

A Theological Perspective on the LGBTQ+ Phenomenon and the Importance of Providing Education to Church Congregations

Kris Banarto*, Guntur Hamonangan Sahat Silaban

STT Global Glow Indonesia

Email: krisbanarto@gmail.com*, guntursilaban1908@gmail.com

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<i>LGBTQ+, education, theology, church</i>	The LGBTQ+ phenomenon has evolved from clandestine practice to open advocacy, creating significant theological and pastoral challenges for churches worldwide. As of January 2025, 38 countries have legalized same-sex marriage, with some churches permitting clergy to perform such ceremonies. This global trend, coupled with aggressive cultural campaigns promoting LGBTQ+ as a legitimate lifestyle, has created urgency for churches to provide biblical education to their congregations. This research examines the theological foundations for understanding LGBTQ+ issues through the lenses of <i>Imago Dei</i> and <i>Creation Theology</i> and develops comprehensive educational frameworks for church congregations. The study employs qualitative methodology, with biblical exegesis as the primary analytical approach, supplemented by a systematic review of theological literature, commentaries, and peer-reviewed journals. Analysis focuses on Genesis 1:26–27 regarding human creation in God's image and the binary gender design, along with relevant New Testament passages on the restoration of <i>Imago Dei</i> through Christ. Findings demonstrate that LGBTQ+ behavior contradicts biblical teaching on three grounds: it violates the <i>Imago Dei</i> by rejecting God's design for human sexuality, contradicts <i>Creation Theology</i> 's establishment of binary gender and heterosexual marriage, and opposes New Testament teachings on sanctification and sexual holiness. The study concludes that churches must implement age-appropriate educational programs featuring biblically grounded content, multidisciplinary expert involvement, and pedagogical methods tailored to children, adolescents, young adults, and mature believers. This research contributes to existing scholarship by bridging the gap between theological argumentation and practical educational implementation in congregational settings.

Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)



INTRODUCTION

LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and the plus sign (+) represents the diverse identities of individuals who are not members of the LGBTQ+ group. LGBTQ+ practices have been debated worldwide, generating both pros and cons. Differing views arise from various aspects, including law, human rights, medicine, culture, psychology, and even religion. Within the Christian faith, differences of opinion inevitably arise. Speaking of church institutions, we can find those who reject and those who support the existence of this community (Wittberg, 2021). Several countries have legalized same-sex marriage, with at least 38 countries recorded by 2025. These countries include the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain,

Canada, France, Argentina, Denmark, Brazil, the United States, and Greece. This means that 28 percent of the total 195 countries support same-sex marriage (Muhaimin, 2024).

The Presbyterian Church, one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, has granted its pastors permission to officiate same-sex marriages (BBC News Indonesia, 2014). Shocking news came from the Vatican, where Pope Francis, the supreme leader of the Catholic Church, ruled on December 18, 2023, that Roman Catholic priests may perform marriage blessings for same-sex couples under various conditions, including that the blessing be performed in other contexts, such as a visit to a holy place, a meeting with a priest, a prayer reading, or during a pilgrimage. Uniquely, his statement clarified that homosexual acts are a sin, but same-sex attraction is not (Detikcom Team, 2023).

Marriage in Indonesia is regulated by Law Number 1 of 1974, which states that marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family or household based on the One Almighty God (Sihombing, 2021). Other news came from the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), which firmly stated that the church would not approve or enforce same-sex marriage and only recognized marriage between a man and a woman (Nasional.kompas.com, 2015). This firmness from the PGI was positively received by the churches under its auspices and other churches in Indonesia.

Support for and rejection of LGBTQ+ individuals require critical biblical study to properly position this group and avoid confusion among congregations. A biblical perspective on LGBTQ+ individuals can guide the church's attitudes and actions in accordance with the truth of Scripture. To address the negative impacts of this movement, the church needs to anticipate these by educating its congregation.

