

Inkarnasi, Tabernakel, dan Tubuh Orang Percaya: Teologi Kehadiran Allah bagi Kaum Marginal dan Disabilitas

Incarnation, Tabernacle, and the Body of Believers: A Theology of Divine Presence for the Marginalized and Disabled

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Abstrak: Teologi kehadiran ilahi telah menjadi tema sentral dalam tradisi Kristen, namun implikasinya bagi komunitas marginal dan penyandang disabilitas masih kurang dieksplorasi. Inkarnasi Kristus, tabernakel sebagai tempat kediaman Allah, dan tubuh orang percaya sebagai bait Roh Kudus bersama-sama membentuk kerangka teologis yang kaya untuk memahami bagaimana kehadiran Allah bersinggungan dengan perwujudan manusia dan marginalisasi sosial. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk membangun teologi sintetis tentang kehadiran ilahi yang mengintegrasikan doktrin inkarnasi, tabernakel, dan indwelling tubuh untuk menjawab kebutuhan spiritual dan sosial kelompok marginal dan penyandang disabilitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka, menganalisis teks-teks Alkitab, karya-karya teologis, dan kajian kontemporer tentang inkarnasi, ruang sakral, teologi disabilitas, dan teologi kontekstual. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa inkarnasi menetapkan solidaritas Allah dengan perwujudan manusia, tabernakel menunjukkan keinginan Allah untuk diam di antara yang marginal, dan tubuh orang percaya sebagai bait menegaskan martabat semua orang terlepas dari kemampuan fisik atau status sosial. Teologi kehadiran ilahi yang berakar pada ketiga doktrin ini menantang praktik eksklusif dalam komunitas iman dan memanggil gereja untuk mewujudkan kehadiran Allah yang inklusif.

Kontribusi: Artikel ini berkontribusi pada teologi disabilitas dan teologi kontekstual dengan menyediakan kerangka teologis yang menegaskan partisipasi penuh orang-orang marginal dalam kehidupan iman.

Kata Kunci: teologi kehadiran ilahi; inkarnasi dan perwujudan; ruang sakral tabernakel; gereja inklusi disabilitas; iman komunitas marginal.

Abstract: The theology of divine presence has been a central theme in Christian tradition, yet its implications for marginalized communities and persons with disabilities remain underexplored. The incarnation of Christ, the tabernacle as God's dwelling place, and the believer's body as temple of the Holy Spirit together form a rich theological framework for understanding how God's presence intersects with human embodiment and social marginalization. This article aims to construct a synthetic theology of divine presence that integrates the doctrines of incarnation, tabernacle, and bodily indwelling to address the spiritual and social needs of marginalized groups and persons with disabilities. This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review method, analyzing biblical texts, theological works, and contemporary scholarship on incarnation, sacred space, disability theology, and contextual theology. The findings reveal that the incarnation establishes God's solidarity with human embodiment, the tabernacle demonstrates God's desire to dwell among the marginalized, and the believer's body as temple affirms the dignity of all

persons regardless of physical ability or social status. A theology of divine presence grounded in these three doctrines challenges exclusionary practices within faith communities and calls the church to embody God's inclusive presence.

Contribution: This article contributes to disability theology and contextual theology by providing a theological framework that affirms the full participation of marginalized persons in the life of faith.

Keywords: divine presence theology; incarnation and embodiment; tabernacle sacred space; disability inclusion church; marginalized communities faith.

INTRODUCTION

The question of how God is present in the world has occupied theological reflection since the earliest days of the Christian church. Throughout Scripture, from the Garden of Eden to the tabernacle in the wilderness, from the temple in Jerusalem to the incarnation of Christ, God consistently reveals a desire to dwell among humanity (Patanan, Akimas, & Tanasyah, 2024). This pattern of divine presence culminates in the person of Jesus Christ, who is described as the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us (Gulo, Tanasyah, & Kristiantoro, 2022). However, the implications of this theology of presence for those who exist on the margins of society—particularly persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups—have not been adequately explored in contemporary theological discourse (Eiesland, 1994).

