



Music Variations as Alternative Media in Providing Light Indonesian Pentecostal Church, Banana Garden Assembly, Medan

Hendrik L Simanjuntak¹, Zk Pangaribuan², Hasiando Sihombing³, Swilly Pakpahan⁴, Bertin Pangapuli Sakoikoi⁵, Saud Kiki Pandiangan⁶, Rio Siburian⁷
^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan, Indonesia

Abstract *In Christianity there are various sects with diverse dogmas. When Christianity entered the Pematangsiantar area, various churches with different sect backgrounds grew and developed, such as the Catholic Church, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS), Indonesian Christian Church (GKI), Indonesian Bethel Church (GBI), Indonesian Pentecostal Church (GPI), and others (Aritonang, 2008)*

Keyword : Music, Alternative Media, Accompaniment

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of the Indonesian Pentecostal Church cannot be separated from the history of its founder, namely Pastor (Reverend) Evangelis Rhenatus Siburian . Pastor Siburian is the only pioneer of the Pentecostal movement who is the most successful and the first in the Tapanuli area . North in particular and then North Sumatra . His struggle to spread the gospel from just a Bible School graduate who testified from house to house, from village to village was blessed by God to hundreds of thousands of people who had been saved and dozens of independent Holy Spirit church organizations in North Sumatra (Sumartana, 1994)

Music is the appreciation of the human heart expressed in the form of regular sounds with melody or rhythm and has beautiful harmony. The term music itself comes from the Greek word Musike (derived from the words muse-muse, namely the Nine Greek gods under the god Apollo who protect art and science). In its methodology, it means a beauty that is manifested as talent (Widhyatama, 2012, p. 1)

Music the church is a the type of music that develop among Christians, especially seen from its use in church services . A church music figure . Mawene, in his book The Church That Sings, defines singing as part of church music which is the mainstay of church liturgy (Mawene, The Church That Sings; Yogyakarta - ANDI Publisher, 2004, p. 42). Meanwhile, Winardo Saragih stated that music is an expression of the heart's contents expressed in the form of sounds that are tonal and rhythmic, especially in the form of songs and chants (ANDI, 2008, p. 89)

Music in the Old Testament is rooted in the life of the Jewish people. One of the interesting things is the message of salvation that was first proclaimed in their midst. The history of the Jewish family shows a high civilization, which was later associated with one of

Israel's greatest heroes , King David. The early Christians greatly respected Jewish customs and held in high regard the holy books and the roots of their faith (Wilson-Dickson, 1996, p. 16)

In church history, the involvement of music in achieving church growth has a very important meaning. There are several figures who consider music to be very important, especially during the reformation, namely: Martin Luther, Johannes Calvin. Charles Wesley, and John Wesley. For Martin Luther, music is one of the means of communicating the Word of God. Luther wanted Christians to truly feel the presence of God in their worship and take part in praise as a means of worship. Martin Luther in his doctrinal reforms stated that music is considered a beautiful and friendly gift from God, to be encouraged with good things in the Church and at home, so that people can be happy and religious (Sunarto, 2021:9)

Along with the development of the times and rapid social changes, the taste of music among church congregations, especially the younger generation, has also changed. In many GPI churches, there is a need to update or adjust the type of music in worship to better touch the hearts of various congregations without reducing the spiritual values contained therein. One solution is to apply musical variations as an alternative to accompany church services (Svani, AF 2023)

In the context of music, thorough preparation is very important and should not be done carelessly. According to Wijoyo in his journal, music in worship serves to prepare the hearts of the congregation to be able to enter the presence of God. In addition, music also plays a role as an accompaniment that delivers the word of God, both through song lyrics and before the sermon is delivered. More than that, songs can also be a means of healing and release for the congregation (Kesowo Wijoyo, 2014, pp. 6–7).

