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Transformation of the Values of Agape Love as a Learning Agent for Moral Change in the Context of Theology Students

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the parallels between the Agape Love and moral change in theological students. The findings imply that transformation of the values of Agape Love as a learning agent for moral change in the context of theological students should aim to bring about God's Kingdom's reconciliation. Contextualising learning agent content into students' circumstances and backgrounds involves shifting from a Christian moral and character to the theological students. The goal of Agape Love is to completely change students' lives, including their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects. Dialectics, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning are all incorporated into the learning approach in theological students. This research aims to answer several questions: What are the values of Agape Love as a learning agent for moral change in theology students? This literature research method provides answers: (1) Agape Love is a source of Christian moral values; (2) the moral value of Agape Love based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is a lifestyle that students of theology can apply as service to God: not easily giving up in facing life's problems, but strengthening personal relationships with God and fellow students as well as all lecturers and staff as co-workers in school of theology; (3) the strategy of applying the values of Agape Love, doing-learning Agape Love, learning as an agent of moral change, and learning modelling for it to become an exemplary individual characteristic in theological students.

Keywords: the values of agape love; learning; morals; theology student

Introduction

Educational qualifications always lead to the achievement of the institution's vision and mission. In this case, the vision of the theological high school is to direct students to become servants of

God who are Biblically knowledgeable, have good character in life, and are charismatic in service and theology.¹ This vision reflects a vocation and will never change but is always relevant to the needs of the era. The vision is the conceptual basis for the Bible School or Theological School as a basis for describing goals. If the vision is a conceptual guide, then the goals are operational targets, and to achieve the intended goals it is necessary to define the mission.² The mission is the basis for the operational management of the Theological High School where to carry out its mission, and each school needs to establish a teaching curriculum.

Knowles said that the vision will be realised in a mission that is spelled out in the objectives and needs of the programme, which includes the following: (1) the goals and needs of each individual; (2) the goals and needs of the institution; (3) community goals and needs.³ This was emphasised by Nasution who stated that the components of the curriculum include: objectives, design of learning materials (knowledge), teaching and learning processes, and assessment or evaluation.⁴ But in the field, it was found that the vision of several theological high schools had not been maximally translated into both the course curriculum and the hidden curriculum. So, in the field of service, it was found that there were alumni who did not serve. Some of them only work in public places, not in a church, teach in elementary schools but not teach religion, open their businesses, get married, and become housewives. Here it can be seen that there is a gap between the vision and the quality of alumni in service.

In the field of curriculum, the high school of theology has a Bachelor of Theology (SI) Bachelor of Theology Study programme in the field of Theology/Clergy using a curriculum from the Ministry of Religion of 80 credits and 80 credits local, which is oriented towards the needs of churches in Indonesia. Although the theological high school has made a syllabus for the courses taught (160 credits) both in theory and field practice, it has been recorded, reproduced in limited numbers, and distributed to teachers and those in need. But the problem that arises is that not all teaching lecturers are prepared to teach materials by the curriculum that has been given. Even though every lecturer who wants to teach is invited, a syllabus is given the scope of what they want to teach. This condition seemed to get worse because there was a lecturer who dictated what was taught to students, not from the existing syllabus. There are even some lecturers who rely on a syllabus (which is taught by lecturers at other theological colleges) to be used as teaching materials in theological high schools. Thus there is a gap between the syllabus made by the school that has not been used in the learning process.

In the growth of morality, it was found that many students violated student rules as follows: not all students were dressed in uniform attributes (uniform and tie) that had been determined by the school, students entered class, not on time, some students plagiarised paper assignments, quarrelled with fellow students, went out without paying attention to the provisions of dating, came home late at night, and there are even students who come to boarding houses of the opposite sex not according to the allotted time. These moral violations occur continuously, at any time, and become a routine task for the student affairs department in carrying out their duties. This is increasingly felt when students begin to carry out service practices and even have plunged into service, then criticism arises from various parties regarding the moral quality of the

1 Muner Daliman, Hanna Suparti, and David Ming, 'Transformational Leadership In The Personality, Performance And Commitments Of Kadesi Theological High School Organizations', *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal* 27 (2021): 1-15.

2 D. Ming, and M. Daliman, 'Mission Theology in the context of a Multiple Society', *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 103 (2) (2002), <https://doi:10.46222/pharosjot.103.2015>.