Several studies have addressed LGBTQ+ issues from different perspectives, yet significant gaps remain. A journal entitled "Educating on the Dangers of LGBT for Teenagers from a Health Review for Students of SMAN 1 Padang Panjang" concluded that the dangers of LGBT require education using lecture and discussion methods so that students have the correct knowledge about LGBT from a health perspective (Susanti et al., 2022). However, this study focuses primarily on health aspects rather than theological foundations. The Journal of Theological and Biblical Studies on LGBTQ and Its Implications for the Church Today provides information that the Bible is the authority that explains that humans were created male and female and that marriage is a pairing of a man and a woman. The Church rejects sin but loves LGBTQ+ individuals to bring them back to God through counseling, community support, and discipleship (Silitonga et al., 2024). While this study offers theological arguments, it does not develop specific educational frameworks for implementation. The Journal of Theological Views on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) states that LGBT is a sexual deviation that can affect Christians. This behavior is a heinous act before God, and parents play an active role in educating children. The church is called to provide guidance to them (Pattiata et al., 2023). This study emphasizes parental roles but lacks systematic congregational education models.

From the review of previous studies, it is evident that while theological arguments and health perspectives have been addressed, there remains limited explicit discussion of comprehensive educational frameworks specifically designed for church congregations about

LGBTQ+ issues. This research fills that gap by integrating theological perspectives with practical educational strategies tailored to different age groups within church settings.

This research aims to accomplish three interconnected objectives that address both theological foundations and practical implementation. First, the study examines biblical and theological foundations regarding LGBTQ+ phenomena through comprehensive analysis of Imago Dei and Creation Theology perspectives, establishing the scriptural basis for understanding human sexuality and gender. Second, it analyzes the implications of these theological views for contemporary church doctrine and pastoral practice, particularly in contexts where cultural acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities conflicts with traditional biblical interpretation. Third, the research develops practical educational frameworks for congregations that are biblically grounded, age-appropriate, and practically applicable across different developmental stages from childhood through adulthood. The expected benefits include strengthening congregational understanding of biblical sexuality, equipping church leaders with effective educational tools and methodologies, building theological resilience against ideologies that contradict Scripture, and fostering compassionate engagement with LGBTQ+ individuals that maintains both doctrinal integrity and Christlike love.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method with a literature study approach, aiming to comprehensively understand various theological views and arguments, as well as their implications related to the LGBTQ+ phenomenon. The research design utilized biblical exegesis as the primary analytical framework, supplemented by theological literature review and comparative analysis of scholarly perspectives. It analyzed biblical texts discussing LGBTQ+ issues and their impacts as presented in literature, academic studies, church statements, and other relevant sources. Data sources were obtained from the Bible, focusing on verses in Genesis about the creation of man and woman and the concept of creation based on the Imago Dei.

The analytical framework consisted of two main components: (1) biblical exegesis that used sound hermeneutical principles to interpret key texts on human creation, gender, and sexuality; and (2) theological synthesis that integrated insights from various theological traditions and contemporary scholarship. In addition, the study discussed books, journals, theological views, and expert perspectives on LGBTQ+ issues and educational planning for church congregations, tailored to different age groups. The analysis process involved thematic coding of theological arguments, comparative evaluation of interpretive approaches, and synthesis of findings into practical educational recommendations. Validity was ensured through triangulation of multiple theological sources and consistency with orthodox biblical interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LGBTQ+ individuals argue that sexual orientation is a manifestation of basic human rights, while those who reject its existence consider it a form of deviation that is not included in the basic concept of human rights. These differing views and underlying arguments seem to make it difficult to reach common ground (Ismail, 2022). Several causal factors for LGBTQ+ individuals exist, as cited by the American Psychology Association website. One such factor,

genetics, is the presence of hormonal imbalances in the body. This hormonal imbalance can influence sexual orientation. Environmental factors, such as socializing with LGBTQ+ individuals, coupled with family disharmony, can trigger deviations. The final cause is past trauma, such as sexual violence, that remains deeply embedded in the individual's mind. While these factors may be valid, the challenge lies in developing confidence in behaving according to one's natural instincts through therapy. Support and acceptance from the family environment are essential to returning individuals to their natural state.

