



## The Efforts of the Pastor as a Christian Educator in Preventing Interreligious Marriages for Young Christian Youth

Siliwarti<sup>1</sup>, Henni Somantik<sup>2</sup>, Markus Amid<sup>3</sup>, Marthen Mau<sup>4\*</sup>

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili Arastamar (SETIA) Ngabang Kalimantan Barat

**Corresponding Author:** Marthen Mau [marthenluthermou@gmail.com](mailto:marthenluthermou@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Humans live in various tribes, nations, cultures, customs and religions, because diversity cannot be denied so that marriages of different beliefs can occur in society. The occurrence of inter-faith marriages is caused by a lack of awareness among young people regarding the impacts that occur when entering into inter-faith marriages. Based on the current prevalence of interfaith marriages, it is necessary for pastors as Christian educators to make efforts to prevent interfaith marriages from continuing to occur. Through this research, the aim is to explain precisely the efforts of pastors as Christian educators in preventing interfaith marriages for young people in GKII Jerusalem Sebelantau, Sekadau Regency. Researchers used descriptive qualitative research methods through observation, interviews and literature techniques. The results of the research obtained are that if the pastor as a Christian educator continuously educates, teaches, guides, and directs Christian young people to the right path through the word of God, then young people will not enter into interfaith marriages even if there is an interfaith marriage. religion, then through God's help can win for the glory of Christ

## **INTRODUCTION**

Marriage is a partnership that builds a family based on the love of Christ as the head of the household to form an institution. Therefore, marriage is considered a holy act if the marriage is carried out when the bodies of the bride and groom are pure. The bride and groom who are ready to get married are expected to be able to survive throughout their lives. Since time immemorial, this wedding procession has been treated as something full of rituals and conditions with symbols of life, especially for those who use traditional customs (Nubatonis, n.d.). Marriage sometimes occurs because of religious, social and legal issues. The issue of belief is closely related to marriage, therefore each belief has provisions from the religion adhered to by each couple getting married.

Social issues are related to the perspective of society in general regarding the implementation of marriage, which will have a certain impact on couples who will get married in the community environment. Meanwhile, from a legal perspective, marriage occurs because there is a relationship between people to form a marriage bond, resulting in the implementation of the law.

Most members of society do not have a problem with marriages that are carried out culturally and legally because they are considered biblical. In that case, there are indeed parts of culture that are good and in accordance with Biblical principles. However, it is necessary to be wary of this because more parts of the culture are at odds. Christian marriage is not just about making a commitment in front of an institution so that the marriage is legally valid, but a much more important meaning is that it involves a commitment to the couple before the Lord God.

Christian marriage is not a marriage contract that can be played with by just one party, but rather a covenant of life and death because Christianity does not recognize divorce. God's Word is very clear that when they become husband and wife they can be united in a household and no one is allowed to divorce them because death can separate a husband and wife, therefore married people must make the love of Christ the foundation of their home life. their marriage, marriage is centered on Christ, so that all authority, adjustment and communication are built for the common good without any party being harmed.

Realizing how important it is for a marriage to be built on a solid foundation, long ago the Apostle Paul warned people who wanted to get married that Christian young people who were going to get married were not allowed to marry and marry people who did not share their faith (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14). God's Word here clearly says that everyone who is getting married should look for someone who already knows God, truly believes, repents and acknowledges God as their Savior. Therefore, before getting married, every prospective couple

should prepare themselves to face various kinds of conflicts in their household in the future. Understanding conflict is very important because, after all, these events will definitely occur in the course of the household. Thus, if both partners have anticipated this from the start, they will be ready to manage the conflict well.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

When they have formed a household, new couples usually need quite a long time to adjust to each other. This is not surprising because each party usually brings their original family habits into their new household. Moreover, the role of each parent in the formation of their personality traits during childhood is very determining. Everyone usually uses their parents as role models, regardless of whether their parents acted right or wrong. Therefore, in building a strong and sturdy marriage, willingness and openness are also needed so that each person can understand each other so that harmony is created (Surbakti, 2008, pp. 174-176).

Marriage can be performed between a man and a woman based on God's command. The implementation of marriage between a man and a woman, so that they become husband and wife living together to build a household into a happy family for life (Borrong, n.d.). So, marriage is a nuclear family that God has planned since the beginning of human creation. Marriage is an institution that is confirmed and blessed by God to build a good relationship without separation between two men and women, as explained by Him in Genesis 2:24. The content of this verse is that there is one flesh that cannot be separated between a man and a woman who become husband and wife in a Christian marriage bond. The bond in a Christian marriage is centered on personal pleasure or happiness but shared pleasure both physically and spiritually and a man must leave his parents to live with his wife.