GPI Kebun Pisang Medan is a church that has been established since 1986 in Medan City, North Sumatra. This church has become a place of fellowship for Christians in the Kebun Pisang area and its surroundings, and is active in spiritual and social services. The history of this church covers a long journey from its founding to its function in shaping the spiritual and social life of the people in Medan City. GPI Kebun Pisang Medan was founded by a group of Christians. where at that time the land was donated to the Church by a Sihite clan.

The use of musical variations in the GPI church is not without challenges, some challenges that may arise include the difficulty in combining various musical genres while maintaining the sanctity of worship, the tendency to overemphasize entertainment compared to spiritual goals, and the selection of music that is appropriate to the context of the church's liturgy. Therefore, the application of musical variations requires a careful approach , where

musicians and worship leaders must be wise in choosing music that is not only interesting, but also enriches the spiritual experience of the congregation.

Based on this background, this researcher aims to explore more deeply how musical variations can be applied as an alternative media in providing accompaniment to the GPI Kebun pisang Medan church.

Problem Formulation

1. How is the application of musical variations as an alternative media in providing accompaniment to GPI Kebun Pisang church worship?
2. What challenges does the GPI Kebun Banana Church face in implementing musical variations as an alternative medium in worship?

Objectives

1. Identifying the types of musical variations used in worship accompaniment at the GPI Kebun Pisang church
2. Analyzing the influence of musical variations on the worship atmosphere at the GPI Kebun Pisang church
3. Assessing the influence of musical variation on the spiritual experience of church congregations
4. Exploring the challenges faced in implementing musical variations at the GPI Kebun Pisang church
5. Providing recommendations for optimizing musical variations in GPI Kebun Pisang church services

Benefits

1. Increasing congregational involvement in worship
2. Creating a more dynamic and solemn atmosphere of worship
3. Deepening the spiritual experience of the congregation
4. Improving Accessibility and Relevance of Worship
5. Respecting Tradition while embracing innovation
6. Increasing Creativity and Collaboration in Worship Services
7. Cultivate a sense of togetherness in worship h.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the GPI Kebun Pisang Church

GPI, a church organization with an Indonesian identity, began to form around the middle of the 20th century. Several Protestant churches in Indonesia at that time began to have

church organizations that were more independent and relevant to the social, cultural and spiritual conditions of Indonesian society. GPI Kebun Pisang Medan is a church that has been established since 1986 in Medan City, North Sumatra. This church has become a place of fellowship for Christians in the Kebun Pisang area and its surroundings, and is active in spiritual and social services. The history of this church covers a long journey from its founding to its function in shaping the spiritual and social life of the people in Medan City.

GPI Kebun Pisang Medan was founded by a group of Christians. At that time the land was donated to the Church by a Sihite clan. So the first founder of GPI Kebun Pisang was Baktiar Siburian, Mr. D Sihite (who owned the land at that time) and another Pangaribuan clan. These are the founders of GPI Kebun Pisang Medan. After it was established, Mr. Sihite was appointed as a sintua, and Mr. Sihite was the first leader to be written in GPI Kebun Pisang. Several years later the leader of the meeting was appointed as Mr. Baktiar Siburian at that time he had become a gospel teacher, but finally Mr. Baktiar Siburian had become a Pastor, Mr. Sihite was the last to become a gospel teacher and Mr. Pangaribuan had also become a gospel teacher until he died. So Sintua Sihite was the first leader (who owned the land). And the second was Rev. B Siburian, after Rev. Siburian died. And the third was Rev. Hb Manurung after Rev. Hb Manurung died, then Rev. Pasaribu until now.

Since its founding, GPI Kebun Pisang Medan has experienced significant development. The congregation, which initially consisted of only a few families, has grown rapidly into a larger community. This church not only holds regular worship services, but also various activities such as Sunday school, youth services, and other social programs. Despite facing challenges in the form of limited facilities and funds, this church remains committed to serving the congregation and the surrounding community with love. In addition to being a place of worship, GPI Kebun Pisang Medan is also active in social services. This church pays special attention to the poor and underprivileged through social assistance, education, and health programs.

