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# Jesus at the Margins: A New Testament Christology Of Humanization in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons in Indonesia exposes a critical tension between religious conviction, cultural identity, human dignity, and the ethical responsibility of Christian communities toward those who are marginalized. While queer theology, incarnational Christology, and Minahasan cultural philosophy have been discussed independently, limited scholarship has brought them into sustained dialogue as a contextual theological response to LGBTQ+ discrimination in Indonesia. This study addresses that gap by examining the intersection of Patrick S. Cheng's queer Christology, Jürgen Moltmann's incarnational and cruciform Christology, and the Minahasan philosophy *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* as resources for constructing an ethic of humanization. Using qualitative library research, the study analyzes theological texts, cultural literature, legal documents, and reports of discrimination through thematic, hermeneutical, comparative, and synthetic analysis. The findings demonstrate that these traditions converge around three ethical-theological principles: divine solidarity with marginalized persons, active responsibility for sustaining the dignity and flourishing of others, and critical resistance to exclusionary structures and rigid binaries. The study further argues that theological disagreement regarding sexuality must not be translated into violence, humiliation, coercion, or social exclusion. Its originality lies in integrating global queer and incarnational Christologies with indigenous Minahasan wisdom, thereby contributing a culturally grounded framework for pastoral care, anti-discrimination practice, theological dialogue, and wider Christian reflection on dignity, justice, and responsible coexistence in plural societies.

**Keywords:** discrimination; incarnation; LGBTQ+; queer Christology; Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou

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## Introduction

Discrimination becomes a theological problem when difference is used to determine whose humanity deserves protection, dignity, and space to flourish. In Indonesia, this question is particularly significant because discussions of LGBTQ+ persons take place at the intersection of religion, culture, law, morality, and human rights. LGBTQ+ individuals continue to experience stigma, intimidation, exclusion, and physical or verbal violence. A frequently cited survey reported by BBC News Indonesia found that 89.3% of LGBTQ+ respondents in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Makassar had experienced physical, psychological, sexual, economic, or cultural violence and discrimination (BBC News Indonesia, 2014). Human Rights Watch has likewise documented raids on private spaces, arrests, involuntary disclosure of identities, cancellation of activities, and the erosion of safe spaces (Human Rights Watch, 2018). More recent documentation indicates that these problems remain persistent, including violence and restrictions affecting LGBT students and communities (Human Rights Watch, 2026). Such experiences show that discrimination extends beyond interpersonal rejection to include fear, social isolation, restricted participation, and conditions that compromise human dignity and safety.

This tension becomes more complex within Indonesia's legal, religious, and educational environments. Article 28I paragraphs (1) and (2) of the 1945 Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedom from discriminatory treatment (Indonesia, 1945), while Law No. 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code, effective from 2 January 2026, regulates sexual intercourse and cohabitation outside legally recognized marriage through complaint-based provisions (Indonesia, 2023). Although homosexuality is not designated as a separate criminal offense, LGBTQ+ persons remain vulnerable to social stigma and to practices that can restrict privacy, association, and security, as documented by Human Rights Watch (2018). These tensions are also reproduced in educational spaces. Research among students at Indonesian religion-based universities continues to identify negative stigma and homophobic attitudes, demonstrating that education does not automatically neutralize prejudicial assumptions about sexual minorities (Praptiningsih et al., 2024). Consequently, the question facing Christian communities and educational institutions is not simply how they interpret sexuality doctrinally, but how theological convictions are translated into relationships, institutional practices, and forms of education that either protect or diminish human dignity.

A substantial body of scholarship has investigated the relationship among religion, sexuality, identity, and exclusion. Queer theology critically examines how categories of sexuality, gender, normality, and power shape Christian interpretation, while Patrick S. Cheng develops this approach through models of the Queer Christ that reconsider sin, grace, embodiment, liberation, and marginalization from queer experience (Cheng, 2011). Beyond theology, international research demonstrates that religious beliefs can influence attitudes toward LGBTQ+ persons and, in some educational and professional contexts, shape curriculum, institutional culture, and professional practices (Westwood, 2022). Studies of religious educational environments similarly show that conflicts between religious freedom and LGBTQ+ inclusion may affect students' sense of safety and participation (Jones, 2023). Fielder et al. (2024) further demonstrate how heteronormative and cisnormative discourses within faith-based schools may indirectly harm LGBTQ+ students even

when exclusion is directed primarily toward educators. At the higher-education level, Yang (2025) shows that queer students in faith-based settings negotiate not merely sexual identity but also religious identity, suggesting that institutional inclusion should not require students to abandon one dimension of identity in order to preserve another. Together, these studies establish that religion and education constitute important sites where LGBTQ+ identities are interpreted, disciplined, contested, or supported; however, they predominantly analyze institutional climate, law, psychology, or educational experience rather than constructing a specifically Indonesian contextual Christology capable of addressing such discrimination.

