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Theology of Migration: A Theoretical and Theological Contribution to the Understanding of Religion in the Fight Against Human Trafficking in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT)

Teologi Migrasi: Kontribusi Teoritis dan Teologis terhadap Pemahaman Agama dalam Upaya Melawan Perdagangan Manusia di Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT)

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ABSTRACT: Theology of Migration represents a form of praxis that elucidates the relationship between theology (religion) and social reality, with a particular focus on migration. This relationship is characterized by intricate, intertwining, and constructive engagement. This leads to the question of whether migration theology can address the issue of migrants who eventually become involved in the criminal act of trafficking in persons (TPPO). Since 2016, NTT has been identified as a key area of concern in the context of human trafficking. Recent research on the phenomenon of human trafficking has identified a number of socio-structural issues that contribute to its prevalence, including deficiencies in education, poverty, patriarchal structures, feudalistic systems, and the scarcity of natural and human resources. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that religion can play a significant role in the fight against TPPO in NTT. As an integral aspect of human existence, religion can serve as a foundation for efforts to provide crucial insights into the phenomenon of migration. Migration theology endeavors to reflect the phenomenon of migration in the light of public theology, thereby providing a basis for defense. This is then realized in practical actions against TPPO, with the objective of actively involving religion. In this context, migration theology will undertake a comprehensive examination of the various factors underlying the migration of people in NTT. It will then engage in interdisciplinary dialogue with the results obtained, particularly with regard to the teachings of Christianity concerning the phenomenon of migration (in terms of tradition, doctrine, the Bible, and theology). The latter can be enhanced with additional theological perspectives, particularly those pertaining to interfaith dialogue, in order to develop a comprehensive theological perspective on migration and to foster a distinctive theological approach to the migration patterns of the people of NTT. This research is grounded in a literature review employing a prosessional correlation approach, wherein Scripture, theological-dogmatic tradition, and socio-cultural human experience converge and engage in a dynamic interplay, ultimately manifesting itself in theological and practical terms.

***ABSTRAK**: Teologi Migrasi merupakan sebuah bentuk praksis yang menjelaskan hubungan antara teologi (agama) dan realitas sosial, dengan fokus khusus pada migrasi. Hubungan ini ditandai dengan keterlibatan yang rumit, saling terkait, dan konstruktif. Hal ini membawa pada pertanyaan apakah teologi migrasi dapat menjawab persoalan migran yang pada akhirnya terlibat dalam tindak pidana perdagangan orang (TPPO). Sejak tahun 2016, NTT telah diidentifikasi sebagai daerah yang menjadi perhatian utama dalam konteks perdagangan orang. Penelitian terbaru tentang fenomena perdagangan orang telah mengidentifikasi sejumlah masalah sosial-struktural yang berkontribusi terhadap prevalensi perdagangan orang, termasuk kekurangan pendidikan, kemiskinan, struktur patriarki, sistem feodalistik, dan kelangkaan sumber daya alam dan sumber daya manusia. Tujuan dari tulisan ini adalah untuk menunjukkan bahwa agama dapat memainkan peran penting dalam memerangi TPPO di NTT. Sebagai aspek integral dari eksistensi manusia, agama dapat menjadi landasan bagi upaya untuk memberikan pemahaman yang krusial terhadap fenomena migrasi. Teologi migrasi berupaya merefleksikan fenomena migrasi dalam terang teologi publik, sehingga menjadi dasar pembelaan. Hal ini kemudian diwujudkan dalam aksi-aksi praktis melawan TPPO, dengan melibatkan agama secara aktif. Dalam konteks ini, teologi migrasi akan melakukan telaah komprehensif terhadap berbagai faktor yang mendasari migrasi masyarakat di NTT. Kemudian akan melakukan dialog interdisipliner dengan hasil yang diperoleh, terutama yang berkaitan dengan ajaran agama Kristen mengenai fenomena migrasi (dari segi tradisi, doktrin, Alkitab, dan teologi). Hal ini dapat dilengkapi dengan perspektif teologis lainnya, terutama yang berkaitan dengan dialog antar agama, untuk mengembangkan perspektif teologis yang komprehensif tentang migrasi dan untuk menumbuhkan pendekatan teologis yang khas terhadap pola migrasi masyarakat NTT. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada tinjauan literatur dengan menggunakan pendekatan korelasi prosedural, di mana Alkitab, tradisi teologis-dogmatis, dan pengalaman sosial-budaya manusia bertemu dan terlibat dalam interaksi yang dinamis, yang pada akhirnya memanifestasikan dirinya dalam istilah-istilah teologis dan praktis.*

Keywords:
migration; human trafficking; religion; theology of migration; crucified migrants

Kata Kunci:
migrasi; perdagangan manusia; agama; teologi migrasi; migran yang disalibkan

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1. Introduction

Every year, Kupang's El Tari Airport Cargo receives a shipment of coffins of migrant workers from inside and outside the country. Between 2012 and 2017, 171 migrant workers from NTT died.[1] Other data from Vice Indonesia shows that throughout 2021, there were 81 trafficking victims who returned home in coffins, fewer than in 2019, when 119 people were affected.[2] This does not include other unrecorded victims. The search for a better destiny comes at the cost of suffering and death. Airport cargo holds are silent witnesses to moments of injustice, never-ending problems, endless lamentations, and the ugly face of crimes against humanity. The human body is meaningless in the face of traffickers and those responsible. The human body with its nobility cannot be traded.

The death of 87 migrant workers from NTT is a proof of this. So far in 2020, GMIT through its House of Hope has assisted victims with critical notes that some of the victims did not know the situation and the things they would do, besides that when they were recruited they did not tell their parents and were still 16 years old, the victims came from inadequate educational background (only finished elementary school), recruiters were close relatives, one of the female victims suffered sexual violence (raped until pregnancy), and two migrant workers returned home with a stroke. These data show that there are still many cases of human trafficking in NTT and the lack of attention from various institutions, including the Church.[3]

This paper will specifically discuss the relationship between the phenomenon of migration and its relation to human trafficking as it occurs in NTT and how theology (read: church) responds to it. Before surveying and examining the phenomenon of human migration from diverse theological perspectives, the concept of migration must be defined. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration is defined as the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition, and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.[4]

Thus, Migration is generally defined as the activity of moving (migrating) people from one place to another (local and inter-local) for various purposes. In this paper, economic factors are the main cause for people in NTT to undertake migration activities. Christian Wibisono, in his research on the theology of migration, showed that migration activities carried out on the basis of economic factors often make a person vulnerable to the crime of human trafficking. [5]

How to build a concept related to the theology of migration, especially for those who experience Trafficking in Persons (TPPO)? How does the church (GMIT) respond to the reality of migration? The lack of knowledge of the social system of the destination place causes many migration actors to get unfair treatment and also become victims of human trafficking. The social system can be in the form of understanding location (areas of origin, transition areas, and migrant destination areas), movement (information on migrant services and services), and institutions (networks and community organizations).

Several studies have shown that migration is also a religious, spiritual and theological issue. Both voluntary and forced migration have theological meanings behind them and religious reasons that give them direction. There are always theologically weighted push and pull factors for this mobility of humanity, whether in the context of temporary or permanent migration.

In discussions about the theology of migration, as far as the author knows, there are still many discussions by two Catholic theologians, namely Peter C. Phan and Daniel Groody. These two theologians use doctrinal lenses and church teachings to formulate and read the phenomenon of migration.[6] However, this results in a static

1 Cornelius Selan, "Data Tenaga Kerja Indonesia yang Berasal dari Nusa Tanggara Timur," in *Menolak Diam: Gereja Melawan Perdagangan Manusia*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018), hlm. 25–40.

2 Faisal Irvani, "Kasus Perdagangan Manusia Memburuk Di NTT, Krisis Iklim Turut Menjadi Pemicunya," Vice Indonesia," Article News (Vice Indonesia, 2021), https://www.vice.com/id/article/wx5mb4/kasus-perdagangan-manusia-dan-praktik-calo-tki-meningkat-di-ntt-dipengaruhi-kemarau-panjang-akibat-krisis-iklim.

3 Ferderika Tadu Hungu et al., "Catatan Pendampingan Rumah Harapan 2020: Darurat Kasus Kekerasan Seksual terhadap Anak, Sahkan RUU Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual," Catatan Tahunan (Kupang: Rumah Harapan GMIT, 2020), hlm. 22.