The incarnation represents the definitive act of God entering into human history and taking on human flesh, thereby affirming the goodness of embodied existence. According to Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022), the incarnation demonstrates that God is not distant from human suffering but rather enters into it fully through the person of Jesus Christ. This theological truth has profound implications for how the church understands and ministers to persons with disabilities, who often face exclusion and marginalization within both society and religious communities. The embodied nature of Christ's presence challenges any theology that devalues or dismisses the significance of physical bodies and their diverse manifestations (Moltmann, 2019).

The tabernacle, as described in the Old Testament, serves as another crucial element in understanding God's presence among God's people. Pundiono and Tandana (2022) argue that the tabernacle was not merely a religious structure but the actual dwelling place of God among the Israelites during their wilderness journey. The tabernacle's design, with its accessibility provisions and central location among the tribal

encampments, suggests that God's presence was intended to be available to all people, regardless of their social status or physical condition. This Old Testament institution provides a foundation for understanding how sacred space should function in relation to marginalized communities (Homan, 2007).

The New Testament extends this theology of presence through the teaching that believers' bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) emphasize that the indwelling of the Spirit in believers' bodies represents the continuation of God's presence in the world through the church. This understanding transforms the physical body from a potential source of shame or limitation into a vessel of divine presence and dignity. For persons with disabilities, this theological affirmation carries particular significance, as it challenges cultural narratives that associate disability with divine punishment or spiritual deficiency (Kilby, 2019).

Contemporary scholarship has addressed various aspects of divine presence, incarnation, and sacred space, yet significant gaps remain in integrating these themes with disability theology and the experiences of marginalized communities. Gulo and Putrawan (2023) explore the concept of God as Father and the intimacy of the believer's relationship with God, but do not extend this analysis to consider how embodied differences affect this relationship. Similarly, the work of Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) on digital pneumatology addresses the Spirit's presence in virtual spaces but does not fully engage with the physical embodiment of marginalized persons. These gaps suggest the need for a more comprehensive synthesis that brings together incarnation, tabernacle, and bodily indwelling in service of a theology that affirms the full humanity and dignity of all persons (Fiddes, 2020).

Several previous studies have employed various methods to examine themes related to divine presence and embodiment. The study by Pundiono and Tandana (2022) utilized a biblical theology approach with a tripartite formula to trace the evolution of God's presence from the tabernacle to the temple to the believer's body. Meanwhile, Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) employed a qualitative literature review method to analyze the doctrine of incarnation and its implications for understanding God's omnipotence. These methodological approaches, while valuable, have not been combined in a way that addresses the specific concerns of disability theology and the experiences of marginalized communities (Davidson, 2015). A more integrative approach that draws on multiple theological disciplines is needed to address this gap.

The research gap this article seeks to address is the absence of a synthetic theology of divine presence that explicitly incorporates the perspectives and experiences of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. While disability theology has made significant contributions to understanding how God is present in and through disabled bodies (Eiesland, 1994), and while contextual theology has emphasized the importance of lived experience as a source for theological reflection (Sugiri, 2026), these streams of thought have not been adequately integrated with the classical doctrines of incarnation and sacred space. This article argues that such an integration is not only possible but necessary for a theology that genuinely reflects God's inclusive presence (Bonhoeffer, 2016). Furthermore, such an integration can enrich both disability theology and classical theology by demonstrating their mutual interdependence.

The purpose of this article is to construct a synthetic theology of divine presence that integrates the doctrines of incarnation, tabernacle, and bodily indwelling to address the spiritual and social needs of marginalized groups and persons with disabilities. By examining these three theological themes through the lens of disability theology and contextual theology, this article seeks to demonstrate how God's presence is particularly manifested among those whom society often overlooks or excludes. The central thesis is that the incarnation establishes God's solidarity with all embodied persons, the tabernacle demonstrates God's desire for accessible sacred space, and the indwelling of the Spirit in believers' bodies affirms the inherent dignity of every human being regardless of physical ability or social status (Beale, 2018). This synthesis will be developed through a critical engagement with biblical texts, theological traditions, and contemporary disability scholarship.