Theological views on the LGBTQ+ phenomenon in Indonesian churches are dominated by a biblical perspective that does not recognize or accept homosexual practices and transgender identities because they are inconsistent with biblical teachings. However, the seeds of change and the emergence of more inclusive views are beginning to appear in some circles, although they remain a minority. Theological debate and reflection on this issue will likely continue in Indonesian churches along with social developments and deeper understanding. In general, this group receives a negative response from society because it is considered to have immoral sexual disorders that contradict religious values and the national ideology of Pancasila (Wibowo, 2015). To address this issue, the Bible can provide answers through two main texts: the Imago Dei and the Theology of Creation, namely that God created only two genders, male and female, and that normal marriage is between a man and a woman.

The Imago Dei View According to Theologians

The phrase "Imago Dei" comes from the Latin word "imago," meaning image, and "Dei," meaning God. Therefore, "Imago Dei" means "image of God." Imago Dei implies that humans are different from other creatures on earth; they are partners with God, have a relationship with God, and have the freedom to obey God. Humans were created completely, encompassing body, soul, and spirit. Therefore, we live not for ourselves, but for the glory of His name (Mebine, 2019). This argument was strong enough to stem a massive campaign from that community.

Irenaeus and Tertullian argued that the image and likeness of God (Imago Dei) are two words with different meanings. They argued that "image" relates to the physical (tselem) of humans, while "likeness" (demuth) relates to their spiritual state. However, the likeness was lost after the fall of humanity and can be restored through Christ's redemption (Hoekema, 2003). A different opinion came from Thomas Aquinas, who understood the image of God not to be physical but to be located in the human mind. Regarding sin and restoration, he shares Irenaeus and Tertullian's view, stating that although the image was damaged by sin, he believed the damage had been repaired through Christ's atonement (Arjuna, 2022).

Meanwhile, Calvin argued that the image and likeness are one concept, namely, concerning the human soul. This means that the spiritual and spiritual aspects are a reflection of God's nature. Not only does the soul reflect God's nature; other parts also reflect God's image, although not to the same degree (Hutahaean, 2018). Similar to Irenaeus and Tertullian, William Dyrness argued that humans not only reflect God through their souls and morality; their physical exterior also plays a role in depicting God (Dyrness, 2001). Augustine explained that humans, as the Imago Dei, are a unity of body and soul, thus the need to respect humans because body and soul constitute the fundamental nature of humans (Sianturi et al., 2023).

The concept of the Imago Dei indicates a resemblance between humans and God. Humans possess qualities and capacities that reflect God's attributes. They possess reason, the ability to think, reflect, and make decisions that reflect God's wisdom. They also possess moral awareness, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and to build a relationship with God that reflects God's love and holiness. Reflecting God's creativity, humans are given the ability to innovate and produce works of art and culture for the greater good of humanity. The question is whether we, as special creatures, have utilized this resemblance to God to the fullest. This unique gift given to humans should not be used to misuse this resemblance to God by making decisions and behaviors that contradict God's decrees. Those who reject the gender that God has given them are in conflict with God. Sexual attraction to the same sex, or attraction to both men and women, as well as other abnormal deviations, truly hurt the Creator. God desires that what He has bestowed upon us from birth should be the foundation for a normal human life, allowing us to grow and be of value to others.

Imago Dei in Genesis

Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." The argument is that God intentionally and uniquely created humans with two distinct and complementary genders. This gender duality is seen as an essential part of the image of God, or Imago Dei, given to humans.

Opposition to LGBTQ+ people stems from the belief that non-heterosexual sexual orientations and gender identities that do not align with their biological sex at birth deviate from God's established binary order of creation (male and female). Humans were created at the end of all creation through a developmental process that leads to greater perfection. Humans were created from the ground to inhabit the earth, and thus should not desire lustful desires, thereby becoming like animals that will perish (Henry, 2018). Furthermore, humans were created in the image and likeness of God, meaning that humans are intellectual, moral, and eternal beings, and after death they will enter eternity in heaven or hell. This demonstrates that humans are a noble creation (Asali, 2020).