The establishment of marriage between a man and a woman is important to reject all forms of immoral acts such as adultery, same-sex (homosexuals and lesbians), polygamy, polyandry and free sex because they pollute the relationship within a marriage. In the text Hebrews 13:4 teaches everyone about the importance of purity in a marriage and also God's Word refers to intimate relationships where husband and wife must not commit adultery with other people, because as husband and wife they must respect each other, respect each other, giving and receiving every shortcoming from their partner. However, this foundation of marriage is currently starting to be shaken and replaced by another basis for marriage which is based on fragile human-created laws (Surbakti, 2008). Marriage is a form of legal sacred agreement between a man and a woman, so

that they can hope to form an eternal family, love each other and live happily together.

Based on observations and interviews, researchers with Alen Weras stated that marriages should not take place when there are different religions, but there were 4 members of the congregation who were involved in interfaith marriages. And when they marry from different religions they cannot glorify God through their marriage (Weras, 2022). Then the researcher conducted an interview with Yuda, saying that marriage between different religions is not permissible because in the future it will have an impact on the children and the children will be confused about whether to follow their father's or mother's religion (Yuda, 2022). Furthermore, the researcher also conducted an interview with Yohana Emelian (already converted to Islam) who said that actually it is not permissible to marry between different religions because when you marry someone from a different religion, there will be differences starting from differences in beliefs and ways of worship (Emelian, 2022). And then the researchers also conducted interviews with Norsani, namely people who have had interfaith marriages, explaining that actually they are not allowed to have interfaith marriages because there will be many things that are not in line, one of which is in terms of faith and will distance themselves from communion with God (Norsani, 2023).

This is the author's reason for writing this scientific work. Because researchers want to contribute to young people being able to have an understanding of interfaith marriages and so that this action can be overcome along with current and future developments.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper uses qualitative research methods through observation, interviews and literature study. The qualitative method is an in-depth analysis approach using inductive reasoning techniques, so as to be able to understand problems subjectively to obtain accurate research results (Marthen Mau, Markus Amid, 2022, p. 332). The qualitative method aims to narrate the information obtained through secondary and primary sources, so that it can be applied in the learning process (Amid et al., 2022, p. 42).

Data and information collection techniques through observation. The author collects data through direct observation of an object that can be studied (Marthen Mau, Sulianus Susanto, Aprinia Windasari & Hutabarat, 2023, p. 5). Researchers conducted direct interviews with informants (Marthen Mau, 2020, p. 89) at the GKII Jerusalem Sebelantau Congregation, Sekadau Regency. The informants interviewed were the pastor, church council, and young people who were still active members of the congregation and young people who had converted to Islam. To complete and support research data collection, researchers used library research. Library study, namely a research method used to collect

data and information from various sources required by the author. Researchers focus or concentrate on library research whose targets are documents that are closely related to the title of the discussion (Mau, 2020a, p. 101).

## RESULTS

The pastor as a Christian educator must provide the right understanding to young Christians in his church so that when they grow up they can date and marry according to God's law so that there will be no infidelity and divorce after marrying the partner they love. The married couple must comply with God's laws which have been taught in the Holy Bible, both written and implied.

## DISCUSSION

### Overview of Pastors as Christian Educators

#### 1. Understanding the Pastor as a Christian Educator

The term shepherd can be understood as someone who is responsible for caring for and looking after a flock of livestock responsibly. A pastor is obliged to be a loving guide to the flock, therefore a shepherd is a person whom God calls to care for His people of all ages. The term pastor is a pastor as an educator who is required to be able to educate, guide and direct young people to experience spiritual growth (Mulyasa, 2003, p. 15). So, the pastor is not just an ordinary Christian educator, but the pastor is a mentor in motivating every young person to develop the knowledge, morals and spirituality of young people.

According to Alen Weras, the pastor as a Christian educator needs to motivate all members of the congregation to apply God's Word in their lives, to mature the congregation in growing in faith and spirituality in God (Weras, 2022). According to Yuda, pastors as Christian educators must teach religious norms, attitudes and personalities of Christian young people. Teaching positive things based on God's Word that relate to the lives of congregation members in the community to set an example through good attitudes and actions (Yuda, 2022).