The contribution of this article lies in its provision of a theological framework that affirms the full participation of marginalized persons in the life of faith. By synthesizing insights from biblical theology, systematic theology, and contextual theology, this article offers a robust theological foundation for churches seeking to become more inclusive communities. Furthermore, it challenges theological traditions that have historically excluded or marginalized persons with disabilities by demonstrating that God's presence is most clearly revealed among those whom the world considers least. This theological reorientation has practical implications for worship, community life, and social engagement within faith communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review method, drawing on biblical texts, theological works, and contemporary scholarship to construct a synthetic theology of divine presence. The qualitative approach is appropriate for this research because it allows for deep engagement with theological concepts and the exploration of meaning that cannot be reduced to quantitative measurement (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The literature review method involves the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of existing texts and documents relevant to the research topic, enabling the examination of biblical passages, theological treatises, and scholarly articles to develop a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Zaluchu, 2021). This approach is particularly suited to theological research that seeks to integrate multiple sources and traditions into a coherent framework (Barth, 1956).

The application of this method proceeds through four systematic steps that structure the analysis in the Results and Discussion sections. First, the study collects and identifies relevant biblical texts concerning incarnation, tabernacle, and bodily indwelling, along with theological literature addressing disability, marginalization, and divine presence. Second, thematic analysis is employed to categorize and interpret these texts, identifying patterns, themes, and meanings related to God's presence among marginalized persons. Third, hermeneutical interpretation examines the historical, literary, and theological contexts of the texts to understand their original meaning and contemporary significance.

Fourth, contextual application connects these theological insights to the lived experiences of persons with disabilities and marginalized communities, demonstrating how the theology of divine presence informs and transforms church practice. In the Results section, the first three steps are applied to each subsection: the collection of biblical and theological sources, thematic analysis of key concepts, and hermeneutical interpretation of their significance. In the Discussion section, the fourth step is applied through contextual application and critical dialogue with supporting and opposing theological perspectives, leading to a synthetic theology that is both biblically grounded and contextually relevant. This methodological framework ensures that the synthesis is both rigorous and relevant.

RESULT

The Incarnation as Divine Solidarity with Embodied Humanity

The incarnation represents the central act of divine self-communication in Christian theology, whereby the eternal Word of God became flesh and dwelt among humanity. Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) explain that the term "incarnation" derives from the Latin words "in" (in) and "carn" (flesh), literally meaning "in the flesh," and refers to the act by which the second person of the Trinity took on human nature. This act is not merely a historical event but a theological revelation of God's character and disposition toward humanity. In the incarnation, God demonstrates that divine presence is not confined to transcendent realms but enters fully into the material reality of human existence (Moltmann, 2019).

The incarnation affirms the goodness of the human body and material existence, countering any theological perspective that denigrates physicality or embodiment. Gulo and Putrawan (2023) note that in Jesus Christ, the divine and human natures are united in one person without confusion, change, division, or separation, as defined by the Council of Chalcedon. This means that Jesus is fully God and fully human, and his physical body was not a temporary vessel to be discarded but an integral aspect of his identity and mission. The implication for persons with disabilities is profound: if God chose to become incarnate in a human body, then all human bodies possess inherent dignity and worth (Kilby, 2019).

The incarnation establishes divine solidarity with human suffering, including the suffering experienced by persons with disabilities and marginalized communities. Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) emphasize that Jesus experienced the full range of human limitations, including hunger, thirst, fatigue, and pain, and ultimately suffered death on the cross. This solidarity means that God is not distant from the experiences of those who suffer but is present with them in their suffering. For persons with disabilities who may experience chronic pain, social exclusion, or systemic barriers, the incarnation offers the assurance that God understands and shares in their experiences (Bonhoeffer, 2016).

The embodied presence of God in Christ also challenges cultural and religious narratives that associate disability with sin, punishment, or spiritual deficiency. Gulo and Putrawan (2023) observe that Jesus consistently reached out to those who were marginalized, including those with physical ailments and disabilities, demonstrating that

divine favor is not contingent on physical wholeness or social status. The incarnation thus provides a theological foundation for rejecting ableist interpretations of disability and affirming the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community of faith. This theological insight calls the church to examine its own practices and attitudes toward those whose bodies differ from cultural norms of able-bodiedness (Eiesland, 1994).