Humans are so special compared to other creations, consisting of various aspects: reason and intellect, thoughts, feelings, considerations, physical aspects, and the human essence as the image of God. Imago Dei gives humans the privilege to communicate with God. Image or tselem means image or can mean resemblance, of course, not a physical resemblance. Rupa or demuth means appearance, similarity, and resemblance. Image refers to natural qualities in humans, such as personality, that make them resemble God, while rupa refers to supernatural grace, for example regarding ethics. Image can also relate to humans' mental and spiritual abilities to share, free will, consciousness, and intelligence (Lumintang et al., 2017).

The Imago Dei View According to the New Testament

The Imago Dei view according to the New Testament continues and deepens the concept laid down in the Old Testament. The New Testament highlights how this image of God is restored and fully manifested through Jesus Christ, and how believers partake of that image through the Holy Spirit. In Colossians 1:15, Christ is called the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. This shows that Jesus is the perfect and clearest representation of

who God is. Matthew Henry argued that through Jesus, we can see the full nature and character of God. Just as a child is the image of his father, possessing natural feelings, so whoever sees Christ sees the Father. We, as believers, are also required by God to be like Christ.

The Apostle Paul called the Gospel of Christ the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4). This emphasizes that understanding the true God comes through knowing Christ. The reason many people do not accept the Gospel is because their minds have been blinded by Satan, or the god of this age. Satan actively works to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the perfect representation of God. By blinding them to Christ's glory, Satan prevents them from knowing the true God and accepting the salvation offered through Him. This verse emphasizes Satan's active role in opposing the gospel and the importance of spiritual enlightenment so that one can see and accept the truth about Christ as the image of God.

In Hebrews 1:3, Christ is described as the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being. This reaffirms that Jesus is the direct and accurate representation of God's essence and glory. The radiance of God's glory means that Jesus Christ is a direct radiance of God's glory. Just as light emanates from its source, Christ emanates from and manifests God's invisible glory. He is not simply a radiance of God's glory; rather, He is the clear and vivid expression and representation of God's majesty, beauty, and divine power. This emphasizes the essential unity of the Father and the Son. The exact representation, the exact molding, or the perfect impression of God's being. Being refers to the essence, substance, or actual existence of God. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the perfect and accurate representation of God's essence and being. He is the exact replica of who God is. Through Jesus, we can see and know God directly.

In the New Testament, Jesus is not just a man created in God's image, but He is the very image of God in human form. This adds a new dimension to the understanding of the *Imago Dei*. Romans 8:29 reads, "God predestined those whom he chose to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." This indicates that God's purpose for believers is to be transformed into the image of Christ, who is the image of God. It reveals God's loving purpose for believers: to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ in character, morality, spirituality, relationship with the Father, and ultimately in glory. This is an ongoing process of sanctification, carried out by the Holy Spirit, with the goal of Christ becoming the firstborn among many brothers in God's family. It is a call to continually grow in holiness and increasingly reflect God's glory through our lives.

2 Corinthians 3:18: We all, with unveiled face, behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. The process of sanctification and spiritual growth is a process in which the *Imago Dei* in believers is restored and more fully manifested through the work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, in Ephesians 4:24, believers are commanded to put on the new self, which has been created according to God's will in true righteousness and holiness. This new self is a human being restored to the image of God through Christ.

The New Testament implies that the image of God in humans has been damaged and distorted by sin. However, through faith in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, this image is restored and renewed. This process is a lifelong journey toward Christlikeness. Because

believers are called to be conformed to Christ, who is the image of God, the ethical implication is to live in love, justice, mercy, and holiness, as Christ has demonstrated. Loving others and treating them with respect is also based on the recognition that every human being, despite the damage to the image of God in them, retains potential and value as God's creation.

The concept of the Imago Dei in the New Testament culminates in Jesus Christ, who is the perfect image of God. Believers are called and enabled by the Holy Spirit to be transformed into this image of Christ. This process of renewing the Imago Dei, damaged by sin, is the primary goal of sanctification and spiritual growth. The New Testament's view of the Imago Dei has profound implications for understanding Christ, the believer's identity, Christian ethics, and relationships with others.

Creation Theology Genesis 1:27

"So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Matthew Henry emphasized that Adam was first created from the ground, then Eve from his rib. Adam was limited to one wife. If he sent her away, he would not marry anyone else, illustrating that the marriage bond could not be dissolved arbitrarily. God created man and woman to be fruitful, fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth.