Pastors as humans have truly known God and have experienced saving forgiveness in Jesus Christ (Humes, 1998, p. 45). A pastor is obliged to educate, teach and guide young people in a better direction in accordance with Christian teachings. The presence of the pastor in the pastoral ministry is very urgent because the survival of church members in a world influenced by digitalization (Sidjabat, 2000, p. 106).

So the researcher can draw a conclusion that the pastor as a Christian educator has the role of being an educator who educates, teaches and guides young people based on the teaching of the Bible, namely God's Word, to bring everyone to the knowledge of the living God.

#### 2. Duties and Responsibilities of the Pastor as a Christian Educator

##### a. Duties of the Pastor as a Christian Educator

The task of the pastor as a Christian educator is to ensure success and efforts to bring or awaken young people towards maturity, both physically and spiritually. For this reason, the pastor as a Christian educator strives to develop

the personality, affective and intellectual qualities of young people in a better direction. Carrying out your duties as a pastor in this era is not easy, especially when faced with various changes that occur in the social environment.

Through the changes that occur in society, it becomes a challenge that a pastor must undertake to deal with young people who are less interested in participating in spiritual activities and experience moral damage, both physically and spiritually. To overcome what is happening, a pastor is required to be able to change the nature and bring young people like this, especially in improving the morals of young people, so this is the task of a pastor to overcome this damage so that young people can become moral people. good, fear of God, and grow in faith and trust in God, so that they truly understand God's will to be implemented in everyday life (Gagne, n.d.).

#### b. Pastor's Responsibilities as Christian Educators

Responsibility is an obligation to bear everything that is good to do with all one's heart (Penyusun, 2008). Pastors need to carry out some or all of their duties with sincerity, even though they are full of risks, so that a person's growth and development improves. So, the tasks carried out need to be done from the heart and the will becomes stronger to carry out the obligations or tasks in question (Sukiman, 2016).

The responsibilities of the pastor according to Homrighausen and Enklaar are: (1) the pastor as a Christian educator in providing explanations about faith or beliefs to Christian young people; (2) the pastor is responsible for the spiritual life of young people and is obliged to foster and advance their spiritual life; (3) the pastor must be a good example to young people and be a reflection in their ministry and daily life; (4) the pastor must be responsible for evangelizing young people so that they truly believe in the Lord Jesus, show obedience, and be faithful to Him until.

### 3. Requirements as a Pastor

Requirements are a standard as a demand or request that must be fulfilled, and a measure that must be possessed by every pastor as a Christian educator. So the conditions that must be considered are as follows:

#### a. Repent

In Hebrew, the word repent consists of two different words, namely: first, *nahum* which means sadness and having a strong desire to change. Second, *shub* which means turning back or repenting from sin as a form of decision to abandon sin and obey God completely (Mau, 2020a, p. 102).

Jesus wants everyone to become a new person, a person who lives in Him and a person who is renewed in spirit and mind as in the letter to Ephesians. 4:17-18. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that brings us closer to God. This involves turning from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. Repentance is also a change of mind and heart that brings a new attitude towards God, oneself, and life in general.

#### b. Understanding God's Word

Pastors as Christian educators need to understand God's Word before teaching it to young Christians, including GKII Jerusalem Sebelantau. God's Word as the true word (John 17:17); which remains forever (1 Peter 1:25). A pastor

must have more knowledge of the Word than his students. In this case, it is a big responsibility for educators to be able to understand the Word, let alone apply it in their lives, so that the teaching given to young people can be said to be a living testimony.

In understanding the Word, a teacher must at least have attended or have undertaken special education, for example formal education at a Christian institution, or in other words, have completed a Theological College, so that it can be believed that the pastor has sufficient knowledge. knowledgeable about the Word of God, and have understood the ways of interpreting the Word of God.

#### c. Fear of God

Talking about the Fear of God is about the attitude of human life towards the Creator. The feeling of fear is a feeling of trepidation in facing something that is assumed to bring disaster. Feelings of fear for Christians are an honor to God (Heb. 12:28-29). Fear of God is the beginning of knowledge and is the basis for Christians to follow God, serve God, and love Him with all their heart. For Christians, the feeling of fear of God is biblical, including understanding how much God hates human sin and fear of His judgment.

Humans need to have the fear of God because human life comes from God. Humans need to be afraid of God's awesomeness, because the God who led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt was an angry God when he saw the disobedience of His chosen people. Pastors as Christian educators must have an attitude of fear and submission to God. When leading a pastor, it is necessary to develop a sense of responsibility with full respect for God, so that all work is carried out with sincerity based on the fear of God. Including when educating and teaching young people, in the right attitude of living in the Lord Jesus.