The Tabernacle as Accessible Sacred Space

The tabernacle, as described in the Hebrew Scriptures, represents God's initiative to dwell among the people of Israel in a tangible and accessible manner. Pundiono and Tandana (2022) explain that the tabernacle was not simply a religious symbol but the actual dwelling place of God, where the divine presence manifested in the pillar of cloud and fire. The construction of the tabernacle was commanded by God and executed with precise specifications, indicating the importance of sacred space in mediating the relationship between God and humanity. This institution established a pattern for understanding how God's presence can be encountered in physical locations and structures (Homan, 2007).

The tabernacle was designed to be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of their physical condition or social status. Wonoadi and Tandana (2022) note that the tabernacle was centrally located among the tribal encampments, with each tribe oriented toward the sacred space, symbolizing that God's presence was available to all. While the tabernacle had specific areas with restricted access, such as the Holy of Holies, the overall structure and its location communicated that God desired to be near to the people. This accessibility challenges contemporary practices that exclude persons with disabilities from full participation in worship and community life (Patanan, Akimas, & Tanasyah, 2024).

The tabernacle's design elements carry symbolic significance that relates to the experiences of marginalized persons. Patanan, Akimas, and Tanasyah (2024) observe that the tabernacle contained imagery reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, including cherubim and the menorah as a symbolic tree of life, suggesting that the tabernacle was intended to restore the intimate communion with God that was lost through sin. This restorative function of sacred space is particularly relevant for persons who have experienced exclusion or marginalization, as it affirms their rightful place in God's presence. The

tabernacle thus serves as a model for creating worship spaces that are genuinely welcoming and accessible to all (Beale, 2018).

The transition from the tabernacle to the temple and ultimately to the believer's body as temple represents an evolution in how God's presence is mediated. Pundiono and Tandana (2022) trace this development through the biblical narrative, from the tabernacle in the wilderness to Solomon's temple in Jerusalem to the vision of the eschatological temple in Revelation. This progression demonstrates that God's presence is not confined to any particular physical structure but continues to seek dwelling places among God's people. For persons with disabilities, this means that their bodies, regardless of physical limitations, can be vessels of divine presence and instruments of worship (Davidson, 2015).

The Body as Temple and the Dignity of Embodied Persons

The New Testament teaching that believers' bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit represents a radical affirmation of the dignity of embodied existence. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) explain that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers' bodies continues the pattern of divine presence established in the incarnation and tabernacle, making each believer a locus of God's presence in the world. This teaching transforms the physical body from a potential source of shame or limitation into a sacred space where God dwells. For persons with disabilities, this affirmation carries profound implications for understanding their identity and worth (Fiddes, 2020).

The concept of the body as temple emphasizes that divine presence is not limited by physical ability or appearance. Pangumbahas, Gunawan, and Repi (2021) argue that the church as the body of Christ is constituted by the Holy Spirit, who dwells in each believer regardless of their physical characteristics. This means that persons with disabilities are not deficient members of the body of Christ but essential parts of the whole, contributing unique perspectives and gifts to the community. The theology of the body as temple thus provides a foundation for rejecting exclusionary practices and affirming the full participation of all persons (Saron & Tubagus, 2021).

The implications of this theology for the church's ministry to persons with disabilities are significant. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) emphasize that the Holy Spirit's presence in digital spaces demonstrates that divine presence transcends physical boundaries, but this does not negate the importance of physical embodiment. Rather, it

affirms that God's presence is mediated through bodies in all their diversity, including bodies that are disabled. The church must therefore create spaces where persons with disabilities can fully participate in worship, ministry, and community life, recognizing that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (Rohr, 2016).

The eschatological dimension of the body as temple points toward the ultimate fulfillment of God's presence among humanity. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) note that the Spirit's work includes not only the present indwelling but also the future resurrection and transformation of believers' bodies. This eschatological hope affirms that physical limitations are not permanent conditions but temporary realities that will be transformed in the resurrection. For persons with disabilities, this hope provides comfort and assurance that their current experiences of limitation and marginalization do not represent their ultimate destiny. The theology of the body as temple thus combines present affirmation with future hope (Moltmann, 2019).

God's Presence Among the Marginalized

The consistent biblical pattern reveals that God's presence is particularly manifested among those who are marginalized, excluded, or overlooked by society. Togatorop, Phang, and Winda (2024) observe that Jesus consistently associated with those on the margins—tax collectors, sinners, lepers, and others whom society deemed unclean or unworthy. This pattern demonstrates that divine presence is not contingent on social status or ritual purity but is freely offered to all who seek God. For persons with disabilities, who often experience social exclusion and marginalization, this biblical pattern offers the assurance of God's special concern and presence (Barclay, 2013).