A second strand of scholarship turns to education and culture as resources for resisting exclusion. Within Minahasan thought, Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou, commonly understood as the conviction that human beings live to humanize one another, has been interpreted as an ethical foundation for identity, education, solidarity, and communal responsibility. Sondakh (2002) emphasizes that human maturity is expressed through contributing to the growth and humanization of others. This concern is especially relevant in educational settings. Sirry et al. (2026) found that Indonesian high school students' attitudes toward LGBT people often reflected prejudicial narratives circulating in wider society, showing that schools can reproduce the assumptions of their social environment. International research reaches a similar conclusion from a different angle. Mann et al. (2025) associate LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula, pedagogy, staff preparation, and related strategies with stronger perceptions of school safety and community, while Bailey et al. (2024) identify positive school climate as a potential buffer against the mental health effects of sexuality based discrimination. A systematic review further identifies inclusive resources, supportive policies, affirming school climates, connectedness, and social support as important school level protective factors (Xu et al., 2026). In higher education, supportive campus climates and a stronger sense of belonging are likewise associated with better psychological outcomes among LGBTQ+ students (McField et al., 2026). Yet these educational findings seldom enter sustained dialogue with Christology and Indonesian indigenous wisdom. Conversely, scholarship on queer theology and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou has largely developed along separate lines. The gap addressed here therefore lies in the limited integration of these conversations within a contextual theological framework for interpreting LGBTQ+ discrimination in Indonesia.

This study occupies that intersection by constructing a three-layered dialogue among the social reality of LGBTQ+ discrimination in Indonesia, Patrick S. Cheng's queer Christology and incarnational Christology, and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou as an indigenous ethical language of humanization. Minahasan philosophy is not treated as a cultural ornament attached to a Western theological scheme, but as an interlocutor capable of shaping the ethical argument. Queer Christology is likewise used critically rather than as a claim that every doctrinal dispute concerning sexuality has been settled. Its role is to interrogate structures and binary assumptions that allow theological difference to become dehumanizing practice. The contribution of the study is therefore a contextual Christian ethic in which divine solidarity, liberation, cultural responsibility, and human dignity are interpreted together.

The importance of this inquiry is theological, cultural, ecclesial, and educational. Theologically, it asks whether claims about Christ's incarnation, suffering, liberation, and solidarity

remain credible when Christian communities tolerate practices that humiliate or endanger marginalized persons. Culturally, it demonstrates how Minahasan wisdom can contribute constructively to contemporary theological ethics. Ecclesially and educationally, it offers a framework through which churches, Christian schools, universities, theological colleges, and educators may distinguish serious theological disagreement from practices that create unsafe or dehumanizing environments. The study therefore examines how Cheng's queer Christology, incarnational Christology, and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou may be brought into dialogue to formulate an ethical response to LGBTQ+ discrimination in Indonesia and to identify how their convergences and tensions can inform solidarity, protection, dialogue, and humanization.

The argument developed here is that theological disagreement concerning sexuality neither requires nor ethically legitimates violence, humiliation, coercion, involuntary disclosure, or social exclusion. The contribution is not the elimination of theological difference, but the articulation of an ethical boundary within which such difference should be negotiated. By placing the Liberator Christ and Hybrid Christ in dialogue with incarnational solidarity and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou, the study proposes that Christian theology should also be assessed by its capacity to protect vulnerable life and enable participation in community without loss of dignity. In this sense, "humanizing the human" functions as both a contextual theological category and a practical criterion for evaluating Christian responses to marginalized persons.

In educational contexts, this framework has implications that extend beyond the LGBTQ+ debate itself. Christian education does not merely transmit doctrine; it also forms dispositions, relationships, institutional cultures, and ways of encountering difference. Empirical studies increasingly suggest that supportive teachers, inclusive educational practices, positive institutional climates, and a sense of belonging matter significantly for LGBTQ+ students' safety and well-being (Bailey et al., 2024; Mann et al., 2025; McField et al., 2026; Sirry et al., 2026; Xu et al., 2026). The integration proposed here therefore encourages Christian educational institutions to cultivate learning environments in which theological convictions may be examined seriously without transforming classrooms, campuses, pastoral relationships, or disciplinary structures into spaces of humiliation and fear. More broadly, the study contributes to Christian education by proposing humanization as a pedagogical responsibility: educating persons not simply to defend convictions, but to engage difference through critical theological reflection, compassion, justice, responsible dialogue, and active protection of human dignity.

## Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library-based approach, which was considered appropriate because the research seeks to construct a contextual theological-ethical interpretation through sustained engagement with theological texts, cultural philosophy, legal documents, and documented experiences of discrimination rather than through the measurement of variables or collection of primary participant data. The primary corpus consisted of Patrick S. Cheng's work on queer Christology, Jürgen Moltmann's writings on Christology, the cross, and incarnation, Niels Henrik Gregersen's work on *deep incarnation*, and A. J. Sondakh's interpretation

of the Minahasan philosophy *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* (Cheng, 2012; Gregersen, 2015; Moltmann, 1993a, 1993b; Sondakh, 2002). Secondary sources included scholarly discussions of queer theology, relevant Indonesian legal documents, and reports from institutions documenting discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons in Indonesia. These sources were selected purposively on the basis of their conceptual relevance to the research problem. Cheng was chosen because his seven models of the Queer Christ explicitly connect Christology with sin, grace, marginalization, and the lived experience of queer communities; Moltmann was selected because his Christology integrates the cross, resurrection, divine solidarity with suffering, and the renewal of creation; Gregersen was included because *deep incarnation* broadens reflection on divine participation in vulnerable and material existence; and *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* was incorporated because it provides an indigenous Minahasan ethical category in which human maturity is expressed through responsibility for the flourishing and humanization of others. This combination of theological, cultural, legal, and social-documentary sources enabled the study to examine LGBTQ+ discrimination simultaneously as a theological, ethical, cultural, and contextual problem.

Data analysis proceeded through five interrelated stages. First, social and legal materials were mapped to identify recurring forms of discrimination and their documented consequences. Second, the theological and cultural texts were coded thematically around key concepts including marginalization, solidarity, liberation, relationality, hybridity, incarnation, and humanization. Third, hermeneutical analysis was used to interpret these concepts within their respective theological and cultural contexts, thereby reducing the risk of anachronistically transferring meanings from one tradition to another. Fourth, comparative analysis was employed to identify convergences, differences, tensions, and conceptual limits among Cheng's queer Christology, Moltmann's incarnational and cruciform Christology, Gregersen's *deep incarnation*, and *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*. Finally, these findings were synthesized into contextual ethical and pastoral implications for Christian communities responding to LGBTQ+ discrimination in Indonesia. The use of multiple source categories and sequential analytical procedures strengthened interpretive rigor by allowing theological claims to be examined alongside cultural, legal, and social evidence rather than in isolation. Because the study did not involve interviews, observations, experiments, or direct participation by human subjects, no participant recruitment or informed-consent procedures were required. Nevertheless, ethical care remained important in representing marginalized communities accurately and avoiding claims that exceeded the documentary evidence. Accordingly, the study does not present its pastoral recommendations as empirically tested interventions; rather, they are interpretive and normative proposals derived from the literature and documentary materials analyzed.

## Results And Discussion

### Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou: Humanization as a Relational and Ethical Vocation

The analysis first shows that Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou is best understood not as an isolated maxim attributable exclusively to Gerungan Saul Samuel Jacob Ratulangi, but as a Minahasan cultural philosophy whose ethical, educational, and communal significance has developed through

historical transmission. Sondakh (2002) situates the expression within the broader evolution of Minahasan values and human identity, while Supit and Pangalila-Ratulangi (2022) caution against reducing its origin to a single historical moment. Its theological significance therefore lies less in identifying a first speaker than in tracing how the philosophy has shaped Minahasan understandings of humanity, responsibility, solidarity, and communal flourishing. Recent contextual theological scholarship in Indonesia similarly argues that indigenous traditions should not merely illustrate supposedly universal Western theology, but should be treated as interlocutors capable of generating locally grounded theological knowledge (Setyarini et al., 2026; Wagiu et al., 2026).

The linguistic movement from *tou* to *timou* and finally *tumou* reveals a particularly significant anthropology. *Tou* designates the human person; *timou* evokes living, growing, and becoming mature; and *tumou* expands this movement toward enabling another person to live, develop, and mature. Humanity is therefore not conceptualized as a purely individual possession. A person reaches ethical maturity when one's existence contributes to the flourishing of another. The central finding is consequently that *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* represents an active ethic of humanization: to become fully human is to become life-giving toward others.

This interpretation is reinforced by Sondakh's (2002) categories of *tou ente*, *tou ngaasan*, and *tou sama*. Social prominence (*tou ente*) and intellectual capacity (*tou ngaasan*) remain morally incomplete without *tou sama*, the good person whose knowledge and power are directed toward love of God and neighbor. Theologically, this hierarchy of values is striking. It suggests that intelligence, religious authority, cultural prestige, or doctrinal competence do not constitute mature humanity by themselves. Such qualities require ethical verification through their consequences for others. Power that diminishes another person contradicts *tumou tou*, regardless of how culturally respected or religiously justified that power may appear.

This relational anthropology carries particular weight for Christian ethics. Mark 12:28–31 joins love of God to love of neighbor, making it difficult to separate Christian spirituality from responsibility for the life of another. The Minahasan category tou sama offers a contextual vocabulary for this New Testament pattern: mature humanity is recognizable not only through knowledge of God but also through the capacity to make life more livable for others. Practices such as maupus-upusan, masigi-sigian, matulung-tulungan, maleos-leosan, and matembo-temboan embody this ethic through affection, respect, assistance, reconciliation, and sustained mutual care (Sondakh, 2002; Tuela et al., 2023).