3 Malcolm Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (Michigan: Gulf Publishing Company, 1990), 30.

4 S. Nasution, *Pengembangan Kurikulum* (Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti, 1990), 23.

student concerned. Thus the student service is hampered (becomes a stumbling block) because their morality has not yet reached the standard of the morality of God's servant.

The morality referred to here is the moral values of ágape love which are the basis for the faith growth of students. The values of ágape love have long been instilled into the basic character of the students of the theological high school, which are not only taught in theory in class, sermons, and lectures, but are also taught in practice in daily life in schools between the leaders, staff, lecturers, and students.

This situation is indeed the basis of the teaching and learning process in the theological high school. The students experienced a process of understanding and applying the values of agape love which characterises the life of the students.

Wandt & Brown said that an action or a process determines the value of something. Educational evaluation is an action or activity (carried out with the intention of) – or a process – which takes place in the world of education (i.e., everything related to or that occurs in the field of education).⁵ Educational evaluation is the activity or process of determining the value of education, so that there can be known the quality or results. For the pattern of education in higher theology schools, evaluation work has not been carried out in all fields. For example, evaluations regarding the increase in the number of students, student problems, and infrastructure are always carried out routinely, but evaluations of teaching lecturers, for example, have never been done. Evaluation of student learning processes or field service evaluations has not been carried out. Thus, the evaluation work has not been carried out optimally.

The distribution of the alumni above was found by several alumni as follows: not all alumni services, and not all alumni have good achievements so there are also alumni who instead of serving become a 'source of problems' at the place of service. The objectives of the study programme are as follows: first, to produce graduates who are capable, knowledgeable, broad-minded, honest and responsible, competent, and professional in the field of Pastoral and Missiology so that they can start growing, nurturing, developing, and maturing the congregations of Christ so that the congregation can independently and work together to spread the gospel to the whole world. Second, preparing full-time servants of God who have a strong biblical-systematic foundation with insight and personality of Christ. Third, prepare full-time servants of God who have a pastoral spirit (shepherding) and use biblical leadership methods. Fourth, prepare full-time servants of God who can develop potential in themselves and others as role models and witnesses for Christ. By looking at the vision and graduates of the alumni above, it can be seen that there is a gap between theory in class and practice in everyday life or the field. About the above, Sidjabat said that as long as students are in college, they need to have theoretical pressure (in class with a teacher) and practice (in the field with a mentor) to work in balance.⁶ Thus theological education needs to put its educational goals in balance between theory and practice.

The theory above is synchronised with Gulo's 'two-dimensional vision' theory which argues that there are two dimensions that are unified in vision, namely the 'top-down' dimension and the 'will-now' dimension. The top-down dimension is none other than God's statement which contains values that want to be realised in concrete situations such as love, justice, and truth. The will-now dimension shows the relationship between reality and idealism. According to Gulo, vision is built on existing reality, where an understanding of existing reality is presented as an ideal, namely

5 Anas Sudjono, *Pengantar Evaluasi Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 2007), 35.

6 B. S. Sidjabat, *Panggilan Pendidikan Teologi Di Indonesia* (Bandung: Institut Alkitab Tiranus, 2003), 56.

God's statement.⁷ So, the purpose of education is to realise this philosophical vision that is set in the mission of the educational process.

Continuing the thoughts above, Weld completes the data in the field. In his research, he found that educational theology which was starting to grow had several weaknesses: first, theology was unable to supply the clergy needed in the field. Second, the cost of providing education is too high. Third, it does not produce servants of God with the local congregation or culture. Fourth, the insufficient selection of prospective seminary students, because graduates when serving in the field cannot show themselves as a shepherd with the spirit needed by the church. This research aims to answer the following question: What are the values of Agape Love as a learning agent for moral change in theology students?

Method

The research on 'transforming the values of agape love as a learning agent for moral change in theology students' uses a library study with a content analysis approach.⁸ The three things studied in this research are: collecting library data about understanding, and values, and making agape love a transforming agent of moral change for theology students.