The marginalized position of persons with disabilities in many societies makes them particularly receptive to the message of God's inclusive love. Sugiri (2026) argues that the theological reflection on gender equality in Galatians 3:28 provides a framework for understanding how the gospel challenges all forms of discrimination and exclusion. While Sugiri focuses specifically on gender, the same theological principles apply to disability, as the gospel proclaims that all persons are equal in Christ regardless of their physical characteristics or social status. The church must therefore examine its own practices to ensure that persons with disabilities are not marginalized within the community of faith (Eiesland, 1994).

The presence of God among the marginalized is not merely a consolation for their suffering but a source of empowerment and transformation. Natanael and Tandana (2026) demonstrate how women from Christian minority groups in Indonesia develop resilience through community support, spiritual practices, and collective action. This resilience is rooted in the conviction that God is present with them in their struggles and empowers them to overcome challenges. Similarly, persons with disabilities can experience God's presence as a source of strength and dignity, enabling them to claim their rightful place in the church and society (Bonhoeffer, 2016).

The church's calling to embody God's presence among the marginalized requires intentional action and structural change. Natanael and Tandana (2026) emphasize the importance of community-based empowerment approaches that build the capacity of marginalized persons to participate fully in social and religious life. This involves not only removing physical barriers to accessibility but also addressing attitudes and practices that exclude persons with disabilities from full participation. The theology of divine presence thus calls the church to become a community where all persons, regardless of ability, can experience and embody God's love (Kilby, 2019).

DISCUSSION

The Trinity and the Inclusive Nature of Divine Presence

The triune nature of God provides the ultimate foundation for understanding divine presence as inherently relational and inclusive. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) explain that the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity, acts as the bond of love uniting the Father and the Son, and this relational love extends to all of creation. This Trinitarian understanding means that God's presence is not a static attribute but a dynamic relationship that invites all persons into communion. For persons with disabilities and marginalized communities, this Trinitarian theology affirms that they are not outsiders to God's love but are embraced within the divine fellowship (Fiddes, 2020).

The incarnation, as the act of the Son taking on human flesh, demonstrates that the Trinity's inclusive love extends to embodied existence in all its forms. Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) argue that in the incarnation, the Son assumed human nature without ceasing to be divine, thereby uniting divinity and humanity in a single person. This union does not require the erasure of human particularity but rather affirms it, as Jesus was a particular human being with a particular body, history, and social location. By extension,

the incarnation affirms that all human bodies, including disabled bodies, are capable of bearing divine presence and dignity (Moltmann, 2019).

The Holy Spirit's work in the church continues the inclusive presence of God through the ages. Pangumbahas, Gunawan, and Repi (2021) emphasize that the Spirit constitutes the church as the body of Christ, distributing gifts to each member for the common good. This distribution of gifts does not depend on physical ability or social status but on the sovereign will of the Spirit. Persons with disabilities are therefore not merely recipients of ministry but active participants in the church's mission, contributing their unique gifts to the building up of the body. This pneumatological perspective challenges any theology that relegates persons with disabilities to passive roles within the church (Sarono & Tubagus, 2021).

The Trinitarian understanding of divine presence also has implications for how the church understands worship and community life. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) note that the Spirit's presence is not limited to physical locations but extends to all spaces where believers gather, including digital environments. This insight, while developed in relation to digital pneumatology, has profound implications for disability inclusion, as it affirms that barriers to physical access do not limit God's presence. However, this does not excuse the church from the responsibility to create accessible physical spaces, as the incarnation itself affirms the importance of embodied presence (Rohr, 2016).

The relational nature of the Trinity also provides a model for how the church should relate to persons with disabilities and marginalized communities. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) describe the Trinitarian relationships as characterized by mutual love, honor, and cooperation, without hierarchy or domination. The church is called to reflect this relational pattern in its own life, creating communities where all persons are valued and their contributions are honored. This means not merely including persons with disabilities but actively seeking their leadership and participation in all aspects of church life (Barth, 1956).