4 Ilsup Ahn, "Migration and Christian Theology," n.d. https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/MigrationandChristianTheology di akses 8 November 2024

5 Christian Fritz Wibisono, "Teologi Migrasi: Subjek Perjumpaan Teologi bagi Kaum Migran di Indonesia," *Divinitas Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi Kontekstual* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 1, https://doi.org/10.24071/div.v1i1.6132.

6 Martinus Dam Febrianto, "Berteologi Multidisipliner dan Interkultural di Zaman Migrasi," *JURNAL TEOLOGI* 9, no. 1 (2020). hlm. 49–68.Pope Francis offers a contextual theological reflection\non humanity's relationship with the planet. Widely considered as a theological\ndiscourse par excellence, the papal encyclical combines theological reflections\nwith studies from various scientific

situation in seeing this phenomenon, especially using the lens of religiosity, because both of them depart from theological reality in viewing real life experiences. Given also that the phenomenon of migration is a common phenomenon and can happen to anyone, an interdisciplinary and comprehensive religious analysis based on human life experience is needed.

GMIT theologians have also spoken about trafficking from various perspectives, church teachings, the Bible, church tradition, pastoral, gender, systematic and others, GMIT has also realized all of these things in terms of praxis, especially with the establishment of the GMIT House of Hope in order to become a forum for advocacy and assistance to victims of trafficking. However, from various literatures and things that have been done, there has been no writing or analysis from the perspective of Migration Theology, especially from the context of NTT and GMIT, from the stories of victims in particular. Mery Kolimon has touched on this side of migration but in the perspective of interpretation of the book of Ruth and has not fully explored what is meant by migration and what is called the theology of migration and how the theology of migration can become text and praxis in efforts to prevent and resist human trafficking. In relation to the church's mission as a companion, it is very important to listen to the stories of migration actors. Sometimes we fail to listen and stand with survivors because we are unwilling to meet and listen to their stories. Churches are often only willing to teach and are not humble enough to learn from the stories of victims' families and survivors.

What has been done as briefly described above are still things that happen after many victims have fallen, not wrong, but in order not to fall many victims, the church needs to take preventive action. In the context of GMIT, the church is one of the first axes or doors for those who choose to migrate. This is based on the fact that before, in the process and after migrating the perpetrators of migration make the church (teachings and theology) a place of rest and hope for a better life (12 stories of trafficking victims in the book God does not Trade). In response to this, the theology of migration from the context of NTT and GMIT is the most important thing that can be considered in efforts to prevent and resist Human Trafficking.

Theology of Migration in the context of NTT and GMIT is a description of the phenomenon of migration and theological reflection carried out by people in NTT, especially GMIT residents as part of an effort to realize a better life. In this context, theology of migration will comprehensively look at the various things behind the migration carried out by people in NTT and then will also dialogue the results obtained in an interdisciplinary manner with theological hermeneutics, especially based on the teachings of Christianity in seeing the phenomenon of migration (Tradition, doctrinal, biblical, and theological). This second point can be enriched with other theological views, especially inter-religiously, in order to create a comprehensive theological reflection in seeing the phenomenon of migration and lead to a distinctiveness of theology in the flow of migration carried out by the people of NTT. And finally, it will manifest in praxis steps that can be taken by churches in the GMIT service area.

2. Method

This paper uses literature study as the main reference in collecting data related to migration, theology, theology of migration and human trafficking. Then the data that has been collected comprehensively will be processed using an approach with what the author mentions in the abstract as a method of theology that is correlative and processional. This method is adapted from what Martinus Dam Febrianto stated in his writing where a theology is born from a processional correlation between scripture, tradition, human experience, different cultures and across disciplines. This paper will also critically analyze Richard Kearney's Anateism as a philosophical-theological foundation for efforts to construct a theology of migration in the context of migration in NTT.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Migration and Human Trafficking

This paper will specifically discuss the relationship between the phenomenon of migration and its relationship with human trafficking that occurs in NTT and how theology (read: church) responds to it. Migration is

disciplines. The result is a theology that is\nboth contextual and relevant to the challenges of the present world. Against this\nbackdrop, this article argues that the development of a theology of migration in\nrecent decades presents an attempt to conduct theological inquiries in a manner\nconsonant to Pope Francis' theological method. This is due to the method used\nin migration theology. It begins by reflecting upon concrete phenomena and encounters\n(interculturality

the movement of people from one place to another for various reasons. In NTT, economic factors drive migration. Christian Wibisono's research on the theology of migration shows that migration driven by economic factors increases vulnerability to human trafficking. This raises an important question: how does this phenomenon. This has led to an increase in trafficking cases in NTT, in 2016 the Governor of NTT announced that NTT was a trafficking emergency area, and at the same time the number of trafficking victims in NTT became one of the highest in Indonesia.[7]

The decision to migrate has been practiced by humans throughout history. The lack of human and natural resources to manage makes it possible. However, this is not the only important factor in migration. In his analysis of the phenomenon of why many people in NTT choose to migrate and work outside their region, Wetangterah states that this is influenced by the monopoly of agricultural resources in NTT. According to him, the existing agricultural land and natural resources with a total of about 3,793,051 ha and a total of 778,854 agricultural households (RTP), each RTP should be able to control and manage agricultural land of about 4.9 ha. In reality, however, each RTP acquires and manages only 0.88 ha.[8] Thus, about 3.9 ha of land becomes monopolized and controlled by a handful of people, which certainly has an impact on the existing economic and social life.

These data are supported by the research on poverty carried out by Risnawati and Titik, who, based on an analysis of the statistical number of RTPs in NTT using a binary logistic regression approach, found that in 2020 about 18.75% of agricultural households will be poor. The poverty referred to in this study is a situation where a household experiences a lack of ability to meet basic needs from an economic perspective. The factors behind this are lack of access to land, education, health, technology and information, and access to business credit.[9]

This phenomenon is more specifically categorized into economic migrants, who are people who, for economic reasons, choose to leave their territory and look for work, both at home and abroad. Economic reasons should lead these migrants to fulfill the documentary requirements to migrate or (documented migrants), but due to social situations and other factors, such as inadequate knowledge of migration requirements, immediate desire and high economic demands make them vulnerable to illegal migration, the incompleteness of document requirements (undocumented migrants) makes them also vulnerable to crimes against humanity.[10]

Every year, hundreds or even thousands of NTT men and women choose to work as migrant labourers, both at home and abroad. For NTT children, this is an easy choice, given that their lives still revolve around poverty. The lack of access to education, economic health and the manipulation of agrarian and natural resources are the root causes of the various forms of migration that occur in NTT. Those who exploit migrant workers often do so with the full knowledge that they are exploiting victims who are unaware of their rights. This makes them vulnerable to trafficking in persons (TPPO) crimes.

The United Nations (UN) defines trafficking in persons as follows: *[T]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation must include, at a minimum, the exploitation of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.* [11]

Citing the U.S. Embassy's 2022 Annual Trafficking in Persons Report, Indonesia is included in the list of countries with Tier 2 Trafficking Watch status. This level 2 monitoring status is based on the lack of attention and the Indonesian government has not fully complied with the regulations and minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons (TPPO). It is estimated that there are 6-8 million migrant workers working abroad. This data does not include workers who migrate domestically and work in regions within Indonesia.

7 Liliya Wetangterah, "Kerentanan Masyarakat Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Menjadi Korban Perdagangan Manusia Dengan Modus Pekerja Migran Indonesia," in *Menolak Diam: Gereja Melawan Perdagangan Orang*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018), 122.

8 Wetangterah, 120–22.

9 Risnawati Azali and Titik Harsanti, "Analisis Determinan Status Kemiskinan Rumah Tangga Sektor Pertanian Di Nusa Tenggara Timur Tahun 2020," in *Seminar Nasional Official Statistics*, vol. 2022, 2022, 873–84.

10 Terdapat berbagai macam definisi untuk menjelaskan fenomena migrasi di antaranya adalah: *internatinal migrants, domestik migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateles people, economic migrants, involuntary migrants, voluntary migrants, documented migrants, undocumented migrants,* dan *climate migrants.* Untuk kepentingan dalam tulisan ini penulis hanya akan berfokus pada definisi *economic migrants, international migrants, domestik migrants, unducumented migrants,* dan *documented migrants*. Tanpa menyingkirkan istilah-istilah lain yang ada, penulis bermaksud menghubungkan definisi pilihan penulis untuk kemudian dikaitkan dengan fenomena perdagangan orang yang terjadi di NTT. Lih. Martinus Dam Febrianto, *Sang Pelintas Batas-Batas: Berteologi Di Era Migrasi Bersama Paus Fransiskus* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2022).