From a small church founded with passion and vision to serve, GPI Kebun Pisang Medan has now become a large and influential church in Medan City. In this long journey, the Church has shown its commitment in building the faith of the congregation and providing great social contributions. With a spirit that continues to burn, GPI Kebun Pisang hopes to continue to serve the LORD and the community with love and be a light for many people in the future.

Definition of Music

According to Jamalus, as quoted by Andaryani, music is a work that reflects the thoughts and feelings of its creator through various elements, such as rhythm, melody, harmony, song

structure, and expression that are united in one unit (Andaryani, 2019, p. 110). Andaryani also added that music was born from the creator's desire to express ideas through words and sound compositions that describe his inner feelings (Andaryani, 2019, p. 110). Based on this view, it can be concluded that music is not just sound, but an art form that has beauty and can be enjoyed and experienced. Music can be produced through instruments such as piano and guitar, with only vocals, or a combination of both to create richer harmony.

Church Music

music is music that develops in the church for Christians and for the sake of worship (Sitepu, 2017:1). Music in worship is no longer a strange thing, especially for Christians. Music in worship is an important and integral part of the liturgy, so music is used and exists for liturgical celebrations. Music in the form of liturgy is also not just a decoration where it only functions to beautify the worship carried out in the church (Martasudjita, 2011:195).

According to Miller (in Ganap, 2014:2) Church music was originally a plain song using a single-voice melody. The songs of praise in worship were chosen according to the theme or topic of the sermon (Manurung, 2014:6). According to Riemer (in Batubara and Kamaluddin galinggung, 2019:2) Congregational singing is a liturgical part of the worship process in the church.

The growth of church music in Christianity from time to time continues to grow from its use and structure. Initially, music was used in the Orthodox and Catholic Churches only. Then during the Protestant era, it grew, until the musical tradition in Europe especially in the form of a choir which is based on harmony, is growing rapidly. In the Protestant Church, elements of European music also appeared in theory and practice. This is also the case in the Charismatic and Pentecostal sects, which are "trend setters" with their contemporary worship (Tumanan, 2015, p. 36)

Music Variations

Musical variation is a technique in musical composition where a basic theme or melody is changed in various ways to create different variations while still maintaining the essence of the original theme. Variations can occur in various aspects of music, such as:

1. Melody – Change the pitch, rhythm, or ornamentation of the original melody.
2. Harmony – Adjusting chords or harmonic progressions to give a new feel.
3. Rhythm – Modifying rhythmic patterns to create differences in dynamics and musical character.
4. Instrument – Change the instrument playing the melody or harmony to give a different sound color.

5. Dynamics and Tempo – Using changes in volume or speed to create contrast.

Musical variations are often used in various genres, including classical, jazz, pop, and traditional music. In classical music, for example, variations are often found in the form of "Theme and Variations", such as *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* by Brahms or *Goldberg Variations* by Bach (Douglas M, 1979)

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method by taking sources, analyzing data and writing. The qualitative method is a method that is carried out by collecting information by interpreting and explaining the meaning of non-numerical forms of information. Then the data will be further studied with a musical approach and an ethnomusicological approach. The data that has been collected will be collected and described which are mutually supportive. The stages carried out in the complete research are as follows:

Source Collection Stage

Before collecting sources, identification of the objectives and focus of the research was also carried out, so that the search for sources could be relevant. Continued with the collection of sources carried out, namely looking for reading references obtained from books and journals. Furthermore , we continued to conduct interviews with several sources. After collecting sources, recording and making a summary containing relevant arguments were carried out.

Data Analysis

At the data analysis stage, identification and solutions for data quality will be carried out. Then the data is also organized so that it is easy to understand. Furthermore, it is carried out qualitatively by means of analysis. With qualitative testing, data validity tests are also carried out to consider the criteria and validity of the data. After the analysis is carried out, it will be interpreted and reconnected with the research questions. Furthermore, the findings and evaluation of the analysis and interpretation methods are compiled for assurance.