Discussion

Understanding Agape Love

The word 'love' in Hebrew (Khessed) refers to the values of loyalty. God establishes an intimate relationship with his people and maintains it even though humans violate its conditions. God loves His people: 'God loves His children and cares for them' (Ex 34:6; Hos 2:21; Deut 5:10; 7:9).⁹ In the New Testament the love that is meant is 'agape' love. The word 'agape' is love that is highest in appearance, which sees an infinite value in the object of its love.¹⁰ 'Agape' love is love that is not concerned with personal interests. This love comes from a heart that is concerned and concerned for others.¹¹ 'Agape' love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, does not arise from the man himself, but is poured out by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who love (Rom. 5:5).¹² Paul wrote: 'Such are these three things, namely faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love' (1 Cor 13:13). Here, 'agape' reflects and reflects the character of God's love for humans, so one can call it a constant love, a love that endures with fidelity. Loyalty is built on trust. Such love will not fade away; such love is a love of permanent commitment.¹³ In this regard, Dodd defines agape as 'agape is not primarily an emotion of affection, it is primarily an active determination of the will'.¹⁴ In essence, agape is not an emotion, not a feeling of love, but an attitude that is determined to act. The will of man is activated more than his feelings. Thus, agape is a person's will and effort to seek

7 Gulo, W. 'Penampakan Identitas Dan Ciri Khas Dalam Penyelenggaraan Sekolah Kristen' dalam *Weinata Sairin (Penyunting)*, *Identitas & Ciri Khas Pendidikan Kristen Di Indonesia Antara Konseptual Dan Operasional* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011), 23.

8 Hsiu-Fang Hsieh, and Sarah E. Shannon, 'Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis', *Qualitative Health Research* 15(9) (2005): 1277-88.

9 Marie Claire Barth-Frommel, *Hati Allah Bagaikan Hati Seorang Ibu* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2003), 45.

10 Roger Robert, *Hidup Suci* (Bandung: LLB, 1996), 23.

11 J. L. C. Abineno, *Pedoman Praktis Untuk Pelayanan Pastoral* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2003).

12 T. Andrian et al., 'The concept of time management based on Ephesians 5:15-17 and relevance to contemporary Christian leaders', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 77(3) (2021).

13 R. C. Sproul, *Kebenaran Dasar Iman Kristen* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 15.

14 G. P. Harianto et al., 'Honor Dei as a learning of the need to appreciate God's servants in the Church', *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 104 (1) (2023), 1-14.

and seek the ‘summum bonum’ for others.¹⁵

In 1 Corinthians 13:13, the King James Version of the Bible translates the word ‘love’ as charity, which means kindness. The word charity means good wishes or love for fellow human beings. But actually, the Greek word used in this verse is agape, which means God’s love.¹⁶ In the book ‘The Four Loves’, Lewis says that agape love is the highest and highest form of love, which sees something of equal worth in the object of its love. Because agape is a gift from God.¹⁷ Furthermore, 1 John 4:16 says: ‘God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.’ This means that God’s nature is love and God is the source of love, true love. If humans want to find true love, they must come and look for it at the source, namely God. “For love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7-8). So, knowing God means knowing love. Having no love is to have no God.¹⁸ Not only focusing on God but agape love is also related to relationships with fellowship.¹⁹

The above understanding is also said by the Apostle John in 1 John 4:8 that God is agape. The manifestation of God’s love is in Jesus. Everyone who wants to receive God’s love must believe in Jesus. John 3:16 reads, ‘For God’s great love for this world, that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but have eternal life.’ Piet Go O. Carm, from Catholic thought, calls it ‘moral love’ which emphasises action: bringing out what is good for those who are loved and trying to do what is good as much as possible.²⁰

From the description above, the researcher argues that agape love is a source of Christian moral values. The values of agape love are not something abstract or vague but something real, so that one can know whether love exists or not in a given situation.²¹

The Moral Value of Agape Love Based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The moral values of Love can be taken from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 as follows: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” [KJV]

Value of Long Patience

The term ‘long-suffering’ in Greek ‘makrothumei’ is a combination of two words, namely ‘macro’ which means long, and ‘tumors’ which means temperament. Patience gives strength to be able to withstand the pressures of life caused by suffering. Patience means standing up to trials (not being easily angered, not easily discouraged, not easily broken hearted); stoic; calm; unhurried; no need for lust.²²

God himself is long-suffering (Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18; 2 Pet 3:9). Patience means not giving up

15 Ibid.

16 Kenneth E. Hagin, *Kasih Jalan Menuju Kemenangan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pekabaran Injil Immanuel, 2001), 23.