Ellicott highlights the word "created," a crucial verb repeated three times in reference to humans. First, this verb indicates that humans possess something within themselves that is not developmental or evolutionary, but something new. They are, in fact, the most perfect work of creative energy, and differ from animals not only in degree but also in kind, despite possessing, like animals, an organized body. And further, this verb indicates God's joy at the accomplishment of His purpose.

Complementing Ellicott's argument, Benson offers a view of offspring from a single couple. God formed woman from man and caused all humanity to come from one original couple, so that all human families and nations, created from one blood and descended from one common stock, might know themselves as brothers and sisters, and might love and support one another with all their might. Sadly, the opposite of this is exemplified every day before our eyes.

The reference to marriage in Genesis 1:27 implies that the creation of two sexes provides the theological basis for a fundamental understanding of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, further explained in Genesis 2:24. This union is seen as the natural, God-ordained way to procreate and build a family. It is not like the LGBTQ+ practice of adopting same-sex marriage and changing God's given gender identity.

Peniel Maiaweng understands that God created humans male and female so that He could fulfill their basic desires and bring them happiness (Genesis 1:27). Humans were created to love and support one another. In God's sight, both are equal. God made marriage the most important structure for humanity, and He ensured that both men and women would remain married. Humans are not viewed as separate or unique in the Old Testament. Instead, they are seen as responsible members of a family or group. An individual is a member of a family or tribe. They are part of a family and are part of their tribe, which is part of the unity of the entire house of Israel. Humans are also called by God for the good of the group. Abram was commanded to give up the good things of his family and country so that he could help many. To be a blessing

to the Israelites, God commanded Moses to stay close to Him (Exodus 24:2). The high priest entered the Most Holy Place alone to do work for many (Leviticus 16:17-19). Preachers were commanded to help the people of Israel and Judah.

This message rejects views that devalue one gender or give superior value to the other. Both are God's glorious creations and have vital roles in His plan. To build a holy marriage and to cultivate offspring to produce a better future generation and to carry out His plan and will. God firmly condemns LGBTQ+ deviation in the Bible. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 clearly state that homosexuality is an abomination and is punishable by death. Romans 1:26-27 informs us that transvestites and prostitutes will not inherit the Kingdom of God. 1 Timothy 1:9-10, prostitutes, contradict God's Word. God's message strongly expects believers to maintain holiness (1 Peter 1:4-16).

Educating the Congregation about the LGBTQ+ Phenomenon

The word "education" comes from the Latin "ducare," meaning to guide or lead outward. According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, education means nurturing and providing training in morals and knowledge. Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System defines education as a deliberate and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process that allows students to actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, good morals, and the skills needed for themselves, society, the nation, and the state.

According to Sadono, education is a conscious and deliberate effort to change human behavior, both individually and in groups, so that people become more mature through teaching and training. This is the author's focus. From this perspective, education is not just any education; it is part of Christian education that takes place in the church.

A leading educational historian, Lawrence Cremin, states that the definition of education is very broad and encompasses more than just formal schooling. For him, education is a deliberate and systematic configuration of influences through which each generation of young people grows and the adults involved learn. Thus, Cremin provides a more holistic view of education, recognizing that individual learning and formation occur through various interactions and influences in various environments throughout life. This contrasts with the narrower view that identifies education solely with what happens in the classroom.

Furthermore, Alfred North Whitehead, a philosopher and mathematician, emphasized the limitations of education, emphasizing the development of knowledge and the avoidance of inactive ideas. For him, true education is about life and action, not merely the passive accumulation of information. Theologian and educator Thomas H. Groome argues that the concept of religious education is closely related to the formation of identity and meaning in life within the context of a faith community. For him, education is not simply the transmission of information, but a participatory and reflective process that helps individuals construct meaning from their life experiences in light of the faith tradition.

The definitions of education according to Christian theologians are diverse, but they share several strong common threads rooted in biblical understandings of humanity, God, and the purpose of life. In general, Christian theologians view education as a holistic process aimed at shaping all aspects of a person to become more like Christ and live according to God's will.