A further implication concerns the meaning of humanization itself. To "humanize" another person must not imply that marginalized people acquire humanity only when recognized by those with greater social or religious power. Their human dignity is already given. Memanusiakan manusia is more adequately understood as treating others in ways consistent with the humanity they already possess and resisting structures that deny that humanity in practice. This interpretation protects Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou from paternalism and turns it into a critical ethical criterion. Institutions should therefore be judged not only by whether they refrain from direct violence, but also by whether they cultivate conditions in which people can live, participate, develop, and flourish.

## Incarnation, Vulnerability, and Divine Solidarity

The ethical force of incarnation provides the next major result. Moltmann's Christology does not reduce incarnation to the isolated proposition that Jesus "became human." Incarnation belongs to the whole history of Christ, from birth and ministry through crucifixion and resurrection to eschatological renewal. In The Way of Jesus Christ, Moltmann (1993b) interprets Christology dynamically as the journey of Jesus Christ toward the renewal of life. In The Crucified God, the cross reveals that God does not remain untouched by human suffering but enters suffering through the crucified Christ (Moltmann, 1993a). Structures that humiliate, destroy, or exclude therefore cannot claim theological legitimacy merely because they operate under religious or moral authority.

Gregersen's (2015) account of deep incarnation extends this claim. John 1:14, "the Word became flesh," can be read as God's participation in vulnerable, material, and mortal creaturely existence. When this text is read alongside Colossians 1:20 and 1 Corinthians 15:28, incarnation opens toward the reconciliation and renewal of creation as a whole. This does not collapse the distinction between Creator and creation or imply pantheism. Rather, it portrays divine action as redemptive engagement with embodied and fragile life.

Incarnation thus provides a theological basis for solidarity without requiring every doctrinal controversy concerning sexuality to be resolved in advance. It does not, by itself, establish the correctness of any contemporary theory of sexual or gender identity. Its ethical significance lies elsewhere: embodied vulnerability cannot be treated as irrelevant to Christian faith. A church that confesses a God who becomes flesh and enters suffering must examine practices that intensify the vulnerability of people who are already marginalized.

This reading is strengthened by contemporary discussions of religion, sexuality, and embodiment. Schnabel et al. (2022) demonstrate that gender and sexuality frequently operate as symbolic boundaries through which religious communities negotiate identity and belonging. Such boundaries are not automatically oppressive, but they become ethically problematic when classification is transformed into a hierarchy of human worth. Similarly, Wirth (2021) argues that theological ethical problems arise not simply from the existence of queer forms of relationship but from restrictive models that determine legitimacy through narrowly prescribed forms of life.

This suggests a Christological test of proximity. Christian communities need to ask not only what doctrinal position they hold, but also toward whom that position causes them to move. The trajectory of incarnation is movement toward vulnerable existence rather than withdrawal from it. Theology that legitimates humiliation, social abandonment, or coercion therefore requires scrutiny in light of the incarnational pattern it claims to confess. A spirituality shaped by incarnation should form communities capable of approaching vulnerable lives without first demanding that those lives become socially comfortable or theologically uncomplicated.

## Queer Christology as a Critical Hermeneutic

Queer Christology functions in this study as a critical hermeneutic rather than as a historical claim about Jesus' sexual identity. The term queer is neither a simple synonym for homosexual

identity nor a description of Jesus' orientation. In queer theology, it is used to interrogate categories of gender, sexuality, normality, identity, and power that are often treated as fixed or self-evident (Cheng, 2011; Slater & Cornwall, 2022). Speaking of the "Queer Christ" therefore names a contextual Christological lens through which exclusionary boundaries may be examined.

This distinction is methodologically crucial. Projecting contemporary sexual identities directly onto the historical Jesus would produce anachronism. Yet avoiding anachronism does not mean that the Gospel traditions are incapable of addressing contemporary structures of marginalization. Christian interpretation necessarily moves between text, tradition, and changing historical contexts. The appropriate question is thus not whether Jesus can be assigned a modern identity label but whether the Christological patterns witnessed in Scripture challenge mechanisms through which certain persons are rendered socially or religiously illegitimate.

Cornwall's work sharpens this issue through the theological significance of bodily ambiguity. Her discussion of intersex embodiment questions assumptions that Jesus' male body must become a universal biological norm governing the theological significance of all bodies (Cornwall, 2010, 2014). Speculation about the biological or chromosomal composition of Jesus should not be elevated into historical fact. Its theological usefulness lies instead in exposing the limits of human certainty about embodiment. Such reflection enables Christology to resist the temptation to turn a particular bodily configuration into an exhaustive measure of human legitimacy.