17 Josh McDowell, and Norman Geisler, *Kasih Itu Selalu Benar* (Jakarta: Professional Books, 1997), 14.

18 J. Stephen Lang, *Pedoman Lengkap Janji – Janji Alkitab* (Bandung: Kalam Hidup, 2001), 56.

19 G. P. Harianto et al., ‘Opus Dei: a Challenge for Church Leadership’, *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 104(2) 2023.

20 Piet Go O. Carm., *Teologi Modal Dasar* (Malang: Dioma, 2007), 35.

21 Geoffrey W. Grogan, ‘A Biblical Theology of the Love of God’, in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 17.

22 B. T. Finlayson et al. ‘Solution Focused Brief Therapy Telemental Health Suicide Intervention’, *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 45(1) (2023): 49–60, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-021-09599-1>.

easily in the face of difficulty and difficult life problems. In all the bitter experiences he does not want to take revenge, he does not want to justify himself, because he knows that the truth must win. In this regard, Paul said, 'Always be humble, gentle, and patient.... Be patient with one another, and forgive another when one holds a grudge against another' (Eph 4:2; Col 3:13).

The quality of 'patience' is not passivity, but mastery or restraint or self-control in the face of resistance and other things that cause anger. Patience is giving a place and time for humans with a specific purpose. For God, long-suffering is an opportunity given for comfort (Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).²³

From the description above, the researcher argues that long-suffering means not easily giving up in facing difficulty and difficult life problems, but being able to control oneself and not to cause anger to oneself human beings.

Value of Generosity

The word 'chrestotes' (kindness) is the preeminent moral form denoting kindness and gentleness. Kindness is kindness in action, kindness in attitude, gentleness in dealing with others, benevolence, kindness, and generosity. So, this describes the ability to act according to the agreement of others. Generous means 'kindness; the nature of love and compassion; generosity'. Meanwhile, 'generous' refers to 'like giving; not stingy; compassionate and loving; helpful; kind'.²⁴

Generosity is the nature of helping others. Generous or kind, always tenderly sweet, respectful, and polite to everyone around him, not harsh and hasty in his words. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus once said to His disciples, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy' (Matthew 5:7). It was further said that David himself had experienced the bitterness of this life, but he still felt God's inclusion. God gives sufficiency, even abundance to him. That is why David says, "Only goodness and kindness will follow me all the days of my life" (Ps 23:6). It is a determination and an example of life that should be imitated. In Galatians 6:9-10 it says, 'Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, while there is still a chance for us, let us do good to everyone, but especially to our friends in the faith.'

For God, generosity is God's attitude towards human beings full of compassion, which, among other things, means that He likes to do good and give good things to people. This attribute is called His mercy (Ps 23:6). Man should be generous, and God will teach him with the same mercy (Matthew 5:7).²⁵

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that generosity is an act of helping others, being respectful and polite to everyone around him, not being rude and hasty in his words.

Value of Not Jealous

The moral value 'not jealous' refers to jealous people. Jealousy is a self-destructive trait. Envious people are usually miserable, restless, and unable to rejoice. 'Not jealous' is not 'not feeling or not happy to see other people's luck'.²⁶

The moral 'not jealous' means that a person who has love tries not to be affected by anything that belongs to someone else in his life. He is always grateful for what he has. He worked hard, then

23 J. D. Douglas, *Ensiklopedi Alkitab Masa Kini II* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi BinaKasih/OMF, 1995), 29.

24 James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (MacDonald Publishing, 1990).

25 Robert D. Enright et al., 'The Philosophy and Social Science of Agape Love', *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 42(4) (2022): 220–37.

26 David L. Baker, *Roh Dan Kerohanian Dalam Jemaat* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia Bible, 1993), 16.

the results he left to God. He let God bless his labours. With this principle, his heart does not burn with jealousy. Thus, jealousy is the feeling that life is not fair because other people have something they want and cannot have.²⁷

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that not being jealous is a person who tries not to be affected by anything that belongs to other people, is always grateful for what he has, works hard, the results are left to God, and lets God bless his efforts.

Values of Not Boasting

The value of 'not boasting' (ou perpereuetai) shows selflessness. The proud person feels that all he has is due to his effort and persistence. He exalts himself too much. For a person like this God is not important in his life and success. But people who have love are not like that, because love does not boast. What he has is solely the blessing of God. For him, God is the source of life, strength, and hope. The Bible says: 'then do not say in your heart: it was my power and the strength of my hands that made me obtain this wealth, but you must remember your God, for it was he who gave you the strength to obtain wealth' (Deut 8:17-18). "Pride" means standing upright, rising, resting on one's feet.²⁸

But a child of God who has the love of Christ is meek and humble in heart, knowing that 'all blessings come only by the grace of God alone' (1 Cor 15:10). He is always simple and humble and does not consider himself greater and smarter than others (Rom 12:16).