11 Alexis A. Aronowitz, *Human Trafficking, Human Misery: The Global Trade in Human Beings*, Global Crime and Justice (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2009), 1.

Out of the 608 million Indonesian workers abroad, there are at least 2 million undocumented and illegal migrant workers who can be trapped by human trafficking syndicates.[12]

These data show that people who choose to work as migrant workers, both locally and internationally, are people who are very vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking. These data also show the poor system of placement and protection of Indonesian workers by the government and related officials. In 2016, the NTT government admitted that NTT has entered and is in a human trafficking emergency, a situation that threatens the sustainability of life in NTT itself. The rapid attraction of social change and modernism, strengthened by technological development, has absorbed and given beautiful dreams to every human being to have a better life. Gambling destiny has become something that cannot be avoided, if you are successful and make a lot of money, you will be called a winner, and if you fail and become a victim of human trafficking, you will be labelled as a person who has failed in the gamble of life.[13]

Success is ultimately determined by what is constructed by the social environment, which is often unequal. Those who succeed are praised, while those who fail and become victims are shamed and alienated from social life. These patterns will certainly affect the victims' efforts to heal their wounds, trauma, and psychology. On the other hand, the structural conditions of NTT society, which are still in a feudalistic and patriarchal cycle that places children in the power of their parents, often become a boomerang for life. One form of this practice is violence, which is often used as a measure to train children to be strong and hard workers as adults.

This structural violence then becomes a boomerang for migrant workers to always submit and remain silent about the violence they experience. The facts show that migrant workers from NTT are in high demand because they are strong at work, willing to be paid cheaply, willing to do any job, and willing to submit to violence. The decision to talk about and report the violence they experience is a taboo and a shame, so it is covered up.[14]

This perspective is also legitimized later in the values and meaning of life that are accepted, for example, by the Timorese, who place the highest value on their ability to work (from birth, both girls and boys are introduced to their type of work, women weaving and men gardening). This creates its own paradox when confronted with work that demands too much of their energy, which is then seen as an opportunity to prove themselves as strong Timorese. [15] Cultural phenomena such as the above are part of how the existing culture becomes a medium that unconsciously perpetuates the practice of human trafficking.

The cycle of violence in the culture, lack of attention to education and poverty in NTT are some of the causes of human trafficking in NTT. This reality causes the vulnerability of people to take the path of becoming migrant workers without sufficient education and knowledge about migrant workers and the risks that can occur. This cycle is the reason why this crime against humanity continues to occur. [16] Data adapted from the website of the American Embassy in Indonesia until 2022 shows that Indonesia is on the level 2 watch list for human trafficking. The data shows that until now the issue of human trafficking is still an issue that is not considered important. Victims who return with physical or mental disabilities, who become victims of internal organ trafficking, and who become victims of unpaid wages fraud are people who need to be considered and treated seriously.

The life of the NTT community in general is still in a cycle of poverty. The percentage of poverty in NTT as of 2020 according to BPS data reached 21.21 percent. This makes NTT the third poorest province in Indonesia. The lack of employment opportunities in NTT allows this to happen, besides as mentioned, the education factor also plays a big role in determining people's choice to become migrant workers. The lack of natural and human resources plays a major role in the occurrence of human trafficking. [17] In addition, the lack of support facilities in the villages, such as roads, transportation and markets, supports the slow circulation of cash. The basic needs to be met are exacerbated by the slow cash circulation, making people vulnerable to invitations to become migrant workers.[18]

12 "2022 Trafficking in Persons Report," Report (Jakarta: U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia, 2022), https://id.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/official-reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/.

13 Wetangterah, "Kerentanan Masyarakat Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Menjadi Korban Perdagangan Manusia Dengan Modus Pekerja Migran Indonesia," 101–21.

14 Wetangterah, 101–22.

15 Ester Mariani, "Metafora Eklesiologi Gereja Masehi Injili Di Timor Dalam Konteks Perdagangan Manusia Dari Perspektif Teologi Praktis" (Disertasi, Yogyakarta, Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, 2021), 163.

16 "2022 Trafficking in Persons Report."

17 Azali and Harsanti, "Analisis Determinan Status Kemiskinan Rumah Tangga Sektor Pertanian Di Nusa Tenggara Timur Tahun 2020," 873.

18 Azali and Harsanti, 876.

3.2 Forced Migration

As previously stated, the decision to migrate is shaped by the context of one's life. This context exerts a significant influence on the decision to migrate, and thus plays an important role in the process. The term "forced migration" is employed by the author to describe the phenomenon of migration by NTT children, who risk their lives as migrant workers outside their region of origin. In her research on human trafficking, Elina Otu posits that a significant proportion of NTT individuals, particularly those hailing from rural communities, opt to seek opportunities outside their region of origin due to the pervasive socio-economic challenges that impede their ability to flourish in their homeland. [19]

Forced migration is typically conceptualised as a politically motivated movement, such as fleeing persecution or conflict, whereas voluntary migration is generally understood to be driven by economic motives. In practice, however, this distinction is not always clear-cut, as migration often occurs on a spectrum between forced and voluntary migration, and is influenced by a range of political and economic factors. Many migrants are constrained by structural factors that limit their ability to exercise control over the timing and destination of their movements. This is true even for those who are traditionally categorised as "economic migrants". [20]

In East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), forced migration is frequently associated with poverty and constrained employment opportunities, which compel individuals to seek opportunities in other regions, including overseas. However, this forced migration is often exploited by human trafficking networks. Many children and women from NTT are deceived by promises of better jobs and livelihoods, but end up becoming victims of exploitation, including forced labour or sexual exploitation. The economic crisis and lack of access to local resources exacerbate this vulnerability, trapping individuals from NTT in migration situations exploited by trafficking syndicates.

It is imperative that the Indonesian government and social organisations give serious consideration to the interconnection between forced migration and trafficking. Furthermore, in addition to addressing structural poverty and providing employment opportunities in NTT, migration control and trafficking prevention policies require reinforcement. It is also crucial to enhance community empowerment and raise awareness about the dangers of human trafficking. This will enable individuals to make safer migration decisions and avoid the pitfalls of exploitation. The conjunction of socio-economic factors and inadequate legal protection has reinforced the correlation between forced migration and trafficking, which has a detrimental impact on the well-being of communities in NTT.

This phenomenon requires serious attention from various parties, including, in this case, the Church. As part of the social life of the people in NTT, the church must be actively involved as a civil society movement. Of course, this is not easy, but as part of the social life, the church must be responsible for various humanitarian issues. The tragic stories of trafficking victims are stories of the fragility of the church as a community and/or fellowship of believers, borrowing Mery Kolimon's critique that trafficking is a wound in the body of Christ. As such, this wound needs serious attention from the church. [21]

3.3 Evangelical Church in Timor (GMIT) and Human Trafficking

GMIT, as one of the large churches in Indonesia with a large congregation, faces the humanitarian issue of human trafficking as shown in the data above. However, the phenomenon directly affects GMIT congregations. GMIT has acted with various humanitarian movements, one of which is the establishment of GMIT House of Hope as one of the task forces of the Disaster and Humanitarian Response Service Assistance Unit, which is tasked to assist families and victims of human trafficking. As mandated by the 2010 GMIT Regulation (amended 2015), which states that one of the tasks of the church in its presence in the world is to interpret human beings as created in the image of God (Imago Dei). Based on this theology, the church is called to recognize its responsibility and critical stance in the defence of humanity, including human trafficking. [22]

The GMIT House of Hope team found that poverty, gender injustice and global market capitalism are the background or roots of human trafficking. In addition, in the social context of society, it was found that the issue of human trafficking still received a less favourable response, society still looked down on the position of migrant

19 Elina W. Otu, "Jalan Panjang Menuju Penegakan Keadilan dan Penyembuhan Trauma," in *Tuhan tak Berdagang: Perdagangan Orang, Trauma dan Teologi di Nusa Tenggara Timur* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020), 115.

20 Alexander Betts, *Forced Migration and Global Politics* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 4–5.

21 Mery Kolimon, "Kerentanan dan Luka, Perlawanan dan Penyembuhan: Refleksi Teologis tentang Perdagangan Orang di Wilayah Pelayanan Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)," in *Menolak Diam: Gereja Melawan Perdagangan Orang*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018), 1–24.