#### d. Loyalty in Guiding

The faithfulness of the pastor as a Christian educator in guiding young Christians in the church he pastors to prevent marriages of different faiths is very important so that the young people will have loyalty in upholding the teachings he teaches. Loyalty is the determination and ability to obey, carry out, practice something that is obeyed with full awareness and responsibility (Mau, 2020b, p. 159).

Loyalty is sticking to promises, having a stand, being obedient and obedient. Someone who has responsibilities that must be carried out without feeling forced and carried out with a full sense of responsibility. So loyalty is one of the main standards in carrying out service and in leadership (Bailey, 2014). Loyalty means carrying out all constructive activities that need to be done with full responsibility, perseverance, patience, until the work is completed.

### **Interfaith Marriage**

#### 1. Definition of Interfaith Marriage

A marriage is said to be valid if it fulfills every specified requirement (Bailey, 2014, p. 262). A bride and groom who do not belong to a religious group have a greater risk of marriage than a bride and groom who belong to one religious group. In marriages of one person who is religious and the other is not, the rate of divorce and delinquency among young people is generally twice as

high as in marriages between couples of the same faith. If partners agree in areas of their lives, there will be fewer problems.

Interfaith marriages will cause problems more quickly than other marriages. Couples in such marriages will also try to separate sooner after the wedding than couples of the same faith. During the engagement period the couple found it difficult to think realistically about marriage. It is easy to mitigate any difficulties that may be encountered. If a couple does not face it realistically, then major disagreements can arise after the joy of the honeymoon wears off.

According to research on couples who do not have the same religious background, their interest and attention to religion usually decreases after they get married. The following is an interfaith marriage where one partner fails to pay attention to the other. This leads to an important conclusion: Religion contributes or provides support for the stability and success of marriage when both husband and wife are active (Pelt, 2006). This means that a shared belief between a husband and wife can provide happiness and success in building a family. In fact, interfaith marriages can be avoided according to God's laws which are taught in each faith to prevent divisions of faith and belief within the family and damage the relationship with God.

According to Buya Yahya, from outside the religious context, in terms of marriage, it would be better to marry or marry sons and daughters with those who have many similarities, not with those who have many differences (Yahya, n.d.). So researchers can draw a conclusion from the explanation above that marriage will be better if you choose a partner who shares your religion and parents must also provide guidance in finding a life partner who shares your faith.

## 2. Factors that Cause Interfaith Marriages

### a. Supporting Factors for Interfaith Marriage

Interreligious, interethnic, cultural and gender interactions are not prohibited in any belief, but what is needed is to be wise and have limits in relationships because bad relationships destroy good deeds. A life of pluralism really provides motivation for people to live together peacefully and build tolerance between different religions. Social issues can give rise to young people with different beliefs. If relationships are not well controlled between people of different genders and religions, dating, engagement and marriage can be unavoidable.

So that relationships remain as usual and marriages of people of different beliefs do not occur, the church is present to provide the necessary Christian religious education to Christian young people, in addition to the duties and responsibilities of the church, parents and pastors as Christian educators must still be responsible in provide religious education for young people, so that they have a strong faith. One of the things that really determines young people's future is that parents and the church need to provide religious education to their children, so that they are able to think that having one belief in Jesus Christ is very urgent to maintain throughout life. So, parents are very responsible for teaching God's truth to their children so that they adhere to His commandments (cf. Deut. 6:7-15).

The development of increasingly advanced times has a big influence on the lives of young people, so they are free to carry out intense communication with friends of different beliefs, including relationships in love and dating. If this is not balanced with the strength of their faith, marriages of different beliefs can occur (*Concept of Choosing a Life Partner*, n.d.). The desire to live together arises from a person's heart and feelings, so that there is a feeling of attraction between the two halves of the heart even though they have different religions. The feeling of wanting to live together is one of the factors causing interfaith marriages, because when young people feel very compatible, they will do various things so they can live together, even if they have different beliefs in the household in the future.

Pregnancy out of wedlock is an act that deviates from religious teachings, both Christian and non-Christian. Pregnancy out of wedlock also happens very often, so when you are pregnant out of wedlock, you don't think anymore about differences in religion and family background. Because the woman is already pregnant as a result of sexual intercourse, whether she likes it or not, the man must be responsible and cannot be stopped by anyone even though he has violated religious law.

Economic problems also greatly affect every human life. Many people are unable to maintain their faith and beliefs because they are influenced by economic demands or very limited and very low economic conditions so that each person's mindset prefers to look for a partner who is able to change their family's living conditions and is able to have a decent life (*Decision Making for Marriage Is Different Religion*, n.d.).