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that the moral value of not boasting is that everything one has is solely the blessing of God. He is always simple and humble and does not consider himself greater and smarter than others.

Value Of Not Arrogant

The value of 'not arrogant' (ou fusioutai) shows humility, respect, and respect for all people. An arrogant nature is usually favouritism in association, one who only wants to hang out with certain people. He tends to look down on those who are lower than him. Arrogance is 'excessive self-esteem; arrogant'.²⁹

Proud, arrogant, a haughty heart emphasises refusing to depend on God and submit to Him, but who gives his own condition the honour that should be given to God, is seen as the true root and essence of sin.³⁰

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that the value of not being arrogant is being humble, appreciating, and respecting everyone.

Value of Not Impolite

The phrase 'do not be immodest' includes both shameful (1 Cor 12:23-24; Rev 16:15) and unlawful (1 Cor 14:40) meanings and is used in the context of sexual ethics (Rom 1;27; 1 Cor 7:35-36), as well as in the context of lifestyle (Rom 13:12-13; 1 Thess 4:11-12).³¹

The moral value is 'not to be immodest' (ouk askhemonei) in other words, the moral value of love

27 Ken Campbell, *7 Emosi Perusak Jiwa* (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2008), 38.

28 Ibid.

29 New Strong's, 27.

30 Ibid., 67.

31 Baker, *Roh Dan*, 19.

is to 'live modestly' (euskhemonos peripateo, Rom 13:13). The value of 'polite' refers to always paying attention to the etiquette of justice in society, order and discipline. Everyone has freedom in their life, but don't believe in using that freedom irresponsibly. In this regard, Paul said, 'Everything is permissible; righteous, but not everything builds up' (1 Cor 10:23). Freedom must be used rightly, 'so that I may win as many as possible' (1 Cor 9:19). Polite means 'respect, orderly according to the rules; civilized'.³²

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that 'not doing something that is not polite' is paying attention to the rules of justice in society, order, and discipline.

Value of Not Self-gain

The value of 'not seeking one's own gain': self-interest in the Greek 'ta heautēs' refers to seeking mutual benefit. In this case, Paul describes the life of those who have been saved in this way, 'so that those who are alive no longer live for themselves, and no one dies for himself' (2 Cor 5:15; Rom 14:7). Every believer is called to be a channel of blessing to others.³³

Believers no longer have rights over themselves but live continuously imitating the life of Jesus. He lives while always loving others. Here the believer is willing not to use his rights for his own sake.

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that the value of 'not seeking self-interest' means trying to seek mutual benefit.

Value of Not Grumpy

As with the moral values of being grumpy, the moral values of 'not being angry' and 'not keeping other people's mistakes' are parallel, which becomes one unit in the understanding of the values above.

The moral value 'grumpy' means quick to be offended; irritable.³⁴ Angry people make other people feel depressed. People cannot control themselves. When emotions overpower, his mouth, his hands, and his whole being lose control. Angry means 'very displeased (because of being insulted, mistreated)'.³⁵

Thus, Angry is a feeling of displeasure with events in his life or towards the behaviour of other people that cause tension. Temper is often an attitude of hostility towards those who attack.³⁶ So 'not being angry' implies trying to be patient, gentle, and unemotional. 'Not getting angry' means forgiving and forgetting, not attacking or reviling. 'Keep your heart always full of the Holy Spirit' (Eph 5:18).

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that 'not angry' is a person who can control himself, that the powerful emotions, his mouth, hands, and all of himself can be controlled.

Values of Not Storing Other People's Errors

The value of 'not keeping other people's mistakes' (logizetai ta kakon) means to think, calculate, and think about [other people's] mistakes.³⁷ The moral 'do not keep other people's mistakes' means

32 Ibid.

33 Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 18.

34 Baker, *Roh Dan*, 17.

35 A. Marques, et al., 'Religious-based interventions for depression: A systematic review and meta-analysis of experimental studies', *Journal of Affective Disorders* (2023): 289–296, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.04>.

