

Genesis 2: 15 The Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (NRSV)

The Green Imago Dei

What does it mean for human to be the image and likeness of God? Herman Bavink once writes, “But among creatures, only man is the image of God, God highest and richest self-revelation and consequently the head and crown of the whole creation, the Imago Dei and the epitome of nature, both microtheos (micro-god) and mikrokosmos (micro-cosmos). In the tale of creation of Genesis 1 and 2, God created the earth with ‘his’ word. God arranged, decorated, and filled the earth with all kinds of plants and animals. Then, God willed man. So God molded in God’ image and likeness, created from dust and dirt, then God breathed into Adam the breath of life so than man can live. Although according to this story Eve was later created from Adam’s rib, I also believe that there is also a scientific story that shows us that humans did not come from a *man’s rib*, but from a *woman’s womb*. 😊

Then God blessed man and gave him the command to have dominion over the earth and over all other creation. The creation narrative wants to tell us that the purpose of creation is the indwelling of God among God’s creation. Human beings as the image and likeness of God are mandated to rule over the earth by nurturing, managing, and being responsible for all other creation. One of the cultural mandates God gives to human is to be responsible for managing the natural preservation that God has created so well. However, man’s fall into sin has caused a shift in meaning from managing and nurturing to exploiting nature greedily and arbitrarily. Look at the context of Southeast Asian Countries, for example, Indonesia. Indonesia is the lung of the earth since Indonesia has the largest rainforest in the world. But the fact is that everyday deforestation of Indonesia’s forests continues to occur. Indonesians must face the crises of flooding, species extinction, and also, as in many parts of the world, the emerging of various zoonotic diseases.

How do we as Christians respond to such conditions? How can we all as a church play an active role in providing awareness and a real influence to maintain the ecological balance? Is there any anxiety in our faith seeing the condition of the earth that is getting sicker day to day? Because, isn’t it in The Lord’s Prayer that we pray, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven?” On earth? Which earth? This damaged, mutilated, injured, and wounded earth?

We read the Book of Revelation which gives the idea of the New Jerusalem. Is this New Jerusalem an utopia, an imagination of a place where there are no tears for God’s children? In fact, the New Jerusalem is a concept of the author of the Book of Revelation, which is John the Apostle, at his time with some ideological contents. The ideology was built as the author faced how his environment shrouded in crises; namely imperialism, injustice, and marginalization in not only human’ lives but also the lives of all creations.

It is our calling as Christians to oppose all forms of injustice and violence against God’s creations. We are the actors of the environmental degradations; at the same time we are the agents of peace who should stand for the integrity of all creations. Because, as Image Dei, or the Image of God, or Gambar dan Rupa Allah (Indonesian), we have the wisdom of God and the capacity to reflect. So the Green Imago Dei is a

divine capacities within us to create a life that is peaceful, humble, and with solidarity to not only the life of humanity but also to all God's creation. Our duty as stewards is basically the realization that God's creation, whether it is a land, water, air, plants, and animals, was not created for the sake of human beings. They, especially animals and plants, also have their own purposes for the survival of their species. Let us all as the Imago Dei have the humbleness to appreciate that.

May all of us who are dwelling in this place today be enabled by God to perform our identity as the Imago Dei, in apprehending justice, peace, and integrity of God's creation. The peace of Christ be with you. Amen, puji TUHAN!

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