#### b. Factors Inhibiting Interfaith Marriages

In family life, parents are strongly advised to educate, teach and provide good examples for their children, especially for the Christian religion so that children can understand religious life and not do things that deviate from religious teachings. Because wise parents will always take the time to educate their children based on the correct doctrine about the Lord Jesus. Correct doctrine when taught to children is able to open their hearts and minds to see spiritual things that cannot be seen with physical eyes (*Teaching Correct Doctrine*, n.d.).

As humans, of course it is very necessary to communicate within a family and with everyone to get important information. Building good communication with God as a life helper through prayer and learning to obey God's word. Because when you read God's word, it is proof that God always speaks to human beings who faithfully read God's word. So, people who like praying and reading God's word are a sign that they are learning to know God's praiseworthy will for their lives, so they don't easily fall into various trials (*Communication With God*, n.d.).

Relationships have a big influence on everyone, especially when having friends who share your faith greatly influences the character of a life that glorifies God. When someone takes inappropriate actions, friends who share the faith can provide a solution or way out, so that they can choose the life partner desired by the Lord Jesus Christ when they feel mature enough to have a family.

### 3. Biblical Basis for Interfaith Marriage

a. In the Old Testament

Samson was a Nazirite of God, chosen by God in his mother's womb to free God's chosen people from slavery to the Philistines. Samson entered into an interfaith marriage, he married a Philistine woman who of course did not believe in God. In fact, God does not allow the people chosen by God to marry other people who are not Israel, with the aim that the people of Israel will not be influenced by worshipping other gods who are not the Living God. Marriage among Israelites will have a positive effect on the continuation of descendants on earth (cf. Deut. 7:3-4). However, the problem that occurred was that Samson, as the judge of the Israelites, had a strong desire to marry the woman of his dreams from a different religion and country/nation even though God's law forbade it. The marriage between Samson and Delilah was influenced by lustful desires, not the desires of God and their parents as educators. Because Samson did not heed the word of God, Samson was destroyed in captivity by the Philistines at that time.

Then, after Samson married Delilah, it turned out that he himself was being used by Delilah, where Delila would receive money from the Philistines when she managed to ask Samson what the secret of his strength was, and when the Philistines already knew what the secret of Samson's strength was. In the end, Samson had to be bald, he was shackled with two copper chains, he worked as a grinder in prison, the brave Samson had to be blind because he was blinded by his love for a woman who did not know God (Judges 16:21)

In the book of 1 Kings. 11:1-13 is told about Solomon, Solomon was a great and wise king but Solomon loved women who did not know God more, Solomon married a different religion, and in his old age he was influenced by wives who were idolaters. Solomon did have a hobby of marrying, especially with women from other nations who did not worship the God of Israel. Solomon had 700 legal wives and 300 concubines, bringing the total number of Solomon's wives to 1000. The consequences at the end of Solomon's life were very worrying, where Solomon was also taken by his wives to worship idols and their gods and Solomon left the living God. The impact of Solomon's marriage ultimately resulted in destruction, he became an idol worshiper, the blessing that God had promised turned into a curse, his kingdom had to be split, God was angry with Solomon and split the kingdom of Israel into two: North Israel and South Israel (Judah). Solomon's descendants ruled over Judah alone, which only consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. And it will be fulfilled during the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:1-24) (*7 Bible Figures Who Married People of Different Religions*, n.d.).

Esau was the son of Isaac and Rebekah. When Esau was forty years old, Esau chose himself in determining who would be his partner, he decided to have polygamy, he took Judith as his wife, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basmath, the daughter of Elon. Hittites, both women were Canaanites (Gen. 36:2), becoming his wives. However, when Esau had taken the two Hittite women as his wives, then the impact that occurred as a result of their marriage had an impact on him as well where Esau followed his wife's beliefs and caused pain and bitterness to his father and mother (Gen. 26:34-35) (*Esau Breakfast*, n.d.).

When David was getting older, he made a mistake which was certainly not good for him, David took Uriah's wife, Bathsheba the Canaanite, as his wife. Then, when David took Bathsheba as his wife, there was a big impact, namely: 2 Samuel. 12:10, the sword, disputes, violence befell David's family, God imposed a punishment on David and his family which would be fulfilled with violence, disputes, and murder, namely the sword for the rest of his life for about 25 years at that time. The Bible records several incidents of this curse

1. Death of child resulting from adultery (2 Sam. 12:14)
2. Absalom's murder of Amnon (2 Sam. 13:29)
3. The murder of Absalom who rebelled against his Father (2 Sam.18:9-17)
4. Adonijah's execution (1 Kings 2:24-25).
5. Disaster befell David and his family where David's wives would be taken by other people (2 Sam. 12:11). And this is proven where David will experience cruel treatment from his own children, such as the rape of his daughter Tamar by Amnon (2 Sam. 13:7-14); then Absalom raped his wives (2 Sam. 16:22). So this is the consequence of David's sin.