36 L. Webb et al., 'Psychosocial health in adolescent unmarried motherhood in rural Uganda: Implications for community-based collaborative mental health education, and empowerment strategies in the prevention of depression and suicide', *Transcultural Psychiatry* (2023): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221147361>.

37 Baker, *Roh Dan*, 14.

that believers do not think about other people's mistakes and tend always to forgive, just as how God has forgiven all human sins and forgotten everything, so believers forgive and forget all the mistakes of others (Matt 18:32-35). Humans are unable to do so but the Holy Spirit reveals agape love in the life of every true child of God (Phil 1:17-21). This is done because God has already forgiven believers. God first helps and resolves all the sins and mistakes of believers. 'Forgive one another if one holds a grudge against another. Just as God has forgiven you, you will do the same' (Col 3:13).

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that the moral of 'not keeping other people's mistakes' is not counting the mistakes made by other people or registering them as material for accusations, or continuing to think about them so as to foster hatred towards that person.

Value is Not Rejoicing

The Hebrew word for 'joy' is 'simkha'; the verb 'sameach' and the Greek 'khara' mean full of cheer which is a quiet or good rejoicing, a very great joy centred on Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 13 refers to the word 'sungkhairei' which means to rejoice.³⁸ This joy is a gift given by God to believers.

In both the OT and NT joy remains a characteristic of believers as individuals and of the church in general. Joy is quality or character, and not merely a feeling of the heart, which is based on God himself and indeed comes from Him (Ps 16:11; Phil 4:4; Rom 15:13), which characterises Christian life in this world (1 Pet 1:8), and is the beginning of eternal joy with Christ, later in the kingdom of Heaven (Rev 19:7).³⁹ Thus, the value of 'not rejoicing' is because of the injustice in seeing others suffer misfortune or experience difficulties.

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that not being happy is feeling sad when you see your neighbour suffering: he cries with those who cry.

Value Covers Everything

The moral 'covers everything' (stegei) refers to someone who can keep (bear) a secret. The word 'everything' in the Greek 'pania', emphasises the meaning continuously.⁴⁰ Paul said: 'You have an intense love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins' (1 Pet 4:8). In this regard, the word 'cover' means 'to hide; keep it a secret'.⁴¹ So, the covering work is a burden that is carried out continuously by someone who loves God.

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that 'covering everything' is keeping (carrying) secrets continuously.

Value of 'Believe Everything'

The moral values of 'believe everything' and 'expect everything' are parallel and have a unified meaning, as follows. First, the moral 'believe everything': 'believe' – the Hebrew 'emun' and the Greek 'pisteuo' both refer to the meaning of faithfulness to God.⁴² The moral 'believing all things and hoping all things' means that one still loves a person who might offend a human being, one

38 Ruth Groenhout, 'The Love of God the Father: Agapé and Masculinity', in *Visions of Agapé: Problems and Possibilities in Human and Divine Love*, ed. Craig A. Boyd (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 47–60.

39 J.D. Douglas, *Ensiklopedi Alkitab Masa Kini II* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi BinaKasih/OMF, 1995), 35.

40 Baker, *Roh Dan*, 24.

41 Groenhout, 'The Love of God', 47–60.

42 Everett F. Harrison, *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), 57.

still believes in him and always expects the best from him. People who have the love of Christ will always think and act positively by relying on God's help (2 Cor 5:6-7).

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that 'believing everything' is someone who still loves people who might hurt human hearts, someone still believes in him and always expects the best from him.

Value Expects Everything

The value of 'expecting everything': the word 'expect' means 'hope; looking forward to; want; depend on; rely on.'⁴³ Thus, 'expect all things' (Greek, *panta elpizei*), meaning that under no circumstances do those who love never lose hope. Such hope can be seen in the prayer of the Prophet Habakkuk who was determined to praise God and still hoped for God's salvation even though he did not receive any blessings from Him (Hab 3:17-19).⁴⁴ Based on the description above, the researcher argues that 'expecting everything' is a condition in which people who love never lose hope.

Value of Patience Bears Everything

The word 'bear' means to 'bear; shoulder; ensure; responsible.'⁴⁵ So, the moral value of 'bearing all things' (*panta hupomenei*) emphasises that it is a person who is patient, who endures opposition and rejection and still loves. He continued to follow God's will, whatever the cost, with firm faith and hope (Rom 5:2-5).⁴⁶

Based on the description above, the researcher argues that 'bearing everything' is a person who is patient, who can withstand opposition, and rejection, and who continues to follow God's will no matter the risk.