Disability Theology and the Critique of Ableist Christianity

Disability theology has emerged as a significant voice within contemporary theological discourse, challenging traditional understandings of disability and offering constructive alternatives. Eiesland (1994) argues that the church has often perpetuated ableist assumptions that equate disability with sin, spiritual deficiency, or divine

punishment, thereby excluding persons with disabilities from full participation. This critique resonates with the biblical pattern of Jesus' ministry, which consistently challenged religious practices that marginalized those considered unclean or imperfect. The theology of divine presence developed in this article must therefore engage critically with these ableist traditions and offer a more inclusive vision (Kilby, 2019).

The incarnation provides a powerful corrective to ableist theology by affirming that God chose to become embodied in human flesh. Gulo and Putrawan (2023) note that Jesus experienced the full range of human limitations, including physical vulnerability and suffering, demonstrating that these experiences are not incompatible with divine presence. This theological insight challenges any perspective that views disability as a barrier to experiencing God's presence or participating in God's mission. On the contrary, the incarnation suggests that God is particularly present among those who experience vulnerability and marginalization (Bonhoeffer, 2016).

However, some theological traditions have resisted the full implications of this incarnational theology for disability inclusion. Critics of disability theology, such as those within certain conservative evangelical circles, argue that an emphasis on the dignity of disabled bodies may undermine the biblical teaching that physical wholeness is a sign of divine blessing. This perspective, however, fails to account for the incarnation itself, in which God chose to enter into human vulnerability and limitation. As Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) argue, the incarnation reveals that divine presence is not contingent on physical perfection but is freely offered to all persons, regardless of their physical condition (Moltmann, 2019).

The tabernacle's design and function also challenge ableist assumptions about sacred space. Wonoadi and Tandana (2022) observe that the tabernacle was centrally located and accessible to all the tribes of Israel, symbolizing God's desire to dwell among all people. While specific areas had restricted access, the overall structure communicated that God's presence was available to the community as a whole. This model of sacred space challenges contemporary practices that create barriers to participation for persons with disabilities, whether physical, attitudinal, or structural (Homan, 2007).

The theology of the body as temple provides a foundation for affirming the dignity of disabled bodies. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) emphasize that the Holy Spirit dwells in believers' bodies, making them sacred spaces regardless of physical ability or appearance. This affirmation directly challenges cultural narratives that devalue disabled bodies or

view them as defective or inferior. If the Spirit can dwell in any body, then all bodies possess inherent dignity and worth, and the church must treat persons with disabilities with the honor and respect due to temples of the Holy Spirit.

The critique of ableist Christianity requires not only theological reorientation but also practical action. Sugiri (2026) argues that theological reflection must translate into concrete social action that challenges oppressive structures and promotes justice. For the church, this means examining its buildings for accessibility, its liturgy for inclusive language and practices, its leadership for representation of persons with disabilities, and its attitudes for unconscious bias. Such practical actions are essential for embodying the inclusive love of God (Fiddes, 2020).

The Marginalized as Bearers of Divine Presence

Throughout Scripture, God consistently chooses to reveal divine presence through those whom society considers least significant or worthy. Togatorop, Phang, and Winda (2024) observe that Jesus' parable of the laborers in Matthew 20:1-16 demonstrates that God's grace operates according to a different logic than human systems of worth and merit. Those who were hired last, representing the marginalized and overlooked, received the same reward as those who worked all day, demonstrating that divine favor is not based on human achievement or social standing. This parabolic teaching has profound implications for understanding how God's presence is manifested among persons with disabilities and marginalized communities (Barclay, 2013).

The biblical pattern of God's presence among the marginalized is not merely a consolation for their suffering but a source of theological insight for the entire church. Natanael and Tandana (2026) demonstrate how women from Christian minority groups in Indonesia develop resilience and transformative agency through their faith and community. Their experiences of marginalization, far from disqualifying them from theological reflection, actually position them to perceive dimensions of God's presence that those in positions of privilege may overlook. The church must therefore listen to and learn from persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, recognizing them as authoritative voices in the theological conversation (Eiesland, 1994).