Writing (Historiography)

After obtaining valid and relevant data, we then enter the stage of compiling and writing based on the results of the author's analysis. Writing is done by understanding and writing history and the development of the topic with written sources and documentation. From this writing also requires primary sources with interview methods. After writing is also needed reflection and openness to understanding that continues to develop .

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Influence of Music in Worship at the GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang Medan

Music plays an important role in worship at the Indonesian Pentecostal Church (GPI) Sidang Kebun Pisang Medan. Music is not only a means of praise and worship, but also creates a more solemn and profound atmosphere. The congregation feels the presence of the Holy Spirit more clearly through the music that accompanies their worship, both in enthusiastic praise songs and in more reflective worship. The use of various musical instruments such as keyboards, guitars, drums, and basses also enrich the dynamics of worship.

The results of observations and interviews show that music has a significant impact on the congregation, including increasing solemnity in worship, strengthening congregational involvement, and providing a deeper spiritual experience. Although there are challenges such as differences in music preferences and the need for training for the music team, the use of good and appropriate music can further enrich the worship experience of the congregation in this church.

In addition, music also plays a role in creating unity and togetherness among the congregation. By singing the same songs, the congregation feels more connected to each other and experiences worship as a solid community. This strengthens the sense of family in the church and helps create an environment that supports the growth of faith.

The use of music in worship can also be an effective means of evangelism. Heartfelt spiritual songs can attract new people to the church, give them a memorable spiritual experience, and help them on their spiritual journey. Therefore, it is important for the church to continue to develop its music ministry so that it can reach and bless more people.

Musical Variations in Worship at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang

In GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang worship, the variety of music in worship plays an important role in strengthening the spiritual experience of the congregation. The music used combines traditional and modern elements, reflecting the cultural diversity of the congregation. Musical instruments such as guitars, keyboards, and drums are often used together with traditional instruments, such as angklung or gamelan, in some services. Hymns are carefully selected to create a solemn atmosphere of worship, where the congregation can actively participate by singing together or listening to the choir. Music not only functions as an accompaniment to prayer, but also as a means to deepen spiritual teaching and enhance the spirituality of the congregation.

Over time, there has been a shift in the variety of worship music at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang, from more conservative to more modern, following the times and the preferences of

the congregation. The selection of songs with spiritual themes that emphasize messages of love, forgiveness, and hope has become increasingly common. In addition, the variety in song types—from traditional church songs to contemporary spiritual songs—reflects the church's efforts to reach out to people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Thus, the music in worship at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang not only serves as an accompaniment to the event, but also as a medium that unites the congregation in worship and deepens their relationship with God.

In an interview with the GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang Church Leader, he explained that the variety of music in church services is very much considered to create an inclusive and relevant atmosphere for all congregations. According to him, the use of traditional and modern music is a way to accommodate the various generations and cultural backgrounds of the congregation. "We want the music to touch everyone's hearts, both older and younger. We see that music is a bridge that connects the congregation with spiritual messages," he said. The church leader also added that the songs chosen usually have strong and profound lyrics, to ensure that the message conveyed through the music remains consistent with the values of the faith taught.

Furthermore, he also highlighted the importance of congregational participation in worship through music. "We don't just want the congregation to be spectators, but we want them to actively participate in every service," he said. To that end, the church often holds choir practice and involves the congregation in compiling the worship song list. The church leader explained that this helps build a sense of togetherness and a deeper spiritual connection among the congregation. He also emphasized that this musical variation serves not only to enhance spirituality, but also to keep the service fresh and relevant to the times.

GPI Congregation's Response to the Use of Worship in Kebun Pisang

The response of the GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang congregation to the use of music in worship tends to be positive, with many members feeling that music plays an important role in deepening their spiritual experience. For some members, music is an element that brings them closer to God, helping them feel His presence more intensely. Most of them, especially the younger generation, appreciate the variety of music that involves modern and traditional genres, because they feel this creates a more dynamic atmosphere and is relevant to their daily lives. This is reflected in their active participation during worship, both in singing together and in participating in other musical activities.