The Values of Agape Love as Learning Agents of Moral Change in Theology Students

Agape Love Learning for Theology Students

Neto argues that love is one of the most fundamental aspects of the human experience.⁴⁷ There are six relatively independent styles of love. The main styles include Eros (passionate romantic love), Ludus (game love), and Storge (familial love). The compound of two of each of the main styles forms three secondary styles: Pragma (practical love, compounds of Storge and Ludus), Mania (possessive, dependent love, compounds of Eros and Ludus), and Agape (altruistic love, compounds of Eros and Storge). Agape love is the source and lifestyle of theology students. Agape love originates from the values of agape love as follows: (1) long-suffering means not giving up easily in the face of difficulty and difficult life problems, but being able to control oneself so as not to provoke one's anger. (2) Generosity is an act that likes to help others, is respectful and polite to everyone around him, and is not rude and hasty in his words. (3) Not jealous is a person who

43 New Strong's.

44 Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 33.

45 Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 58.

46 Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Michigan: Grand Rapids Knowles, 1990), 48.

47 Félix Neto, 'Love Styles: A Cross-Cultural Study of British, Indian, and Portuguese College Students', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 38(2) (2007): 239-54, <https://utpjournals.press/doi/10.3138/jcfs.38.2.239>.

tries so that his life is not affected by anything that belongs to other people; he is always grateful for what he has, works hard, the results are left to God, and he lets God bless his efforts. (4) He does not boast that all he has is solely the blessing of God. He is always simple and humble and does not consider himself greater and smarter than others. (5) Not being arrogant is being humble, appreciating, and respecting everyone. (6) Not to do something that is not polite is to pay attention to the rules of justice in society, order, and discipline. (7) Not seeking personal gain means trying to seek mutual benefit. (8) Not grumpy is a person who can control himself. If the powerful emotions, his mouth, hands, and all of himself can be controlled. (9) Not keeping other people's mistakes is not counting the mistakes made by other people or registering them as material for accusation or continuing to think about them to foster hatred towards that person. (10) Not to rejoice is to feel sad when you see your neighbour suffering: he cries with those who cry. (11) Covering everything is keeping (carrying) secrets continuously. (12) Believing in everything is that one still loves someone who might offend a human being, one still believes in him and always expects the best from him. (13) Hope that everything is in such a state that those who love never lose hope. (14) Patiently enduring everything is a person who is patient, who can withstand opposition, and rejection, and who continues to follow God's will no matter the risk.

Deeper, Neto says that the style of love is held by three generations: female students, their mothers, and their maternal grandmothers. There is little in common in love styles between generations. Significant generational differences were found in the four love styles: Eros, Storge, Pragma and Agape. However, as expected, mothers and grandmothers, did not differ in their degree of agreement with the various styles of love, except for Pragma with grandmothers who exhibited a more practical love than mothers.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the results of research by Li-wen Lin and C. Huddleston-Casas show that agape love can be applied by people based on factors such as age, religiosity, and relationship satisfaction which have a positive correlation with Agape. People with more education reported lower Agape compassion scores than people with less education.⁴⁹ Men reported higher levels of Agape love than women when controlling for age, education, religiosity, and relationship satisfaction. Thus, theology students can apply Agape love in their daily lives both on campus and off campus.⁵⁰

Learning the Values of Agape Love as an Agent of Moral Change

The moral virtue of agape has been under-explored in the world of research. The ancient idea of agape (love) serving others includes effort and even pain on the part of the expressing kindness. Agape is a way forward with the construction of changes in psychological health for individuals, peace, and unity for families and communities.⁵¹ So moral Agape is very appropriate to be an agent of change in human morality, especially theology students, who will later become servants who serve God. So Agape (agapao) is a basis for leadership behaviour and to show how agapao works in different leadership styles. Agape is useful for action (agapao) and helps the reader see how 'good' leadership behaviours develop and what good behaviours must be achieved.⁵² A theology student can develop Agape and become an agent of moral change because Agape is (in the

48 Ibid.

49 Stephen G. Post, 'The Tradition of Agape', in *Altruism and Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Dialogue*, eds. Stephen G. Post et al. (New York: Oxford Academic, 2002). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195143584.003.0006>.