From the explanation above regarding interfaith marriages in the Old Testament, researchers can draw a conclusion that: In the Old Testament, marriages that do not have the same beliefs or marrying someone who is not from their nation is something that is very difficult to accept in a tribe, nation, society, local, and family. Meanwhile, marriage is the beginning of a relationship built between a man and a woman in the form of a household, each of which will be played by the man as a family and the woman as a housewife, because from the beginning Allah has planned marriage, therefore, everyone who has believers when getting married should not underestimate the meaning of marriage, because God himself blesses a marriage, therefore believers who are going to get married should ask God for guidance in determining who will be their life partner forever.

#### b. Interfaith Marriage in the New Testament

In the New Testament there are no Biblical figures who entered into interfaith marriages, but in the New Testament we are reminded not to look for a partner outside the Christian faith or enter into an interfaith marriage. God desires marriage between people who believe and it is impossible for people who do not believe to build a harmonious household with people who do not know God. (2 Cor. 6:13-18). A harmonious marriage that can provide complete happiness is of course carried out by two people who have mutual trust in the Creator, namely the Lord Jesus the Savior and make the Lord Jesus the basis or foundation of their marriage. This is a hard and serious demand and the secret of such a beautiful marriage which is opened to every child of God who is willing to obey. Paul revealed that this marriage was a great secret, because the marriage was of a representative nature.

Paul also revealed that Christian marriage is not just a man and a woman being struck by love and then with every thought of lust and worldly pleasure entering a marriage. Marriage doesn't just say "I love you and you love me and then there is a marriage between us. Marriage is a representation of the relationship between a man and a woman that is legally recognized before God

and also before God's congregation and the bride and groom make sacred promises to each other. Then Paul Gunadi also explained a view for people who believe in God, when choosing a partner, it must be the right partner, a partner who is in accordance with Allah's wishes, namely a partner who shares the faith or a partner who can bring you closer to Allah. In 1 Corinthians. 7:39 It says that a woman who is a widow or whose husband has died is free to remarry as long as it is with someone who has the same beliefs. This explains that a person should not marry someone who does not share his faith, namely 2 Corinthians. 5:17 explains that people who live by relying on God are a new creation, and people who do not rely on God are people who live in sin. People who live in God will obtain salvation, while people whose lives are not pleasing before God will receive appropriate punishment.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 this verse is a command not to marry someone who does not believe in God. Paul emphasized the command to believers not to worship idols, but to live holy before God. People who believe will be people who continue to believe and will not easily waver in their faith, believers will not deviate from God's will and will always walk with God. So everything that happens in human life has been regulated by God and they must obey God's commands, one of which is looking for a partner who is in the Christian faith.

From the explanation above regarding interfaith marriages, it can be concluded that in the New Testament, marriages that do not share the same beliefs or have different religions are things that are prohibited by the Bible. God does not want young Christians to be in relationships with people who do not share their beliefs. Fear and trust in the creator are the most important standards in choosing a life partner for believers (Biblical Views Regarding Unfaithful Marriage, n.d.).

### **Efforts of Pastors as Christian Educators in Preventing Interfaith Marriages**

As for the efforts of the pastor in accordance with the research results, efforts need to be made in providing good examples in discipline, daily life in speaking and providing motivation to every young person, as well as guiding and directing them towards spiritual matters, encouragement to young people to remain diligent in worship and participate in spiritual activities. So the things that a pastor must apply to young people are:

#### **1. Building a Personal Relationship with God**

Building relationships by communicating with people is very important in human life. This also applies to every human being to build a personal relationship with God as the creator. As a child of God there are several things you must do to build a relationship with God:

- a. Pray, through prayer people can build a closer relationship with God and get closer to Him.
- b. Reading the Bible, to build a relationship with God, young people must know what God's commands and God's will are. By reading the Bible, people can find out everything that He recommends, namely good and what He does not recommend, namely evil.

- c. Worship, Worship is not just about coming or participating in worship, but you must understand what is conveyed in the worship, understand and understand the purpose of participating in the worship.
- d. Through these three main methods, young people can build a close relationship with God and must truly believe (*Building a Close Relationship with God*, n.d.).