However, there are also some more traditional congregations who feel more comfortable with more classic and simple worship music. They expressed that although modern music provides new energy, sometimes they feel more solemn with calmer and slower church

songs. Even so, they still appreciate the church's efforts in combining various musical elements to achieve a balance between tradition and innovation. Overall, the congregation at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang expressed gratitude and support for the variety of music in worship, seeing it as an important part of worshipping God together.

In an interview with one of the congregation members, Mr. Hendra, who has been worshipping at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang for a long time, he expressed his opinion about the use of musical variations in worship.

"I feel that music really helps me to be more focused in worship. Modern songs that are often played give me encouragement, while traditional songs bring more calm. These two types of music complement each other and make worship feel more alive," said Mr. Hendra.

He also expressed that the music chosen for worship is able to reach all generations, and he feels more connected to God through the diversity of music in the church.

"As an older person, I still feel appreciated that the church continues to carry more classical songs, while young people can also enjoy contemporary music," he added.

Meanwhile, Mother Maria, a younger member of the congregation, expressed a similar opinion.

"For me, music is an inseparable part of worship. Modern music, with lyrics that are relevant to our lives, really motivates me to experience worship more. I feel that the church is very sensitive to the needs of the congregation of various ages," said Mrs. Maria.

He added that the congregation's participation in singing together made him feel more involved in the service.

"I love being able to sing along with friends and feel that music is not just entertainment, but also a way to unite us in the spirit of worship," he added.

From this interview, it is clear that despite differences in age and preference, the use of musical variations in worship at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang is well received by the congregation, as it can fulfill their spiritual needs holistically.

Challenges Faced by GPI Kebun Pi Sang Church in Implementing Music Variations

In an interview with Anugrah Siburian, a musician at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang, he revealed that one of the challenges faced by the church in implementing musical variations in worship is in terms of musical tastes between young and old congregants.

"We are often faced with differences in music preferences between the younger and older generations. Young people usually prefer more energetic contemporary music, while older people tend to prefer calmer and more classical traditional songs. Our main challenge is to find

a balance so that all members of the congregation feel involved and can enjoy the music presented," said Anugrah.

Therefore, song selection often involves compromise, where the church tries to combine both musical genres in order to reach the hearts of all age groups.

In addition, Anugrah also added that differences in musical tastes between young and old people affect how they participate in worship.

"Younger people may be more enthusiastic about songs that are more modern and have a fast rhythm, while older people may feel more connected to songs that are slower and more contemplative," he said.

This challenge requires the church to be creative in designing music programs that can accommodate both groups, so that worship remains relevant and unites the entire congregation. Nevertheless, the church remains committed to finding ways for musical variations to be well received by all generations in the congregation.

5. CONCLUSION

The variety of music in worship at GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang plays a very important role in enriching the spiritual experience of the congregation. By combining traditional and modern music, the church is able to reach various age groups and cultural backgrounds of its congregation. Music not only serves as an accompaniment to prayer and praise, but also as a means to deepen the congregation's spiritual relationship with God. The active participation of the congregation, both in singing together and in playing music, shows that music is an important element in a lively and meaningful worship.

However, the biggest challenge facing the church is the difference in musical taste between the younger and older congregations. The younger generation prefers contemporary music that is energetic and modern, while the older generation tends to enjoy more calm and nuanced traditional songs. This difference makes it a challenge to choose songs that are acceptable to both age groups, without anyone feeling marginalized. The church must continue to strive to find a balance so that both groups can enjoy worship that is relevant to their musical tastes.

Although the challenges are not easy, the GPI Sidang Kebun Pisang church remains committed to developing musical variations in worship. By involving all levels of the congregation in the selection and presentation of music, the church strives to create an inclusive and unifying worship atmosphere. In this case, music functions not only as a means of worship, but also as a link between generations. The church continues to innovate to ensure that the

music chosen can inspire and deepen the spiritual experience of the congregation, while maintaining the depth of the church's traditions.

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