22 Hungu et al., "Catatan Pendampingan Rumah Harapan 2020: Darurat Kasus Kekerasan Seksual terhadap Anak, Sahkan RUU Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual."

workers. Meanwhile, in the context of the church, it is noted that human trafficking has not received serious attention, as evidenced by church programs that do not support victims of human trafficking.

From these data, GMIT also formed a mentoring program based on the church community, but it was still limited to workshops and socialization. The author noted that GMIT has made many practical efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking through various collaborations between domestic and foreign institutions. What the author emphasized, however, was the role of GMIT's theological foundation in addressing this issue. The theological foundation of Imago Dei was still born and lived only in elite church circles. For this, it is necessary to deepen and explain this theological foundation, a critical understanding of the issue of migration is very much needed by the congregation, and the theological foundation of Imago Dei can be explained in depth by looking back to the discussion of the sacramentals of the human body. [23]

Following on from this, the author also agrees with what Jear Nenohai stated that GMIT's position in efforts to combat human trafficking is like eating the *simalakama fruit*, on the one hand GMIT's inner body is still in a circle of naive consciousness where it still has to grapple with narratives of oppression in theological concepts and teachings born out of the legacy of colonialism, and on the other hand GMIT is also grappling with the context of feudal NTT society. GMIT's mission in the fight against human trafficking is the "mission of resistance", this mission is based on the theological view of the Familia Dei, which then manifests itself in a joint effort with those who are marginalized to move together against human trafficking.

Mery Kolimon said that the common mission of those who have been marginalized (victims/survivors) is expected to be an effort of resistance to construct the theology of surrender, which has so far been a guideline or value of life, which then makes the victims and survivors and other elements passive towards various crimes, dehumanization, including human trafficking. In addition to this, Kolimon also said that the GMIT congregation has inherited a colonial theology that does not have a sense of critical thinking within itself. Obedience and surrender have become models that are ingrained in the body of the congregation, so that anything that comes in contact with power is always absolute acceptance. [24] What Kolimon has outlined then needs to be taken seriously, in which case the author then offers antheism as an alternative way to promote a mission of resistance and critical education in an effort to fight against the crime of human trafficking and oppressive systems.

This effort is made to enable the victims or survivors to claim their dignity as works and creations in accordance with and in the image of God. It is hoped that from this we will gain the understanding and compassion to dare to fight and reject every form of crime and violence, as well as systems and structures that oppress, enslave and exploit.

3.4 Theology of Migration and an Attempt to Walk with the Marginalized

As an academic discipline, migration theology is hermeneutically established as atheological reflection on various phenomena of human migration. Theology of Migration is not a concept or theological study of the reality of migration but more than that it is a form of praxis of the relationship between theology (religion) and the social reality around it, especially migration, which is intertwined and constructive. The approach taken in the theology of migration is divided into 3 namely, First, Socio-Analytic, related to the deepest life gojalak carried out by those who choose to migrate. Second, Hermeneutical Mediation, which connects the first story with the traditions, teachings, and theology of religion. Third, Practical Mediation, is the church's response in terms of praxis to the lives of migrants. This then becomes Inter-Multicultural Theology, because what is brought down by migrants is something that is not automatically formed, contextual background, culture, understanding, customs are serious considerations, besides that migration theology owes a lot to other scientific fields in responding to the reality of migration.[25]

The question that then arises is can theology of migration speak about people who migrate who eventually fall into the criminal act of trafficking in persons (TPPO)? Theology at this time needs to pay attention to the realities of life rather than theology from the teachings and doctrines of the church. For this reason, theology needs to open up and meet with other fields of science (socio-political analysis, economics, culture, etc.) that have sunk their efforts in improving the existing reality for the better.

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23 Jear Nenohai, "Implikasi Pedagogi Paulo Freire dan Antonia Harder Terhadap Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Manusia di Nusa Tenggara Timur," *BIA': Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen Kontekstual* 4, no. 1 (June 28, 2021): 71–89, https://doi.org/10.34307/b.v4i1.211.

24 Kolimon, "Kerentanan dan Luka, Perlawanan dan Penyembuhan: Refleksi Teologis tentang Perdagangan Orang di Wilayah Pelayanan Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)," 15.

25 Lih. Martinus Dam Febrianto, *Sang Pelintas Batas-Batas: Berteologi Di Era Migrasi Bersama Paus Fransiskus* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2022), hlm. 31–32.

Migration is not merely a social, political, economic and cultural issue but also a moral, missional, pastoral and theological issue of the church. The church in its mission as the bearer of God's peace in the world needs to be seriously involved in this reality. because migration is closely related to the people of God or in other words is the reality of the people of God. Likewise, the church is essentially according to Peter C. Phan an institutional migrant because the church or Christianity is very closely related to migration as the very nature for the church. In 1991 the World Council of Churches (WCC) held a conference in Switzerland with the theme of migration, this shows that migration from these years is a phenomenon that has received serious attention. Theology of migration needs to take into account scientific analysis from other fields of science regarding the reality of migration.

The basis of the theology of migration is Imago Dei, Verbum Dei, Missio Dei & Visio Dei. Systematic reflection requires concrete actions with and for the migrants (option with and for the poor). What are the ethical implications of the study of the theology of migration in the context of migrants from NTT? What are the pastoral implications of the study? What can be recommended for the concrete ministry of the Church of Indonesia (GMIT)? What can be offered to the wider public from the finding that migration is, for example, the way the Creator acts and the way human beings are in this world? What kind of advocacy can be called out to public policy makers regarding the plight of NTT migrant workers?

Human trafficking is both a humanitarian issue (secular and religious) and a question of meaning, of a person's most precious value. As in the conversation between Kearney and Julia Kristeva, humans always have a need to believe, that in human history and religions always intersect with conversations about the sacred. Kearney opens new possibilities beyond this multicultural and multireligious reality to acknowledge the central role of symbols, imagination, narratives, and religious and secular actions as an inseparable part of humanity. That in the colonial dogmatic construction of NTT, people who are victims of human trafficking can be refreshed by anatheism.[26]

Together with those who are marginalized, wounded and vulnerable, anatheism stands as a choice of betting on something that is considered valuable (faith). That the imagination of the sacred is always present in everyday life (not only in the dogmatic theological dictates of religion/church). Anatheism invites us to make a critical bet for a life, to dare to take action and critical spirituality, and to resist the various kinds of suffering caused by the banality of evil, including by religious beliefs themselves.

The phenomenon of migration to meet human needs has occurred throughout the history of human civilization itself. Migration has become a milestone in the history of human civilization and development, from the ancient human species that inhabited East Africa some 2 million years ago to the present modern civilization that proudly calls itself wise man (Homo sapiens). These wise humans later created culture and preyed upon each other. The stories of human trafficking victims like Maria and Mrs. Marieta are a dark history of humanity itself.

As a common social problem, the phenomenon of migration that leads to human trafficking is framed by the author in the context of the sacramental crisis of the body. The historical argument that the author wants to convey is that human beings are fundamentally sacramental. Without intending to emphasize only the anthropological side, the author also recognizes that the world of life, including nature and all that lives on this earth, is sacramental. In other words, all of creation is theologically sacramental. The sacramental itself presupposes the existence of the divine in the totality of created life.

The question of the sacramental is an important one for Kearney. The idea of the sacramental was born out of his struggle as a philosopher who was born and raised in the context of the violence that occurred in Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics. In addition, the issues of violence in the Middle East, his study trip to India, and his meetings with several famous philosophers such as Paul Ricoeur, Levinas, and Derrida raised important questions for him, namely, which God is being talked about when we talk about God? This is the question that he then explored in his writings. His encounters with different people in different places have given rise to his own mental constructions about the meaning of being a migrant and a foreigner, which characterize the existential meaning within each human being.

Kearney pays particular attention to 3 main themes: protest, prophetic, and sacramental. Kearney suggests that any encounter with reality requires the imagination to question one's relationship to oneself, especially to what one believes, while also allowing one's predictions about that reality. [27] Both protest and prophecy seem to be answered by Kearney in his discussion of the sacramental. With a sharp phenomenological lens, Kearney lands

26 Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returnig To God After God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 36.