## 2. Not giving the opportunity to have a girlfriend from a different religion

Courtship is a meeting between a daughter and son to establish intense communication or discuss personal matters with the other person. Meanwhile, "dating" has feelings of loving and being loved, liking and being liked, loving and being loved between sons and daughters who meet at a preferred place.

In dating, if both halves of the heart do not control themselves well, feelings of touching, kissing, hugging and being affectionate may arise. For this reason, when dating, both halves of the heart must always remember God's word which confirms that the body is the place where the Holy Spirit resides (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17). If both halves of the heart always remember God's word, they will continue to maintain the sanctity of life until entering a holy Christian marriage, even doing things that are right and noble, and thinking about wise things according to God's Word. Maintaining the purity of life in dating is an act that glorifies God when both halves of the heart are in love and dating.

### a. Standardization of Dating Life for Christian Teenagers

In the Bible, God does not clearly stipulate regarding dating. However, God's Word provides standardization of life that must be carried out as young Christians who have the identity of Christ, namely:

- 1) The body as the place where the holy Spirit dwells (1 Cor. 6:9).
- 2) Doing things that are right and beneficial for bodily/physical health (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12).
- 3) Maintain attitude and purity of life (1 Pet. 1:15).
- 4) Abstain from sexual immorality because the body belongs to God (1 Thess. 4:3).

### b. The criteria for choosing a girlfriend are according to the principles of God's word

1. Avoid youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22).
2. It is not good to date someone who does not share your faith (2 Cor. 6:14-15)
3. Date someone who lives righteously and fears God (Nubatonis, n.d.).

From several Biblical views on dating, a pastor is needed as a Christian educator in providing understanding to young people about real Christian dating.

## 3. Hold a Seminar on Christian Marriage

In accordance with the results of the research, the author explains that, the efforts of the pastor as a Christian educator in preventing interfaith marriages in GKII Jerusalem Sebelantau, Sekadau Regency, is that the pastor invites young people to take part in seminars for young people in character and spiritual formation. By young people taking part in these seminar activities, they can understand and comprehend the negative impacts of having an interfaith

marriage. The pastor also provides motivation to young people to remain enthusiastic in participating in every spiritual activity.

According to Parta Ibeg in his article, a seminar is a process of meeting a group of people which is held to discuss a problem and find a scientific solution to the problem and the form of activity is a presentation. When viewed from an etymological perspective, seminar has a Latin meaning, namely *seminarium*, which means "land where seeds are planted". Indeed, this definition cannot be interpreted literally, but this meaning can also be translated as a process of internalization of new knowledge or understanding.

Seminars on marriage are important for internal church parties to provide a good understanding to Christian young people in their own church and young people from other churches. Therefore, the characteristics that differentiate seminars from other activities include:

- a. Seminars are always held in the form of forums involving many participants. Even though communication occurs in one direction, a good seminar always ends with a question and answer process. Sometimes this session is also used to refute the speaker's arguments so as to create a dynamic and healthy discussion. This interaction always occurs both ways.
- b. There is meaning as reference material for the seminar. Generally, this reference is prepared by the speaker for seminar participants to study. At the end of the presentation, if any participant feels that the material is less relevant or unclear, they can ask the speaker directly.

The aim and function of seminars is basically to convey an opinion or new thing to seminar participants. That way, the seminar participants will get new information that can be developed into something broader for many people.

The function of seminars in general is as a medium for conveying new information or ideas of a scientific nature to seminar participants. That way, seminar participants can apply these participants in their lives, both directly and indirectly (Ibeg, 2022).

#### 4. Evangelize young people to accept and believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior

The aim of evangelism is clear so that everyone accepts and believes in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, but what God wants is for everyone to accept His teachings that have been conveyed through His Word is a very important point to convey to young people and also to everyone so that they do not go astray and deviate from His teachings. So that when they want to get married they will look for someone who is truly born again and they will understand that marriage is not just one day, one week, one month and one year, but the Bible clearly says about the length of marriage, this is a commitment throughout life. Marriage is designed to last a lifetime before God, but marriage does not extend to eternity. Because it is clear as Jesus explained, in (Matt. 22:30) (Geisler, 2001, p. 356). Because in a marriage when it experiences death, the husband and wife are no longer together, therefore it is said that it does not reach eternity.