Contemporary scholarship also suggests that religion and queer identity should not be reduced to a simple binary of Christianity versus LGBTQ+ existence. Schnabel et al. (2022) show that religion may function simultaneously as a source of boundaries, identity, resistance, support, and conflict. Empirical research among LGBTQ+ Christians likewise reveals experiences of both religious injury and deep commitment to Christian faith (Ezzy et al., 2024). In the Philippine context, Cornelio and Dagle (2024) describe a 'spirituality of struggle' through which queer Christians continue to negotiate questions of identity, love, divine calling, and religious belonging. These studies reinforce a crucial theological point: queer persons should not be conceptualized merely as external objects about whom churches debate; many are themselves believing subjects actively interpreting Scripture, God, church, and vocation.

## The Seven Models of the Queer Christ: Reconfiguring Sin and Grace

Cheng's (2012) seven models of the Queer Christ provide the analytical center of this study because each model reconfigures the relationship between Christology, sin, and grace. The models should not be read as seven competing biographies of Jesus. They are contextual Christological lenses that illuminate different forms of relational brokenness and different possibilities for liberation.

The *Erotic Christ* interprets divine-human relationship through desire, intimacy, and relational connection. For Cheng (2012), the erotic cannot be reduced to sexual activity; it names a deeper energy of relationship and communion. Sin emerges when desire becomes exploitation, objectification, or disregard for another person's agency, whereas grace appears as mutuality. Theologically, this model shifts attention from controlling bodies to evaluating relationships.

Christian love cannot be measured only by the intentions of the person exercising authority; its effect upon the other matters. Pastoral practices described as 'care,' 'discipline,' or 'correction' become ethically questionable when they disregard consent, agency, or dignity. Thus, mutuality becomes a spiritual criterion of love: love that controls another without meaningful regard for their agency risks becoming domination in theological language.

The *Out Christ* interprets divine self-revelation through the analogy of *coming out* (Cheng, 2012). The analogy does not equate Christ's divine revelation with disclosure of sexual identity. It instead foregrounds the movement from enforced concealment toward truthful self-presence. This model requires significant contextual qualification in Indonesia, where disclosure of LGBTQ+ identity may expose individuals to family conflict, religious exclusion, doxxing, loss of safety, or coercive intervention (Human Rights Watch, 2018, 2026). Consequently, *coming out* cannot responsibly be transformed into a universal moral command. The deeper ethical problem is the construction of communities in which concealment becomes necessary for survival. Grace, therefore, is not compulsory disclosure but the creation of relationships in which truth can be spoken freely and safely.

Yih's (2025) study of belonging among LGBTQ+ Christians sharpens this point. Belonging is shaped not only by interpersonal acceptance but also by structural and cultural conditions within churches. Read in this light, the Out Christ raises an ecclesiological question: can the church become a community in which truthful self-presence does not require self-endangerment? This standard goes beyond rhetorical welcome because it requires attention to institutional culture, confidentiality, leadership practices, and power.

Among Cheng's models, the Liberator Christ is especially important for the present argument. Cheng (2012) interprets Christ as liberator from structures that produce oppression and marginalization. This reading resonates with Gospel narratives in which Jesus approaches people marked by stigma: he touches the person with leprosy (Mark 1:40–45), eats with tax collectors and those identified as sinners (Mark 2:15–17), crosses social and religious boundaries in his encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4), and places human restoration at the center of the Sabbath controversy (Mark 3:1–6). Goss (1993) likewise reads Jesus' boundary-crossing ministry as a resource for liberation.

The critical issue in these narratives is not an uncomplicated opposition between Jesus and religious law. Rather, Jesus exposes what happens when religious interpretation loses sight of vulnerable human beings. Mark 3 is particularly important: the question of Sabbath observance becomes inseparable from the question of doing good, saving life, and doing harm. The ethical fruit of interpretation therefore matters.

This moves the concept of sin beyond individualized moral failure. Sin may also be institutional: indifference, silence, discriminatory policy, tolerated bullying, involuntary outing, or structures that normalize another person's humiliation. Setyawan (2022), writing specifically about Indonesian churches, similarly argues that ecclesial discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons requires an ecclesiological reconstruction of the church as an inclusive communion of disciples. Mulya and Udampoh's (2023) empirical study of LGBT-affirming Indonesian Pentecostals further complicates the common assumption that evangelical or Pentecostal identity necessarily produces only

rejection. Their findings identify personal moral agency, communal relationships, and institutional dynamics as resources through which affirming Christian subjectivities can emerge.

Taken together, these studies support a more demanding claim: Liberator Christology requires institutional conversion, not merely compassionate individuals. A congregation cannot establish its humanizing character simply by insisting that its members harbor no hatred. Its structures, policies, pastoral language, reporting mechanisms, leadership practices, and distribution of power must also be examined according to whether they protect vulnerable people or intensify their vulnerability.

