvation. *Sola fide* is the teaching that justification (understood in Protestant theology as “being declared just by God”) is received by faith alone, without the need for good works on the part of the believing individual. Good works are viewed as evidence of saving faith; they do not determine salvation. The Catholic side of the argument is based on James 2:14-17. In understanding *sola fide*, it is important to keep in mind the difference between the Catholic and Protestant notions of justification. Both groups agree that it means a communication of Christ’s merits to sinners.³⁵

The subjective principle of Protestantism is the doctrine of justification and salvation by faith in Christ; as distinct from the doctrine of justification by faith and works or salvation by grace and human merit. Luther’s formula is *sola fide*. Calvin goes further back to God’s eternal election, as the ultimate ground of salvation and comfort in life and death. But Luther and Calvin meant substantially the same thing, and agree in the more general proposition of salvation by free grace through a living faith in Christ, in opposition to any Pelagian or Semi-pelagian compromise which divides the work and merit between God and man. And this is the very soul of evangelical Protestantism.³⁶

³³*Ibid.*, 130.

³⁴Gregg Strawbridge, *The Five Solas of the Reformation: A Brief Statement*, (Laurel: Audubon Drive Bible Church, 1993), 1.

³⁵Gregg Strawbridge, *The Five Solas of the Reformation: A Brief Statement...*, 2.

³⁶Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume VII. Modern Christianity. The German Reformation...*, 20.

3. Sola Gratia

The idea that a person's merit is excluded from having any part in salvation is expressed in the words, "by grace alone" (*sola gratia*). Salvation comes by divine grace, God's "unmerited favor," and not as something offered, exchanged, or sacrificed by the sinner. Salvation is a gift, an unearned blessing from God for Christ's sake. While Protestants and Catholics agree that grace is truly and always a gift of God, there are two related concepts on which they differ. First (as Protestants teach), God is the sole actor in grace; grace is his and only his, and always saves without any contribution from man. Second, a man cannot by any action of his own, acting under the influence of grace, cooperate with the grace of God to merit greater graces for himself (which is what the Roman Catholic Church teaches). The doctrine of *sola gratia* asserts divine "monergism" in salvation: God acts alone to save the sinner. Where even a tiny degree of responsibility for salvation lies with the sinner, "synergism" is operating, and salvation is therefore not by the grace of God alone.³⁷

Sola Fide namely "Only Faith" which is meant here is the priesthood for all believers. The church does not need a class of priests to mediate between believers and God. Instead, everyone becomes a priest for himself and has direct access to God through Christ. Christ is the Great High Priest who replaced all human faith.³⁸

These three ideas are fundamental to the Reformation and are fundamental doctrines of Protestantism. All changes in doctrine, spirituality, and church organization that resulted in the formation of various Protestant groups are based on these principles.³⁹

CLOSING

The reformation of the church carried out by Martin Luther centered on Christians who wanted to be saved from the deviant teachings of the Catholic church. The most visible influence today is the church denomination, which is the diversity of the church which makes some Christians restless with differences in teachings and the delivery of their Scriptures. Because their forms of belief differed on how the Scriptures were delivered, the present church

³⁷Gregg Strawbridge, *The Five Solas of the Reformation: A Brief Statement...*, 2.

³⁸W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Membangun Wawasan Dunia Kristen...*, 130.

³⁹*Ibid*, 131.

denomination occurred which occurred after the reform movement. Martin Luther's concept of reformation of church greatly influences the lives of Christians from the past to the present who want to avoid the confines of the teachings of the church that are out of the bible. Europeans at that time felt benefited by the reforms carried out by Martin Luther because previously many wanted to make changes and resistance to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church but not too influential. But what Martin Luther did was very influential and had a good impact on the people around that time.

Martin Luther has made significant changes to the teachings of the Catholic church, which according to him is very deviated from the teachings of the Bible. For Christians who accept and practice their teachings from the beginning to the present, they feel a great difference, due to the emergence of church denominations after the division of the Catholic church. These church denominations are considered by some Christians to be an obstacle to Christ's teachings to his people because of their different mission of achievement, but for some other Christians it is assumed that the existence of these church denominations adds insight, to understand the meaning of differences and even though the different mission of each church -the church is its main vision it is the same namely returning to Christ.

Bibliography

- Benedict, David. 1997. *A General History Of The Baptist Denomination Volume 1*. Albany:Hartland Publications.
- Edmiston, John. 1999. *Beyond Denominations-The Networked Church*. America:New American Standard Bible (Lockman Foundation).
- Ensign, George. Barry and Collins. Paul M.2011. *Denomination: Assessing an Ecclesiological Category*. London: T&T Clark International.
- Hodge, A, A.1972. *Outlines of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Hoffecker, W, Andrew. 2006. *Membangun Wawasan Dunia Kristen*. Surabaya: Momentum Christian Literature.
- Holder, R. Ward.2017. *The Reformers and Tradition: Seeing the Roots of the Problem*. Manchester: Theology Department, Saint Anselm College.

- Ismail, Arifuddin. July - December 2012. *The Contradiction of the Presence of Jehovah's Witness as Christian Denomination in Yogyakarta*. Journal "Analisa" Volume 19 Nomor 01.
- Keene, Michael. 2006. *Kristianitas*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Locklair, David H. 2017. *The 95 Theses: Dawn Of The Reformation*. Lakewood: Els West Coast Conference.
- Luther, Martin. 2002. *Reformation and Enlightenment 1500-1800*. United States: McDougal Littell.
- McGrath, Alister. E. 1985. *Luther's Theology of the Cross*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- _____. 2016. *Sejarah Pemikiran Reformasi*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia.
- New Dictionary of Theology. 'Sacrament'.
- Rhodes, Ron. 2005. *The Complete Guide To Christian Denominations*. Eugene: Harvest House Publishers.
- Schaff, Philip. 1882. *History of the Christian Church, Volume VII. Modern Christianity. The German Reformation*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Strawbridge, Gregg. 1993. *The Five Solas of the Reformation: A Brief Statement*. Laurel: Audubon Drive Bible Church.
- Towns, Elmer L. 1798. *Is The Day Of The Denomination Dead?*. Nashville, New York: Thomas Nelson Inc.
- Turretin, Francis. 1997. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed.
- Wellem, F. D. 2015. *Riwayat Hidup Singkat Tokoh-Tokoh Dalam Sejarah Gereja*. Jakarta: Gunung Mulia.
- Wyk, I. W. C. Van. 2010. *Calvin, Luther and Church Unity*. Pretoria: Reformed Theological College.
- Yahya, Yuangga Kurnia. 2018. Phenomenological Approach in Interfaith Communication: A Solution to Allegation of Religious Blasphemy in Indonesia, in *Al-Tahrir Journal of Islamic Thought*, Vol. 18, No. 2 December.