The concept of good education for church congregations goes beyond simply imparting information. It is a comprehensive process aimed at transformation, spiritual growth, character formation, and a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. Congregational education is also part of pastoral care, as pastoral care takes various forms in various situations, although its consistent goal is to support individuals during their lowest moments and guide them toward God's compassion (Banarto & Siringoringo, 2024).

The Bible must be the primary foundation of all teaching. Education should be rooted in the truth of God's Word and help congregants understand its context, meaning, and practical application. Speakers need to be equipped with a sound understanding of the Bible to avoid mistakes in educating their congregations. Regarding the complex LGBTQ+ phenomenon, speakers must understand and master the issues and be able to enlighten the congregation in the light of God's Word. The teaching provided should be comprehensive, encompassing various genres and biblical passages, not just favorite verses or specific topics. It should also offer perspectives from various perspectives so that the congregation understands the Bible's position on LGBTQ+ practices. Furthermore, sound interpretation methods should teach sound hermeneutical principles so that speakers can interpret the Bible correctly and responsibly, without confusing the congregation.

Biblical teaching must be grounded and connect faith to reality. Education should help congregants see how the Christian faith is relevant to their daily lives, including work, family, social relationships, and personal challenges. Biblical relevance is necessary to address any issues congregants face, including conflicting information regarding LGBTQ+ issues. In their teaching, speakers can highlight real-life examples to demonstrate the Bible's applicability.

Speakers can respond to contemporary issues circulating on social media by providing biblical education to equip congregants to address social, ethical, and cultural issues relevant to their context. Congregants should not be influenced by deviant teachings that could shake their faith. All teaching at various levels, from Sunday School, Youth, and Adults, should lead to a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ, His redemptive work, and His life example. Congregants should come to a level of awareness of how they have received the gift of salvation and that all sins have been atoned for, allowing them to live righteously for the glory of His name.

Congregational education should encourage them to build a personal relationship with Christ. A close fellowship with Christ and dedicated time of devotion will make the congregation feel close to the Creator and allow the Holy Spirit to reign in their lives. More specifically, this is how we receive or bring God's power into our personal lives (Banarto & Silaban, 2025). Rather than relying on our limited abilities, we rely on God's unlimited power.

When educating the congregation about LGBTQ+ issues, speakers should consider the needs of different age groups and levels of spiritual maturity by providing appropriate teaching materials and methods. Materials and methods for Sunday School children will certainly differ from those for teenagers, young adults, and adults. Speakers' creativity is needed to design innovative and applicable learning methods that are engaging, such as lectures, group discussions, seminars, workshops, film screenings, visual activities, and so on. Creating a safe and accepting climate encourages active congregation participation and creates a space where congregants feel comfortable asking questions, sharing, and discussing issues without fear of judgment.

The church should involve experts on LGBTQ+ issues as speakers, including doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, legal practitioners, counselors, teachers, and pastors. These individuals can speak based on their expertise and capacity to broaden understanding of LGBTQ+ issues from various perspectives. This is crucial for the congregation to gain a comprehensive understanding. This allows the church to be fruitful, pleasing to God, and enjoyed by many, and even to serve as an example for many (Banarto, 2025a). Instilling the understanding that spiritual growth and learning about faith is a lifelong process. To avoid monotony and boredom, education can provide opportunities for questioning and critical thinking, and create a culture where questions are valued and the congregation is encouraged to think critically about LGBTQ+ issues.

The church must confront the reality of LGBTQ+ behaviors with pure teaching of the Word, adaptive fellowship that addresses the congregation's needs based on love and places Christ as the Head of the Church (Banarto, 2024). Encouraging the congregation to apply what they learn in church service and mission in the world. Forming a heart of service: Good education should produce a congregation that is not only knowledgeable but also has a heart of service and is actively involved in God's work. By applying this educational concept, the church can equip the congregation with a solid understanding of faith, foster spiritual maturity, and enable them to live as effective disciples of Christ in this world.