The *Transgressive Christ* emphasizes Jesus' crossing of social, cultural, and religious boundaries (Cheng, 2012). Transgression in this framework should not be equated with rebellion for its own sake. Its theological value lies in identifying boundaries that have ceased to serve life and instead become mechanisms of exclusion. The Gospel traditions repeatedly show Jesus entering relationships from which respectable religious practice might have demanded distance. The resulting insight is hermeneutical: obedience must be accompanied by discernment concerning the consequences of obedience. Religious norms cannot be evaluated only by their formal legitimacy; their effects upon vulnerable persons also require theological scrutiny.

Gunnes' (2020) account of queer kenosis and ecclesial hospitality is valuable here because it refuses an idealized understanding of inclusion. Hospitality involves risk, displacement, and ambivalence precisely because actual marginalized bodies challenge the host's control over ecclesial space. This insight deepens the *Transgressive Christ*: genuine boundary-crossing is not the church benevolently allowing selected outsiders to enter an unchanged institution. Hospitality may also require the community itself to be transformed through encounter.

The *Self-Loving Christ* responds to forms of religious spirituality that transform sacrifice into self-erasure. Cheng (2012) does not oppose Christian self-giving; instead, he challenges the assumption that holiness requires self-contempt. Jesus' withdrawal for prayer (Mark 1:35), invitation to rest (Mark 6:31), and command to love one's neighbor 'as yourself' (Mark 12:31) provide a biblical grammar for distinguishing self-love from narcissism. In situations where religious stigma has cultivated internalized shame, the recovery of one's dignity can itself become a spiritual act.

This model also requires a careful distinction between self-denial and self-hatred. Christian spirituality includes traditions of self-denial, yet relinquishing egocentric power for the sake of love is not the same as destroying one's sense of worth. The Self-Loving Christ therefore challenges forms of discipleship that spiritualize self-rejection. The command to love one's neighbor "as oneself" presupposes a self that can be received as worthy of care.

The *Interconnected Christ* emphasizes the relational character of existence. Cheng's (2012) description of isolation as sin does not condemn solitude, introversion, or healthy boundaries. It concerns destructive relational severance, especially when communities isolate particular persons from networks of belonging and support. This resonates strongly with Pauline ecclesiology. The body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12 exists through differentiated interdependence rather than sameness.

Yih (2025) similarly identifies belonging as a serious issue for LGBTQ+ Christians, while Ezzy et al. (2024) show that Christian experience among LGBTQ+ persons includes not only discrimination but also self-acceptance, religious commitment, and experiences of affirmation. These findings

caution against portraying queer Christians exclusively through victimhood. A humanizing ecclesiology should address suffering without denying agency, spirituality, resilience, and theological voice.

The *Hybrid Christ*, finally, challenges rigid binaries through the Christological conjunction of realities that cannot be reduced to a single category (Cheng, 2012). Christ is divine and human; his identity crosses conventional boundaries between transcendence and materiality and between center and margin. Hybridity should not be interpreted as a biological claim that Jesus was simultaneously male and female or both heterosexual and homosexual. Its purpose is critical: it questions classificatory systems that require complex identities to be reduced to mutually exclusive categories.

The model does not demand the disappearance of all distinctions. Christian theology itself depends upon distinction, including the distinction between Creator and creation. The problem arises when distinction becomes hierarchy, when one category is designated pure, complete, legitimate, or fully human, while another becomes contaminated, defective, or disposable. Wirth's (2021) analysis of queer family forms similarly demonstrates how restrictive theological models may create injustices by treating a single social configuration as the exclusive measure against which all others are judged.

The theological usefulness of the Hybrid Christ lies, then, not in abolishing difference but in criticizing exclusionary simplification. Human beings inhabit intersecting realities of body, faith, family, gender, culture, vocation, history, and community. Pastoral care becomes inadequate when a single label is permitted to eclipse the complexity of the person.

## From Queer Christology to a Christology of Humanization

The study's central synthesis appears when Cheng's models are placed in sustained dialogue with incarnational Christology and Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou. These traditions should not be collapsed into conceptual equivalence because they arise from distinct histories and perform different theological functions. Their value lies in the way those different functions can be held together without erasing their particularity.

Incarnational Christology provides the theological ground: God moves toward embodied, vulnerable, and suffering life. Queer Christology provides the critical lens: theological categories, social norms, and institutional structures must be questioned when they convert difference into exclusion. *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* provides the contextual ethical grammar: mature humanity expresses itself by sustaining the life, dignity, and flourishing of another. Together they make possible what this study proposes as a Christology of humanization.