27 Protest, Prophecy, dan Sacramental adalah 3 kesatuan yang utuh. Protest dan Prophecy dibahasa oleh Kearney dalam hubungannya atas pertanyaan tentang Tuhan. Terutama dalam peristiwa-peristiwa penting dalam tragedi kemanusiaan semisal holocoust di mana Tuhan seakan diam dan tidak berbuat apa-apa. 2 sikap ini seperti menggugat sekaligus mengundang kembali Tuhan yang dalam bahasa Kearney menyebutnya dengan "yang mungkin. Lih. Kearney, 57.

on the idea that every reality is sacramental. The sacramental itself is too religious, especially in Christianity, and Kearney admits this in his explanation. According to him, from the beginning Christianity has had a strong hold on the sacramental vision, especially in the context of the call to pilgrimage. This is a journey (eschaton) to find every possibility, transcendence in immanence. [28]

The sacramental that Kearney means goes beyond the limits of the sacrament as "ritual" or worship, the sacramental is a form of the presence of the divine in the reality of life. his concern about the increasingly secular (western) world allows the opinion to find its place that the way of imagining the divine can also occur in a secular context, and this is the repetition that atheism means. "The Divine/Creator insists on being sought in every creature/creation," these words contain theological elements in religion that the Divine is also present and active in everything. Up to this point, it is necessary to realize that from the beginning Kearney avoided an excessive theological attitude and emphasized more on the hermeneutic and phenomenological philosophical side. [29]

It is interesting when our discussion shifts back to the sacramental intention in Kearney's thinking, because according to him, the discussion of the sacramental has long been forgotten, especially in relation to events of dehumanization and human suffering, since the time of the scriptures and continued through traditions that always identify God as far away in heaven, with moral attributes that are worn on him, that transcend time and never change, which are ontotheological. In light of the current situation, Kearney proposes a rethinking or re-experiencing of the Christian faith, moving beyond the rigid and inflexible formulations of ontotheology. [30] Given the concrete situation of the secular world, atheism and suffering, or perhaps even ecological damage, rethinking the Christian faith by returning to the discussion of sacramentality is one of the important things for now.

Up to this point, Kearney has concluded that the sacramental movement signifies the possibility of the presence of the divine in every human experience and in the universe; God/the Word made flesh always requires a human response as a call to know Him as the infinity that is always present in everyday human experience. According to the author, this is in line with the thinking of John Hart, who sees the human world and the universe as sacramental, which Banoet also calls integral sacramental in his thesis. God is present who is not trapped in a sacred tradition. Every place, every situation is sacramental, as are human tragedies and the existence of human life (human beings are the sacrament of creation). So, I also carefully draw the same conclusion, that man is the sacrament of creation, a medium for the self-revelation of God's grace, where the relationship between himself and creation is realized.

Kearney's sacramental imagination presupposes the return of sacramental life to everyday life as a possibility of God after God (*anatheos*) and, at the same time, of sharing with something sacred after it has been abandoned (*anathema*). Inspired by Marleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the flesh, Kearney argues that the divine is present in the everyday universe, along with life, which always requires a response, and that the context of life requires a renewal, namely a non-dogmatic relationship with the divine by being open to the history of life, including human suffering. In short, Kearney is trying to bring the abstract conversation about the divine back to the life of the flesh or the everyday universe.

Penny Utami's research shows that the handling of TPPO cases in NTT still faces many challenges. The local government focuses on eradicating and punishing perpetrators of trafficking, but often ignores aspects of victim care and empowerment. Key obstacles include a lack of uniform understanding of existing policies among stakeholders, uneven capacity and capabilities, and a lack of coordination among relevant agencies. In addition, the encouragement of NTT people to migrate in search of a better life exacerbates the situation, as many of them end up becoming victims of trafficking. Although the NTT provincial government has made various efforts, such as organizing migrant workers and forming a special task force to deal with TPPO, the challenges are still very great. Budget limitations, lack of understanding and low commitment of law enforcement officers are the main obstacles in handling these cases. Therefore, Penni Utami emphasized the importance of synergy between

28 *Anatheism draws from these two vocations, seeking to combine the pilgrim commitment to protest and prophecy with a sacramental return to epiphanies of the everyday. It endeavors to balance the journey outward with a sojourning in the sacred here and now*. Lih. Kearney, 85–86.

29 Sang Pencipta, ia selalu bersikeras, "harus dicari melalui makhluk-makhluk." Lih. Kearney, 87.

30 Percakapan Ontoteologis menurut McGrath sudah terjadi sejak zaman patristik. Percakapan ini terjadi untuk menjawab dan sekaligus memberi pemahaman teologis terhadap kehidupan gereja perdana. Pertumbuhan gereja perdana membutuhkan formulasi atu penamaan terhadap atribut teologis kekristenan agar dapat dimengerti oleh jemaat waktu itu. Bnd *"The patristic period was of major importance in clarifying a number of issues. One issue that had to be sorted out at an early stage was the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. The letters of Paul in the New Testament point to the importance of this matter in the first century of Christian history, as a series of doctrinal and practical issues came under consideration. Should Gentile (that is, non-Jewish) Christians be obliged to be circumcised? Did Christians have to observe Jewish food laws? And how was the Old Testament to be correctly interpreted?"* Lih. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, V (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 51.

the government, the community and all stakeholders to truly overcome and eradicate the practice of human trafficking in NTT.[31]

Penny Utami also emphasized that the treatment of TPPO in NTT often focuses only on the legal aspect, namely the elimination and punishment of perpetrators, while the aspect of protection and empowerment of victims - which is the essence of the fulfilment and protection of human rights - is less considered. Victims of trafficking experience violations of their fundamental rights, such as the right to liberty, dignity, security, and protection from torture or inhuman treatment. In addition, barriers to coordination, uneven understanding among stakeholders, and lack of support for victims of TPPO indicate that the existing system does not fully support the fulfillment of human rights for victims. Thus, Penny emphasized the importance of a more comprehensive approach to addressing TPPO that not only punishes perpetrators, but also protects, restores, and empowers victims in accordance with basic human rights principles.[32]

3.5 Theology of Migration: An Alternative Offering in an Attempt to Make Sense of Migrants' Bodily Experiences

Following Marleau-Ponty, Kearney repositions the body as ontology in understanding and interpreting the sacred. In this phenomenological concept, Kearney interprets the existential reality of human beings and their relationship to the meaning of the sacred as an inversion, as Levinas did, where God's revelation of Himself to human beings is expressed through thoughts and language that are manifested in an ethical attitude of responsibility toward others. [33] For Kearney, "the sacred" is revealed to human beings through the "stranger" who is also "possible" in the reality of human life, which then manifests itself in an ethical attitude of "hospitality" in welcoming all.

It becomes clear that in this framework of thought, thinking and/or speaking about God or the Sacred is not only at the level of the ego, but also in the existential experience of the reality of life. This makes the way of being religious and talking about God more dynamic and less absolute. Kearney reverses the individual side of a person in religion, but there are social and personal dimensions to religious life that are important to consider. According to Raharjo, the individual (personal) position in religion is very important to question because in the social dimension of religion, the personal position is also very important. Thus, each individual does not lose his or her existence and authentic side as an individual human being. [34] In this way, the phenomenology of the body and the sacramental imagination of it become an important offer to see the excavation of the meaning of the sacred in the existential experience of a person.

Jean Luc Marion's private library became the site of an interesting discussion between Kearney and Marion. On this occasion, Marion conveyed that phenomenology reveals the dogmatic limits of theology, where a phenomenon is always legitimate and possible to be reflected as a call to the sacred. [35] In this case, phenomenology stands as a call to understand a phenomenon, especially one related to the sacred. God is an event without a name, there is always tension in every phenomenon that appears in human existence.

An important part of anatheism is the call to pay attention to sacred experiences before explaining them with theories or causes that exist in theology, psychology, economics, politics, or other positive sciences. In this case, anatheism is a phenomenological project that prioritizes the phenomenological approach itself, anatheism offers a second sacredness to the world of life. It is also a project that pays careful attention to the gaps and distances that make each encounter a response to a phenomenology of meaning that is not yet determined and remains vague (hostis: the stranger as guest or enemy), thus requiring a risky hermeneutic approach by opening oneself to the other. [36]

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31 Penny Naluria Utami, "Penanganan Kasus Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang oleh Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur," *Jurnal HAM* 10, no. 2 (November 27, 2019): 195, https://doi.org/10.30641/ham.2019.10.195-216.East Nusa Tenggara (NTT

32 Utami.East Nusa Tenggara (NTT Hlm.214.

33 Chris Ruhupatty, "Dekonstruksi dan Pembicaraan tentang Tuhan," *Jurnal Dekonstruksi* 2, no. full Issue (2021): 4, https://doi.org/10.54154/dekonstruksi.v2i01.