#### 5. Carry out Pastoral Counseling Services

Pastoral care is a service that is needed for couples of different religions, both before and after they get married. Before making a decision to get married,

they must carefully consider the problems that could occur, after they get married, to prevent and overcome these problems, they also need to be served pastorally. Pastoral service is basically a church service that reflects God's care for His creation, specifically for humans. This care is described in the Bible as the care that a shepherd carries out for his sheep. According to John Patton, the term "pastoral" refers to an attitude of care and concern (Pastoral Care for Christian Family Members, n.d.).

## 6. Communicate

### a. Parent

A pair of soul mates who fall in love and want to build a closer relationship, need to build communication with both parents. Because communication is very important if the two halves of the heart are going to take things seriously to the next level, whether dating, engagement or marriage. Building good communication will give birth to good life and good actions, so that no party is harmed.

Therefore, when a couple is going to get married, first as a Christian educator, they communicate with both sides of the family, namely the male and female family, to make an agreement and ask about the marriage that will take place (Building a Harmonious Christian Marriage, n.d.).

### b. Couple About to Get Married

The decision to get married is not solely the decision of the couple getting married, but rather based on God's will and plan. Therefore, there are several things related to marriage that young people who are getting married should know, including:

1. Christian marriage adheres to the principle of monogamy or monoandry. Monogamy means a man marries a woman who will become husband and wife. Meanwhile, monoandry means a woman marries a man who will become her husband and wife.
2. Christian marriage does not consider homosexual (man to man) or lesbian (woman to woman) marriages as marriages desired by God. But the marriage desired by God is a marriage between the opposite sex, namely a man and a woman.
3. Marriage is something sacred, so it should not be tarnished by sexual relations with people who are not husband and wife.

From the explanation above regarding several efforts of a pastor as a Christian educator in preventing interfaith marriages, the researcher can conclude that in a church a pastor is really needed who can guide, lead and direct young people to good things, including In the relationship between young people, how marriage is desired by God Himself, then what the pastor as a Christian educator must do is to teach each young person so that they build a personal relationship with God through prayer and reading the Bible, then do not give permission to date other people. those who do not share the same faith, hold seminars on Christian marriage in accordance with God's will, carry out evangelization to every young person who begins to deviate from their religion, carry out pastoral counseling services, communicate with parents, and the most important thing is to communicate with their partner. who is getting married.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Pastors play the role of Christian educators in educating, teaching and guiding young people, because they have a goal of improving good and steady behavior. However, pastors as Christian educators must be able to provide good examples for the young people in their church.

In preventing interfaith marriages at GKII Sebelantau Jerusalem, the efforts of a pastor to teach and provide direction to young people about the negative impacts of interfaith marriages are very necessary. In dealing with this kind of problem, there must be good cooperation between the pastor and the parents of the young people, so that children can maintain social interactions, even parents must teach and give direction to good things to avoid interfaith marriages.

Factors in interfaith marriages are feelings of love, economic problems, and promiscuity carried out by young people, resulting in pregnancy out of wedlock and having to enter into interfaith marriages. So that interfaith marriages do not occur, there needs to be cooperation between the pastor and the young people so that they can provide direction and guide the young people to get closer to God through prayer, be active in spiritual activities, and be diligent in worship. Remembering the dangers that will occur when having an interfaith marriage, namely that it will have a negative impact on the family's faith, they will not be able to glorify God through their marriage, God's heart will be hurt, children will be confused about whose religion they should follow.

The various efforts of the pastor as a Christian educator in preventing interfaith marriages must be carried out at GKII Jerusalem Sebelantau, Sekadau Regency, namely the pastor needs to invite all congregations to work together to guide, direct and pay attention to young people in spiritual matters, such as encouraging young people. - young people to worship, persevere in prayer, read the Bible, provide motivation to young people who are hopelessly disappointed with people of their faith, diligently participate in every spiritual activity, provide motivation to young people who are disappointed with people of their faith, direct them to do positive things, as well as guiding young people so that they do not fall into relationships that can damage their faith, namely by providing explanations through the association of young people in socializing with people who do not have the same beliefs.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

From the results of the analysis and research above, the author can provide recommendations for developing research that is useful for informal, formal and non-formal educational institutions, especially for pastors as Christian educators to find out appropriate and effective methods. Strategies that suit the needs of young people in order to provide an understanding of interfaith marriages through a coaching process to increase young people's faith. Thus, it is hoped that pastors as Christian educators and church institutions can use this research as a reference for conducting further research or as a reference as a source of guidance for young people in the church. As reference material, this research can be developed by looking at good correlations and various research topics that are closely related to the facts and conditions being researched and developed.

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