The presence of God among the marginalized also challenges the church's understanding of power and authority. Sugiri (2026) argues that Galatians 3:28 provides a theological foundation for dismantling hierarchical structures that exclude or

subordinate certain groups. If all persons are one in Christ, then traditional distinctions based on gender, ethnicity, or social status have no place in the church. By extension, distinctions based on physical ability must also be overcome, as all persons are equally recipients of God's grace and equally capable of contributing to the church's mission (Bonhoeffer, 2016).

The church's ministry among marginalized communities must be characterized by humility, listening, and partnership rather than paternalism or charity. Natanael and Tandana (2026) emphasize the importance of community-based empowerment approaches that build the capacity of marginalized persons to define and pursue their own goals. Applied to disability ministry, this means creating spaces where persons with disabilities can exercise leadership, shape the church's practices, and articulate their own theological insights. The church must recognize that it has much to learn from persons with disabilities about what it means to be the body of Christ (Kilby, 2019).

The eschatological vision of God's presence among the marginalized points toward the ultimate fulfillment of God's inclusive purposes. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) note that the Spirit's work includes the transformation of all creation, including human bodies, in the resurrection. This eschatological hope affirms that the limitations and marginalizations experienced in the present age are not permanent but will be overcome in God's coming reign. For persons with disabilities and marginalized communities, this hope provides comfort and motivation for continued faithfulness, even in the face of ongoing challenges (Moltmann, 2019).

Practical Implications for Church and Ministry

The theology of divine presence developed in this article has significant practical implications for how churches understand and practice ministry among persons with disabilities and marginalized communities. Pundiono and Tandana (2022) emphasize that the tabernacle was designed to be accessible to all, with its central location and orientation of the tribal encampments symbolizing God's desire to dwell among all people. Similarly, churches today must examine their physical spaces, attitudes, and practices to ensure that they are genuinely accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes not only removing physical barriers but also addressing attitudinal barriers that exclude or marginalize persons with disabilities (Homan, 2007).

The incarnation calls the church to embrace a ministry of presence that enters fully into the experiences of marginalized persons. Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) note that Jesus' ministry involved direct engagement with those who were suffering, touching lepers, eating with sinners, and welcoming children. This pattern of incarnational ministry requires the church to move beyond programs and services to genuine relationships with persons with disabilities, characterized by mutual respect and shared life. Ministry among marginalized communities must be rooted in the recognition that they, too, bear the image of God and are temples of the Holy Spirit (Bonhoeffer, 2016).

The Holy Spirit's work in the church provides resources for creating communities of belonging and mutual care. Pangumbahas, Gunawan, and Repi (2021) emphasize that the Spirit distributes gifts to all believers for the common good, regardless of their social status or physical ability. Churches must therefore create structures and practices that allow persons with disabilities to exercise their gifts and contribute to the life of the community. This requires intentional efforts to identify and remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from using their gifts in ministry and leadership (Sarono & Tubagus, 2021).

The challenge of ableism within the church requires ongoing education and transformation. Sugiri (2026) argues that theological reflection must be accompanied by practical action that challenges oppressive structures and promotes justice. Churches must therefore provide education on disability theology and ableism, examine their policies and practices for discrimination, and actively seek the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes. The church's commitment to justice must extend to the full inclusion of persons with disabilities (Eiesland, 1994).

The theology of divine presence also has implications for the church's engagement with the broader society on issues of disability justice. Togatorop, Phang, and Winda (2024) emphasize that the Kingdom of God involves social justice for all, including those who are marginalized. Churches must therefore advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities in society, challenging systems and structures that exclude or discriminate. The church's witness to God's inclusive love must be embodied in concrete actions that promote accessibility, inclusion, and justice for all persons (Barclay, 2013).

Toward an Integrative Theology of Divine Presence

The synthesis of incarnation, tabernacle, and bodily indwelling reveals a coherent theology of divine presence that has profound implications for marginalized communities and persons with disabilities. Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) establish that the incarnation demonstrates God's solidarity with embodied humanity, affirming that all bodies possess inherent dignity and are capable of bearing divine presence. Pundiono and Tandana (2022) show that the tabernacle provides a model for accessible sacred space where all persons can encounter God and participate in worship. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) extend this theology of presence to every believer through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, making each person a temple of the living God regardless of physical ability or social status (Moltmann, 2019).