This proposal belongs within a broader Indonesian tradition of contextual theological construction. Setyarini et al. (2026), for example, demonstrate how Christian spirituality and indigenous Javanese categories can enter a dialogical relationship without either being reduced to the other. More specifically in the Minahasan context, Wagiu et al. (2026) recover indigenous actors as active agents in the indigenization of Christianity and Christian education rather than as passive

recipients of missionary theology. These studies support an important methodological principle for the present argument: Minahasan wisdom should not merely 'illustrate' theological concepts produced elsewhere. It can actively interrogate and reconfigure Christian theological reflection.

Within this synthesis, Cheng's *Liberator Christ* intersects particularly fruitfully with *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*. The Liberator Christ asks whether social and religious structures restore those whose dignity has been diminished; *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* asks whether one's own humanity has become life-giving for another. In both cases, ethics moves beyond passive nonviolence. A person or institution can fail ethically not only through active aggression but also through indifference toward suffering.

This convergence is evident in Mark 12:28–31, Luke 10:25–37, and Matthew 25:31–46. In the Good Samaritan narrative, neighbor-love becomes visible through approach, touch, material assistance, transportation, economic responsibility, and continuing care. Compassion is therefore embodied. Matthew 25 similarly refuses to separate relation to Christ from treatment of those who are socially vulnerable. These texts do not directly resolve contemporary debates concerning LGBTQ+ identities; they do, however, establish a demanding Christian grammar of responsibility toward vulnerable persons.

## Doctrinal Disagreement and the Ethical Limits of Christian Difference

The continuing biblical dispute over sexuality must remain visible within this synthesis. Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, and 1 Timothy 1:10 remain central to Christian debate. Queer theologians do not approach these texts through a single interpretive method. Some revisit lexical and translation questions, others distinguish ancient sexual practices from modern categories of sexual orientation and gender identity, and still others read individual passages within broader biblical trajectories of justice, embodiment, covenant, and community (Slater & Cornwall, 2022).

Consequently, the present study does not claim that queer Christology has conclusively resolved every exegetical disagreement, nor does it equate every traditional interpretation with hatred. Such claims would exceed the evidence and unnecessarily weaken the argument. The more defensible conclusion is both narrower and more demanding: doctrinal disagreement does not provide ethical authorization for dehumanization.

Violence, humiliation, coercion, bullying, involuntary outing, abandonment, or removal of basic safety cannot be justified merely by appealing to theological disagreement. This distinction is particularly important in Indonesia, where Christian approaches to LGBTQ+ questions are themselves internally diverse. Setyawan (2022) argues for an ecclesiology of inclusive discipleship, whereas Mulya and Udampoh (2023) demonstrate empirically that affirming resources can emerge even within Indonesian Pentecostal settings often stereotyped as uniformly hostile. The Indonesian Christian landscape therefore cannot adequately be represented through a simple binary of 'traditional religion' versus 'queer liberation.'

A further contribution of the study is to treat disagreement itself as a site of Christian spiritual formation. The issue is not only what Christians conclude about contested sexual ethics, but also what kind of Christian character is formed while those conclusions are held and expressed. Do interpretation and disagreement cultivate humility, patience, justice, truthfulness, self-control, and neighbor-love, or do they produce contempt, fear, humiliation, and social expulsion? Christian orthodoxy cannot be indefinitely separated from the moral character generated through its practice.

Cornelio and Dagle's (2024) account of queer Christians' 'spirituality of struggle' is illuminating in this regard. Queer believers may remain engaged in Christian faith even while negotiating deep tensions concerning identity and ecclesial belonging. Such persons are not merely problems for theology to solve; they are theological subjects whose struggle may itself disclose forms of faith, discernment, and perseverance. This insight requires a shift from speaking only about LGBTQ+ Christians toward listening to how LGBTQ+ Christians themselves speak about God.

## Ecclesial Praxis: From Tolerance to Humanizing Communion

Ecclesial praxis provides the final test of the proposed Christology of humanization. If the concept is to possess theological credibility, it must become visible in concrete communal practice. Churches may continue serious biblical and doctrinal deliberation while establishing clear pastoral commitments to safety and dignity. Such commitments can include rejecting violence and bullying, prohibiting involuntary outing, protecting confidentiality, creating trustworthy mechanisms for reporting abuse, preparing clergy and pastoral workers to respond to stigma without humiliation, accompanying families in conflict, and providing spaces where biblical disagreement can be discussed without threatening participants' basic security.

Gunnes (2020) rightly complicates any romanticized theology of hospitality: welcoming marginalized persons can unsettle established ecclesial identities and practices. Hospitality is therefore not merely inviting the 'other' into the host's unchanged world. Authentic hospitality permits encounter to transform the host as well. Yih (2025) likewise emphasizes that belonging involves structural and cultural factors, not simply individual friendliness. The implication is that churches must examine not only attitudes but systems.