34 Wahyu Raharjo, "Agama Menjadi Media Manusia Bereksistensi," *Jurnal Dekonstruksi* 2, no. Full Issues (2021): 1, https://doi.org/10.54154/dekonstruksi.v2i01.

35 Richard Kearney and Jens Zimmermann, "The Death of the Death of God: Dialogue with Jean-Luc Marion," in *Reimagining the Sacred: Richard Kearney Debates God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 176.

36 "*From the beginning, and at its best, Christianity professed both a pilgrim and a sakramental vocation. The first went out in search of aliens and strangers. . .. The second sought to welcome the stranger into the here and now. . .. Anatheism draws from these two vocations, seeking to combine the pilgrim commitment to protest and prophecy with a sakramental return to epiphanies of the everyday. It endeavors to balance the journey outward with a journing in the sacred here and now . . . [for] the ultimate step in mystical abandonment is a sanctification of our mundane existence."*

Thus, for an atheist, the experience of the sacred is not only a preparatory stage for the practice of theology or humanist ethics, but also an excess that involves a close entanglement between transcendence and immanence. It is a constant call to return and revisit (ana: back again, new).[37] In relation to human trafficking, atheism can be a new alternative in the effort to find and give meaning to suffering, and also as an alternative hermeneutic in the effort to construct a theological basis for efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking practices.

During the discussion, Kearney mentioned that "hermeneutics of sacramental imagination" is an attempt to free someone from theistic-metaphysical idols and the denial of atheism. Using people like Dorothy Day, Etty Hilesum, and Jean Vanier as examples, Kearney wants to emphasize that sacramental imagination is also flesh in the body of everyday life. The sacred is about choices and responses in events, not about existence and essence. Thus, the phenomenology of the flesh is about readiness and openness to the future in the face of a human existential event.

> *"Once I was tortured again, my face was punched until my nose was broken, a lot of blood flowed. When I drank water, the water came out through my nose. After that I cleaned the blood that was flowing on the floor while struggling with pain and soreness. I felt that my flowing blood was the flowing blood of Jesus. After my boss came into the office, I took paper and pencil to write and ask for help. It so happened that the door was slightly open at that time and there was a neighbour outside, I dared to throw the paper at him, an hour later the police came and I was saved."* [38]

The way to do this can begin by shifting the paradigm of GMIT theology from ceremonial-centred to existentialism or human experience, including in this case the experience of victims and perpetrators of human trafficking. First, the phenomenon of human trafficking that occurs in the GMIT arena is a sacramental crisis phenomenon. The experiences of victims are sacramental experiences that need a place to express what they are feeling.

The way to do this can be started by shifting the paradigm of GMIT theology from a ceremonial centre to existentialism or human experience, including in this case the experience of victims and perpetrators of human trafficking. First of all, as explained in Chapter II, the phenomenon of human trafficking that occurs in the GMIT area is a sacramental crisis phenomenon. The experience of the victims is a sacramental experience that needs a place to express what they feel.

Citing the opinion of Mutiara Andalas, who traces the works of Leonardo Boff, who said that after the Church grew so rapidly by marginalizing local beliefs (paganism and polytheism), the Church fell into thinking that desacralized the sacramental characteristics of creation. [39] Creation is God's sacrament, in line with Kearney's expression that the daily existence of human beings is part of something sacramental. Using a phenomenological lens, Kearney critiques everyday experiences that can only be reflected through a dualistic (anti-carnal) framework of ideas that separate metaphysics and mainstream theology (body and soul, mind and senses, spirit and matter). [40]

Thus, it becomes important in this paper to reposition the experiences of trafficking victims as sacramental experiences of their lives. The existential experience of one victim, Mrs. Marieta, who suffered torture to the point of deep sacramental reflection, "*I feel that my flowing blood is also the flowing blood of Jesus*," [41] in the sacramental imagination proposed by Kearney, what Mrs. Marieta experienced was a sacramental experience of encountering a foreign feeling of her body that she had never experienced before becoming a migrant worker.

In another example, Maria, a migrant worker who experienced physical disability due to an amputated hand, placed her reflection or sacramental experience on her amputated body by continuing to fight and celebrate her life. Her reflection on her experience made her strong, accepting of herself and enthusiastic to live again. This story reminds us of the story of Queen Vashti in the book of Esther 1:1-22, which Allen Callahan read in the Loving the Body book series as the resolve of a woman who respects her own body. [42]

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37 Bradley Daniel, "Materiality and the Sacred in Anatheism," in *The Art of Anatheism* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd, 2018), 212.

38 Emmy Sahertian, "Traumaku: Menemukan Makna Sebuah Kredo dalam Ziarah Penderitaan," in *Tuhan tak Berdagang: Perdagangan Orang, Truma, dan Teologi di Nusa Tenggara Timur*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020), 235.

39 Mutiara Andalas, "Transformasi Tubuh Kristus Menjadi Nasi: Dari Mobilitas Spiritual Menuju Aktivisme Sega Mubeng," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Covid-19 Pandemic, Social Solidarity & Interreligious Engagement in Indonesia*, I (Salatiga: Satya Wacana University Press, 2021), 4.

40 Kearney, *Anatheism: Returnig To God After God*, 4.

41 Sahertian, "Traumaku: Menemukan Makna Sebuah Kredo dalam Ziarah Penderitaan," 228.

42 Dwight N. Hopkins and Anthony B. Pinn, eds., *Loving the Body: Black Religious Studies and the Erotic*, 1st ed, Black Religion, Womanist Thought, Social Justice (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 91.

These examples show how a person's existential experience is always something foreign to him, which he can then interpret as a sacramental event in which he feels a partiality and participates in the celebration of the Eucharist and the kenosis of the sacramental body of Christ that accompanies every human experience. This is certainly different from ethical-theological considerations such as those offered by Magang and Kolimon above. According to Boff, a person's bodily gestures and symbolic expressions can show the sacramental character of the theology of the people.

David Brown critically shows that discussions about God (outside the level of biblical revelation) are always connected to teleological and ontotheological discussions, which are then added to moral attitudes and experiences when necessary; in short, reflection on God can always and only be done through a structure of thought or a framework of rationality and retrospective justification like this, and this has been lived by the church for thousands of years. [43] Brown also clearly places the sacrament not only as a ritual, but also as an experience that transforms and also confirms a person's status as valuable in the eyes of God. Every human existential experience is an experience of encountering God as something that is inherently a sacramental experience.

3.6 Wounds, Trauma, and the Sacramentality of the Bodies of Trafficking Victims

Dina and Erna, victims of human trafficking, tell of their suffering and torn bodies that were cursed, tortured and abused: "*Our feet were swollen but we were forced to continue working, we were called dogs, we were stripped naked, we were given inadequate food, we were given anti-menstrual pills and forced to take them and our salaries were never paid, we were suffering, our bodies were full of wounds, but we always prayed that we could get out of this suffering, our belief was that if we could get out, the first place we would go was the church because we were sure that there would be someone there to help us*." [44]

Imagination is an important word in almost all of Kearney's writings. Indirectly, Kearney shows that imagination is something that is inevitable in the structure of human existence. Imagination as described by Kearney has the power to be a vehicle of change in the midst of the current postmodern context, imagination can open the veil of possibility in the midst of rigid and fixed concepts, go beyond the dogmatism of imprisoning religion, and as an alternative and dialogical path for the current context, Over the past forty-five years, Kearney's body of writings has provided an antidote to philosophy's forgetfulness of the imagination and to our increasingly anemic social imaginary, offering a fruitful reimagining of traditions and possibilities for reconciliation and human flourishing in a divided world - pitting peace against war, hospitality against hostility, creative exchange against the echo chamber of ideological self-justifying rhetoric. [45]

Citing I. Kant, Kearney places imagination as a forgotten part in the development of Western philosophy, imagination is a dynamic ability in presenting the problem of understanding and interpreting human empirical experience. Imagination is something integral in human beings when trying to give meaning to every existential experience, imagination opens different fields of possibilities in giving meaning to experience. Kearney recognizes that it is a power that can be used for good or evil: to create and heal, or to exclude and destroy. The worlds we create can reflect the face of tyranny, injustice, and barbarism, or they can reflect the human face of compassion, justice, and hospitality - and everything in between. [46]

Before entering into the sacramental imagination of the bodies of trafficking victims, the author will first show how Kearney reconceives the discussion of God. Kearney begins this step by identifying the objective mastery of God that is dogmatic, triumphalist, and legalistic. According to Kearney, the discussion of God can finally be easily defined rather than directly experienced. Kearney wants to free people from such dichotomies that place God only as a metaphysical object. In his philosophy of religion, Kearney shows how his interest in the incarnation and the sacraments is about the importance of the living human body and its relationship to thinking about God. [47]

This allows the author to further explore the importance of the sacramental imagination of the bodies of trafficking victims. He also quotes Kearney as saying that interpreting is not just about understanding words on paper, but also understanding and reading faces with all the vulnerability of the blood and flesh of the human body itself. It requires imagination to read between the lines. Imagination can be used to interpret the sacred in the universe of everyday human life, not in metaphysical dreams.