This integrative theology challenges the church to reconsider its understanding of who belongs and who participates fully in the life of faith. Sugiri (2026) argues that the gospel's radical message of equality in Christ requires the dismantling of all hierarchical structures that exclude or subordinate certain groups. Applied to disability, this means that the church must actively work to remove barriers—physical, attitudinal, and systemic—that prevent persons with disabilities from full participation. The church's identity as the body of Christ is diminished when any member is marginalized or excluded, and the church's witness to God's inclusive love is compromised when it fails to embody that love in its own life (Fiddes, 2020).

The theological synthesis developed in this article also provides a foundation for understanding the church's mission in the world. Natanael and Tandana (2026) emphasize that the church is called to be an agent of transformation in society, working for justice and empowerment of marginalized communities. The theology of divine presence calls the church to extend its mission beyond its own walls, advocating for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life. The church's proclamation of God's love must be accompanied by concrete actions that demonstrate that love, particularly toward those whom society overlooks or excludes (Bonhoeffer, 2016).

However, this synthesis also faces challenges from theological perspectives that emphasize the transcendence of God over divine immanence. Barth (1956), for instance, emphasizes that God is completely transcendent and cannot be fully known through human experience or embodied existence. While Barth's emphasis on divine

transcendence is important, it must be balanced with the biblical witness to God's immanence, particularly in the incarnation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As Gulo, Tanasyah, and Kristiantoro (2022) argue, the incarnation demonstrates that divine transcendence and immanence are not mutually exclusive but are held together in the person of Jesus Christ (Rohr, 2016).

The eschatological dimension of this theology provides hope and motivation for ongoing faithfulness. Putrawan and Ayuk (2025) note that the Spirit's work includes the transformation of all creation, including human bodies, in the resurrection. This future hope does not negate the present reality of suffering and marginalization but provides assurance that these conditions are not permanent. For persons with disabilities and marginalized communities, this eschatological vision offers comfort and empowerment, enabling them to persevere in faith and hope even amid ongoing challenges. The integrative theology of divine presence developed in this article thus represents a contribution to the ongoing conversation between disability theology and classical Christian doctrine, offering a robust theological foundation for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the church (Kilby, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This article has constructed a synthetic theology of divine presence that integrates the doctrines of incarnation, tabernacle, and bodily indwelling to address the spiritual and social needs of marginalized groups and persons with disabilities. The incarnation demonstrates God's solidarity with embodied humanity, affirming that all bodies possess inherent dignity and are capable of bearing divine presence. The tabernacle provides a model for accessible sacred space where all persons can encounter God and participate in worship. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers' bodies extends this theology of presence to every person, regardless of physical ability or social status, making each believer a temple of the living God.

Together, these three doctrines form a coherent framework for understanding how God is present among those whom society often overlooks or excludes. The integrative theology developed here challenges the church to reconsider its understanding of who belongs and who participates fully in the life of faith, calling for the dismantling of barriers that exclude persons with disabilities. It affirms that God's presence is not limited by physical ability or social status but is freely offered to all who seek God. The church is

called to embody this inclusive presence in its worship, community life, and mission, becoming a living witness to the radical love of God.

The implications of this theology for the church are significant and far-reaching. Churches are called to examine their attitudes, practices, and structures to ensure that they genuinely embody God's inclusive presence, removing barriers that exclude persons with disabilities and creating spaces where all can participate fully. The church must recognize that persons with disabilities and marginalized communities are not merely recipients of ministry but active agents of God's mission, contributing unique gifts and perspectives to the building up of the body of Christ. The theology of divine presence developed here calls the church to a ministry of presence, characterized by genuine relationships, mutual respect, and shared life with those on the margins. Furthermore, the church is called to advocate for disability justice in the broader society, challenging systems and structures that exclude or discriminate against persons with disabilities.

The limitations of this study include its reliance on secondary sources and literature review methodology, which precludes primary empirical research with persons with disabilities. Future research could address this limitation by conducting qualitative or ethnographic studies that examine how persons with disabilities experience divine presence in their lives and communities. Additionally, future research could explore the intersection of disability theology with other contextual theologies, such as feminist theology, liberation theology, and ecological theology, to develop more comprehensive frameworks for understanding God's presence in diverse contexts. The theological synthesis developed in this article provides a foundation for such future research, while also offering practical guidance for churches seeking to become more inclusive communities.

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