50 Li-Wen Lin, and Catherine A. Huddleston-Casas, 'Agape Love in Couple Relationships', *Marriage & Family Review* 37(4) (2005): 29–48.

51 Robert D. Enright et al., 'The Philosophy and Social Science of Agape Love', *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 42(4) (2022): 220–37.

52 Bruce E. Winston, 'Agapao Leadership', *Journal: Inner Resources for Leaders* 1, no.1(2008).

process of) changing the morale of the students themselves in their struggles of life.⁵³ First, student morality is measured by three aspects as follows: student character, student discipline, and student worship. Second, regarding the formation of student morality (character, discipline, and worship), the School issues student regulations covering the following: Self-Ordinance, Social Discipline, Spiritual Order, Off-Campus Activity Order, and Student Senate Organisational Order. The third is strengthening personal relationships with God and fellow students as well as all lecturers and staff as co-workers in God.

The goals of moral change are: (1) to foster and develop a good spiritual life through lifestyle and ministry; (2) provide opportunities for growth in the spiritual field through maximising the gifts of worship, witness, attitude in service and triggering the Word of God. This happens, according to Rodriguez and Silverman, when the supremacy of love becomes a moral vision that is fixed on agape values.⁵⁴

Learning to Model the Values of Agape Love as Agents of Moral Change for Theology Students

Learning is not just in the classroom but throughout life: humans keep learning. Modelling is not only done in the classroom but more importantly, is applied throughout life. So a theology student is a servant of God who has a lifestyle of holiness of faith in God by expressing agape values within himself.⁵⁵ Agape is a basis for learning to live together to develop the character of individuals, families, and society as a person's resources to be able to live with others. Family becomes an ideal life learning process. Living in society is a broader process in which a person begins to take responsibility for society's problems by applying Agape values to become the basis for the growth of individual, family, and community character.

In this regard, Greenway said that modelling a person as an Agape lifestyle is a cornerstone of modern ethics and enables a person from agape love to legitimise the spiritual reality of agape, awaken people to its power, clarify its ethical implicitness, and validate our spiritual communion with all beings in all creation.⁵⁶ Carr says that God is the model for the practice of agape values, which are then modelled on humans in relationships between humans. This transitional relationship is a skill or moral knowledge.⁵⁷

In producing fast, effective moral changes for theology students' lives, humans (lecturers and students) and agape teaching materials can be used as models of change. Both of these (humans and agape teaching materials) act as change facilitators.⁵⁸ This modelling is a training process in the life of theology students with the humans around them.

Conclusion

Agape love is a source of Christian moral values. The values of agape love are not something abstract or vague but something real, so that one can know whether love exists or not in a given situation.

53 Ruth Groenhout, 'The Love of God the Father: Agapé and Masculinity', in *Visions of Agapé: Problems and Possibilities in Human and Divine Love*, ed. Craig A. Boyd (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 47–60.

54 D. J. Rodriguez, and Eric J. Silverman, *The Supremacy of Love: An Agape-Centered Vision of Aristotelian Virtue Ethics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 45.

55 G. P. Harianto et al., 'Honor Dei'.

56 William Greenway, *Agape Ethics: Moral Realism and Love for All Life* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publisher, 2016), 25.

57 David Carr, 'Love, Truth and Moral Judgement' *Philosophy* 94(04) (2019): 529–45.

58 G. P. Harianto et al., 'Missionary Thinking in the Perspective of Adult Education Principles and Bible Study', *Jurnal Jaffray* 20, no. 2, (2022), 163–180.

The Moral Value of Agape Love based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is a lifestyle that emphasises: long-suffering means not giving up easily in facing life's problems; generosity as an action that likes to help others, being respectful and polite to everyone around him, not harsh and hasty in his words; not jealous is a person who tries not to be affected by anything that belongs to other people; not boasting is that all one has is solely the blessing of God; not being arrogant is being humble, appreciating and respecting everyone; pay attention to the order of justice in society, order and discipline; not seeking mutual benefit; not counting the mistakes that other people make; one who can control himself; feel sad when you see others suffer; keeping secrets continuously; someone still loves people who might hurt human hearts; under no circumstances do those who love never lose hope; and be resistant to the opposition.

The values of agape love as agents of moral change for theology students: learning of agape love for theology students, learning the values of agape love as agents of moral change, and learning to model the values of agape love as agents of moral change for theology students.

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