43 Boersma and Levering, *The Oxford Handbook of Sakramental Theology*, 795.
44 Liliya Wetangterah, "Perbudakan di Negeri Sendiri," in *Tuhan tak Berdagang: Perdagangan Orang, Trauma, dan Teologi di Nusa Tenggara Timur*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020), 55–61.
45 Murray E. Littlejohn, ed., *Imagination Now: A Richard Kearney Reader* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2020). xii
46 Littlejohn.x
47 Littlejohn.xx

The bodies of trafficking victims are vulnerable bodies full of wounds, the sacramental image and likeness of God. For Charles Peguy, the soul has a habit (is to have a soul of [mere] habit), theology is not only about words, but also refers to the existential experience of human beings, which, if not interpreted, disappears (intuition without concept) and, if not lived, becomes empty (concept without intuition). Human experience and the mystery of God are so closely intertwined and overlapping in the image of the God-man that any desire to separate the two is misleading. [48]

The experience above is the experience of wounded, oppressed and depressed bodies, how can this existential experience be interpreted by someone? Is there a way to get there? Mangililo offers an Imago Dei perspective with a postcolonial basis to answer this, for him Imago Dei opens the veil of possibility for victims, especially women, to claim their identity as the image and likeness of God. [49] Or, in Kearney's view, when someone encounters something foreign in their life journey, they are given the opportunity to interpret it. What is visible is the strangeness that is always open to interpretation. What Kearney offers begins by giving imagination the opportunity to play a role. Imagination is always understood in two main concepts: first, imagination is a representational ability that reproduces images and/or some previous realities. Second, imagination is a creative energy possessed by someone who produces images and images that often claim their own original status. [50] The story of Dina and Erna can be interpreted more deeply through what Kearney offers, that in their suffering there is something new and foreign that they encounter for the first time. Before they were trafficked, they were free and independent people.

The suffering and oppression they experienced were foreign things, what Kolimon called gaping wounds in the body of Christ (Refusing to be Silent, page 14), or what Septemy Lakawa wrote, quoting a poem by a trafficking victim, "*we live without justice and die without justice, we are just corpses*," [51] an expression full of meaning, interpreting the body very deeply, how does one continue to have faith in the midst of such great suffering? The language of wounds is closely related to the sacramental language.

In this way, the author is able to show that imagination can be a great power in interpreting the experience of the body of trafficked persons as a sacramental body that also shows an invitation to the fragility of God along with the existential experience of human beings. Through empathy and imagination, the experience of the victim's body and of something foreign that they have just felt for the first time can give birth to a deep meaning for each other, because creative imagination and a person's spiritual beliefs are not separate.

Romano Guardini aptly describes the above: "Christianity has dared to place the (human) body in the most hidden depths of God," Christianity has dared to place the (human) body in the deepest core of the most hidden depths of God. "The Word became flesh" and shared in the life of creation. And finally, quoting Kearney, our entire life from birth to death is always mediated by the manifestation of ourselves (the body) and only makes sense if we understand it. [52] The body is the bearer of the Word, victims of human trafficking with wounded bodies are the bearers of the Word of God who are also wounded, through the body the meanings manifest themselves to us where we are always called to respond. The body is the incarnation of the Word and therefore the body is a sacramental body. "*The body is the bearer of the Word through which the meaning reaches us and in which every possible call is answered"; but we can lose sight of this eloquence if we isolate the body and fail to appreciate it as the incarnation of the Word*".

Thus, in this framework, different possibilities of theological imagination to interpret the sacred are possible and appreciated through the subversive side of Christianity itself. This allows faith to be present in the public sphere, opening up space for understanding something that is considered sacred but is also completely incomprehensible. Transcendence turns out to be immanent: God is not at the highest level but is always present

48 "*To the philosophical triptych—suffering, birth, body—responds a theological triduum: passion, resurrection, Eucharist. By holding onto human unity, its radical assumption and transformation by the divine is revealed. Human experience and the mystery of God so closely overlap in the figure of the God-man, that any desire to separate them would bedeluded".*Emmanuel Falque, "This Is My Body: Contribution to a Philosophy of the Encharist," in *Carnal Hermeneutic*, I (Unitet States of America: Fordham University Press, n.d.), 280.

49 Ira D. Mangililo, "Imago Dei: Sebuah Upaya Membaca Alkitab Sebagai Perempuan Indonesia Dalam Konteks Perdagangan Orang di Nusa Tenggara Timur," *Indonesian Journal of Theology* 5, no. 2 (April 18, 2019): 76, https://doi.org/10.46567/ijt.v5i2.23.\\uc0\\u8221{} {\\i{}Indonesian Journal of Theology} 5, no. 2 (April 18, 2019

50 Littlejohn, *Imagination Now*, 8.

51 Septemmy E Lakawa, "Misiologi Luka: Mengimajinasikan Ulang Misi di Indonesia Masa Kini," in *Misiologi Kontemporer: Merentangkan Horison Panggilan Kristen*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019), 4–5.

52 Richard Kearney and Brian Treanor, "Introduction: Carnal Hermeneutics from Head to Foot," in Carnal Hermeneutic (Unitet States of America: Fordham University Press, 2015), 2.

in the whole world of human life. [53]

3.7 The Crucified Migrant: A Theological Construction of Migration of Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking in NTT

Following an exhaustive description and analysis, this section will establish a theological foundation for combating and preventing human trafficking, with a particular focus on the concept of "the crucified migrants." This term is employed to describe migrants who are victims of trafficking, exhibiting both physical and psychological trauma and suffering. In this context, the theology of migration demonstrates how the physical suffering and spiritual experiences of migrants can be interpreted in terms of theological solidarity.[54]

The concept of the "Crucified Migrants" presents an opportunity for engagement with the Indonesian public. This work is not intended to be a theoretical exercise devoid of practical applications. Rather, it is an invitation and a form of theological (church) solidarity with those who are victims of TPPO. The sense of security and tranquillity that an individual experiences is inextricably linked to their capacity to explore and ascertain meaning. This search for meaning is also related to and leads to a spiritual search that ultimately results in a belief in forces outside the self, including the divine. For some individuals, this search for meaning is a collective endeavour, while for others it is an individualistic pursuit, even in the context of profound suffering.[55]

As Carrie Doehring posits, the imagination of the divine can be influenced by the stress of suffering, and vice versa. Indeed, the imagination of the divine can influence a person when dealing with suffering. In her work on trauma and theology, Ejodia Kakoensi found that victims of human trafficking often choose to distance themselves from their previous social and religious communities. This is due to the traumatic experiences they have undergone, which have left them with fragmented religious identities and a tendency to isolate themselves.[56]

Nori, one of the female victims of sexual violence and human trafficking, experienced feelings of shame, disgust, and guilt. She felt ashamed to sit with friends and family, as if she did not deserve their company. She also felt that she was inferior to her abuser, as if he was better than she was. Nori attributes her experiences to divine retribution for her transgressions. Nori attributes this to divine intervention, given her lack of engagement with the Church and her perceived distance from God. Prior to this issue, Nori recalled her relationship with God as distant and detached. This is a lesson from God to ensure that Nori remains in His grace. [57]

Nori's experience of feelings of shame, disgust and guilt as a result of sexual violence and human trafficking is illustrative of the spiritual struggles often experienced by victims of forced migration. From the perspective of migration theology, these experiences are not merely about individual suffering, but also about the search for meaning and spiritual identity in the context of significant adversity. In Nori's case, she perceived the events she had experienced as divine retribution for her disobedience, which intensified her feelings of guilt and isolation. This is where migration theology offers a novel perspective, facilitating a more expansive and empathic understanding.