CONCLUSION

From a biblical and Creation Theology perspective, LGBTQ+ behavior contradicts God's decree, as humans were created in the *Imago Dei* as male and female, designed for monogamous marriage between a man and a woman. Although human beings possess uniqueness and dignity reflecting God's image, deviations such as transgender identity or same-sex behavior oppose this divine order. Nonetheless, the Holy Spirit offers restoration for those who stray. Recognizing the imminent dangers of LGBTQ+ behavior, churches should develop comprehensive educational programs tailored to different age groups, involving experts from psychology, medicine, counseling, and theology to provide holistic understanding. Future research should explore the effectiveness of such educational frameworks in transforming congregational attitudes and behaviors, as well as assess methods for integrating theological truth with psychological and social support in church settings.

REFERENCES

- Arjuna, Y. (2022). Gereja nirabelis: Kritik stigma ableisme terhadap orang dengan gangguan jiwa berdasarkan konsep *Imago Dei*. *Sangulele: Jurnal Teologi Konstektual*, 120.
- Asali, B. (2020). *Kejadian 1:1–2:3*. Golgotha Ministry. https://golgothaministry.org/kejadian/kejadian-1_1-2_3.htm
- Banarto, K. (2024). *Menjawab tantangan gereja masa kini*. ADAB.
- Banarto, K. (2025). *Pertumbuhan gereja melalui pendekatan holistik*. Deepublish.
- Banarto, K., & Sahat Silaban, G. H. (2025). Perspektif kerajaan Allah dan implikasinya dalam kehidupan orang percaya. *ARL (Action Research Literate)*, 409.
- Banarto, K., & Siringoringo, M. (2024). Dilematika pelayanan pastoral antara Kristus, keluarga, dan jemaat. *ARL (Action Research Literate)*, 130.
- detikcom, Tim. (2023, December 19). *detiknews*.

- Dyrness, W. (2001). *Tema-tema dalam teologi Perjanjian Lama*. Gandum Mas.
- Henry, M. (2018). *Kejadian 1:27*. Alkitab SABDA. https://alkitab.sabda.org/verse_commentary.php?book=1&chapter=1&verse=27
- Hoekema, A. A. (2003). *Manusia ciptaan menurut gambar Allah*. Momentum.
- Hutahaean, T. (2018). Tinjauan konsep *Imago Dei* Irenaeus dan Thomas dari perspektif Yohanes Calvin serta dampaknya bagi zaman pasca milenial. *Verbun Christi: Jurnal Teologi Reformed Injili*, 159–182.
- Ismail, Z. (2022). *LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Biseksual, dan Transgender)*. Madza Media.
- Lumintang, M., Hutasoit, B. M., & Awule, C. S. E. (2017). Memahami *Imago Dei* sebagai potensi ilahi dalam pelayanan. *EPIGRAPHE: Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan Kristiani*, 1–16.
- Muhaimin. (2024, February 19). *Sindo News*.
- Pattiata, C. C., dkk. (2023). Pandangan teologi terhadap LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Biseksual dan Transgender). *EIRENE*, 1–21.
- Sianturi, A. H., Siagian, Z., & Saragih, J. (2023). Manusia sebagai gambar dan rupa Allah. *INNOVATIVE: Journal of Social Science Research*.
- Sihombing, D. (2021, October 26). *LGBT, HAM dan PGI*.
- Silitonga, R., dkk. (2024). Kajian teologi dan biblika tentang LGBTQ serta implikasinya bagi gereja saat ini. *LUXNOS*, 1–16.
- Susanti, M., dkk. (2022, December). Edukasi bahaya LGBT bagi remaja dari tinjauan kesehatan pada siswa SMAN 1 Padang Panjang. *Jurnal Kreativitas Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 1–10.
- Wahyu, R. (2013, September 29). Cipta, penciptaan. *Sarapan Pagi*. <https://www.sarapanpagi.org/cipta-penciptaan-vt6390.html>
- Wibowo, A. (2015). Tinjauan teoritis terhadap wacana kriminalisasi LGBT. *Jurnal Cakrawala Hukum*, 120–151.
- Wittberg, P. (2021). Generational Change in Religion and Religious Practice: A Review Essay. *Review of Religious Research*, 63(3), 461–482. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00455-0>