This perspective resonates strongly with 1 Corinthians 12:12–26. Paul's body metaphor does not construct unity through sameness. Difference does not negate belonging; indeed, members considered weaker are declared indispensable and deserving of particular honor. The church is therefore most authentically 'one body' not when difference disappears but when difference does not become a basis for dispensability.

This Pauline insight also deepens the meaning of *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*. To humanize is to create communal conditions in which another person may live, mature, participate, contribute, and assume responsibility without being subjected to degradation. The church does not humanize LGBTQ+ persons because they were previously less than human. Rather, the church becomes more fully faithful to its own humanity and ecclesial identity when it refuses practices that deny the humanity of another.

Jesus who humanizes humanity therefore functions not only as a compassionate image but as a theological criterion for ecclesial discernment. The pertinent question is whether Christian practices enable people, including those with whom a community maintains serious theological disagreement, to live safely, participate meaningfully, receive truthful pastoral care, and retain their dignity. When they do not, the problem is no longer only pastoral technique; it becomes a Christological problem.

The originality of this interpretation lies in the differentiated yet constructive relationship among the three primary frameworks. Incarnation prevents Christian theology from abandoning vulnerable embodied life. Queer Christology exposes boundaries when they become mechanisms of exclusion. Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou translates solidarity into an active cultural ethic of sustaining another's humanity. Within this framework, theological fidelity and human dignity need not be treated as competing commitments. Fidelity to Christ is tested, in part, by the kinds of human relationships and communities that Christian theology helps to produce.

A Christology of humanization therefore moves beyond the minimal ethical principle of "do no harm." It calls churches to create conditions in which human beings can live, grow, participate, discern, and flourish. Such a spirituality does not require the suspension of theological conviction. It requires conviction to be embodied through love, justice, humility, and protection of vulnerable persons. Christian witness is credible when the church reflects the Christ who approaches the marginalized, restores wounded persons to community, crosses boundaries that have become instruments of exclusion, and forms disciples whose humanity becomes visible in their willingness to sustain the humanity of others.

## Conclusion

This study shows that discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons in Indonesia is not only a social, legal, or pastoral concern; it is also a theological question about how Christian communities embody the humanity revealed and restored in Christ. The dialogue among Patrick S. Cheng's queer Christology, incarnational and cruciform Christology, and the Minahasan philosophy Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou yields three related conclusions. Incarnation reveals God's movement toward vulnerable and embodied life. Queer Christology exposes religious, social, and institutional boundaries when those boundaries become mechanisms of exclusion. Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou translates solidarity into an active ethical responsibility to sustain the dignity, participation, and flourishing of others. The study's principal contribution is the proposal of a Christology of humanization, which evaluates theological fidelity not only through doctrinal formulation but also through the relationships, institutions, and communities that theology helps to form. This framework does not claim to resolve every biblical or doctrinal dispute concerning sexuality, and it does not equate theological disagreement with hatred. It does, however, establish a clear ethical limit: disagreement cannot legitimately become violence, humiliation, coercion, involuntary disclosure, exclusion, or denial of human dignity. By positioning Minahasan wisdom as an active theological interlocutor rather than a cultural illustration of Western concepts, the study contributes to contextual Christian theology and offers churches, theological institutions, and Christian

educational communities a framework for pastoral safety, responsible dialogue, institutional accountability, and spiritual formation grounded in love, justice, humility, and protection of vulnerable persons. In this sense, “Jesus who humanizes humanity” becomes a criterion for Christian discipleship and ecclesial discernment, asking whether theology enables others to live, grow, participate, and flourish with dignity. Future research should test and refine this conceptual framework through empirical studies with LGBTQ+ Christians, clergy, theological educators, students, families, and Minahasan communities, as well as through comparative work with other Indonesian indigenous philosophies and Christian traditions. Further biblical and theological research could also examine how humanization, embodiment, hospitality, belonging, and faithful disagreement contribute to a contextually grounded Christian spirituality in plural societies.

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### Artificial Intelligence (Ai) Use Statement

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used during the preparation of this manuscript to assist with language editing, academic phrasing, structural refinement, organization of several sections, and the identification and verification of potentially relevant scholarly references. AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, revised, and verified by the author before inclusion in the manuscript. AI was not treated as an author, an independent source of theological authority, or a substitute for scholarly judgment. The selection of sources, formulation of the research problem, theological framework, interpretation of the literature, development of the central argument, and final conclusions remain the responsibility of the author. The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, originality, and final content of the published work.

### Author Contribution

Jeremy Lodewyk Frans Pangemanan: Conceptualization; research design and methodology; literature collection and source selection; theological, hermeneutical, and comparative analysis; development of the conceptual framework; interpretation and synthesis of the findings; manuscript preparation; critical revision for important intellectual content; reference verification; and final approval of the version to be published. As the sole author, Jeremy Lodewyk Frans Pangemanan takes full responsibility for all aspects of the study and for ensuring the accuracy, integrity, and scholarly accountability of the work.

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