Cynthia Hess observes that doctrinal teachings such as sin and atonement, while designed to guide individuals towards a relationship with God, can intensify the emotional burden experienced by victims who have already endured significant trauma. [58] Theology Migration offers a more profound approach to the understanding of this suffering through the lens of anateism, as proposed by Kearney. Rather than reinforcing feelings of guilt and humiliation, anateism invites victims like Nori to find God as a neighbour who 'suffers together' in their migration experience. Anateism views God not as a judge who punishes, but as one who is present and feels their suffering.

53 Julia Kristeva, "Tragedy and a Dream: Disability Revisited," in *Carnal Hermeneutic*, I (Unitet States of America: Fordham University Press, 2015), 119.

54 "Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace: Christian Nonviolence and the Traumatized Self," *Choice Reviews Online* 47, no. 04 (December 1, 2009): 80, https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.47-1942.

55 "*One has to free one's self inwardly of everything, of all existing representations, of all slogans, of all comforts. One has to have the courage to let go of everything, of all standards and all conventional certainties. One has to dare taking the giant leap . . . then life will be endlessly overflowing, even amidst the deepest suffering".* Kearney, *Anatheism: Returnig To God After God*, 57.

56 Ejodia Kakoensi, "Trauma dan Teologi: Pendasaran Kristen Dalam Upaya Gereja Melakukan Pemulihan pada Penyintas Perdagangan Manusia dan Korban Kekerasan," in *Menolak Diam: Gereja Melawan Perdagangan Orang*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018), 262.

57 Rambu Anameri, "Derita yang Terus Berlanjut," in *Tuhan tak Berdagang: Perdagangan Orang, Trauma, dan Teologi di Nusa Tenggara Timur*, I (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020), 178.

58 Kakoensi, "Trauma dan Teologi: Pendasaran Kristen Dalam Upaya Gereja Melakukan Pemulihan pada Penyintas Perdagangan Manusia dan Korban Kekerasan," 263.

From the perspective of anateism, individuals who have experienced forced migration, such as Nori, can be encouraged to rethink their theological understanding, thereby enabling them to find meaning without feeling constrained by feelings of guilt or fear of divine rejection. Kearney emphasises that through anateism, God is present in the Stranger, thereby creating a space for victims to encounter God in their suffering, rather than as a punitive figure, but rather as a path to healing. This is consistent with Serene Jones' assertion that the objective of theology is to reframe what was previously unthinkable, namely locating the divine in the most vulnerable and marginalised contexts.

Consequently, within the context of theology migration, Nori's experience is no longer regarded as a "sin" that requires atonement, but rather as a sacred space where God resides in human vulnerability and suffering. Anateism, as an alternative meaning, offers Nori and other victims the opportunity to liberate themselves from oppressive doctrines and create space for the pursuit of restorative meaning. This is the foundation of a theological perspective that not only acknowledges the vulnerability of victims but also interprets their migration experience as an integral aspect of God's narrative of love and restoration, encompassing the entirety of human existence. [59]

In light of Nori's experience, the author puts forth a reading that employs the lens of anateism to envision and reframe constraining theological interpretations. By harnessing the power of imagination, victims can freely and courageously interpret their experiences without the fear of error. This enables a constructive process of theological development, whereby complex doctrinal concepts such as redemption become less central. This is because such concepts require reimagination, as they encompass the full spectrum of human existential questions.

Anateism posits the importance of hospitality, defined as an empathetic acceptance, which enables a new experience of divinity, the 'God after God'. In the context of the theology of migration and crucified migrants, hospitality is not merely an openness to strangers; rather, it is a commitment to embrace vulnerability, as evidenced by Nori's experience. In his writings, Leo Epafras characterises hospitality as a vulnerable act that can potentially give rise to hostility. Anateism, however, circumscribes this potential by emphasising the role of humour, commitment, and wisdom in moderating the impact of such actions. Hospitality thus serves as a conduit through which one may encounter a deity that is vulnerable, benevolent, and unified in its suffering. [60]

In Nori's experience, migration theology can be seen to interpret her suffering as an encounter with a pathos God, a God who not only understands but is also present in the pain and structural injustice experienced. In this context, the concept of Divine Pathos, as interpreted by Epaphras through the lens of Abraham Heschel, affirms that God is directly involved in human suffering, not as a judge, but as a friend who is also hurt and still loving.[61]

The context of transformative anateism emphasises that Nori's experience requires not only empathy and acceptance, but also a critique of the social structures that support human trafficking. Transformative anateism thus emphasises healing that is not only personal but also social. The Lakoat Kujawas community, for instance, is working to preserve local culture and strengthen education. Such efforts exemplify how anateism can transcend metaphysics and a focus on embodiment, turning into a collective effort to reimagine the social structures that enable human trafficking and other injustices.

The Lakoat Kujawas community initiative in Mollo provides an illustrative example of transformative action in practice. By preserving indigenous knowledge and strengthening community identity through the implementation of educational initiatives and the restoration of the local ecosystem, the Lakoat Kujawas address the social and economic root causes that create vulnerability to human trafficking. Transformative anateism thus represents a theological paradigm that not only provides a framework for understanding the meaning of social and spiritual issues, but also demands sustainable structural change for social, spiritual and environmental justice.

In the context of migration theology, the concept of "Crucified Migrants" represents the suffering of migrants who are victims of human trafficking as a form of modern crucifixion. In a similar manner to the crucified Christ, their bodies and wounds convey a meaning of suffering that extends beyond the boundaries of individual experience. They serve as emblems of structural injustices that oppress the vulnerable. From this perspective, the figure of the Crucified Migrant not only signifies physical and emotional suffering but also serves to highlight the spiritual dimension of the injustices experienced.

The theological theory of migration seeks to elevate the experience of migration victims as an embodiment of Christ's suffering in the modern world. This suffering becomes a call for solidarity for the whole community,

59 Kolimon, "Kerentanan dan Luka, Perlawanan dan Penyembuhan: Refleksi Teologis tentang Perdagangan Orang di Wilayah Pelayanan Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)," 18.

60 Leonard C. Epafras, *Corona VS Kon Ora: Refleksi Teologi Keramahan Dalam Konteks Pandemi* (Yogyakarta: CV. Alaf Media, n.d.), 10–11.

61 Epafras, 13–14.

especially the Church. The Church is called upon not only to bear witness to the suffering of migrant victims of human trafficking, but also to play an active role in accompanying, understanding and demonstrating profound love towards those who are suffering. In this context, the concept of Crucified Migrants encourages the Church to move beyond a static theological understanding and assume a proactive stance that encompasses responsibility for social justice.

In alignment with the anateistic theory, which underscores the significance of comprehensive acceptance of the victim's experience as a constituent element of the quest for meaning in suffering, Crucified Migrants calls upon the Church to not only witness the affliction of victims but also to rethink the theological interpretation of suffering. This is an invitation to conceptualise suffering as a form of divine solidarity with those who have suffered harm, such that the experiences of victims of TPPO are no longer regarded in isolation, but rather as a reflection of a societal problem that requires collective action to prevent and resist TPPO.

The concept of Crucified Migrants invites the church and the public to adopt a more active role in combating human trafficking. It encourages them to express solidarity with victims, advocate for their rights, and foster empathy for the victims' experiences, which can be seen as a collective wound that demands attention and action from all levels of society.

4. Conclusion

The problem of human trafficking in the NTT is a common problem for all levels of society and the Church, and therefore the Church and Christianity must play a role. The efforts of the church, especially GMIT. For example, as mentioned earlier, trafficking is not only related to the individual problems of someone who wants to migrate to find work and a better life, but it is also a problem of the social structure that forces someone to make a choice to work as a migrant worker.

Thus, imagining and reimagining the theological meaning of the body, wounds, and trauma on the basis of Kearney's anatheism can be an alternative theological basis for efforts to combat human trafficking and, at the same time, a new hermeneutic alternative in interpreting the existential phenomenon of human life. The author hopes that this article will contribute to theological reflection on the existential phenomenon of human life, that the bodies of the victims are the bodies of God, who also suffers in the fragility and suffering experienced, and that in such cases the selves of the victims and of God are restored together through the hope of a better life.

The author hopes that this article can contribute to the theological-philosophical discourse on migration, human trafficking, and suffering, and provide deeper reflections. In more depth, the ideas contained in this article are one of the foundations of the many efforts to combat the crime of human trafficking. The theological ideas and arguments contained are expected to be an important responsibility to stand with those who are marginalized.

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