

‘Beyond The Wall’ as an Interreligious Dialogue Approach For Social Transformation in Indonesia

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Abstract— Indonesia is classified as a developing country. As developing countries in various parts of the world is always faced with the context of problems, Indonesia likewise. Indonesia is faced with the context of various problems. Unfortunately, these problems are always easily thrown to the government to think and solve them. Whereas, in various religious teachings, there are also social responsibilities given to its adherents to contribute to solving problems that are being faced by the government and society. Some religious organizations already have that awareness, and have also contributed. It's just that each religion works and thinks individually to find solutions and solve them by themselves. This article intends to propose an interreligious approach that can be taken to undertake social transformation in Indonesia, in dealing with various problems in society. These social problems require an operative, adaptive and sustainable solution. This research proposes the concept of "Beyond The Wall" as an interreligious approach to transform social life in Indonesia. The method used is qualitative-descriptive, by observing related literature, but also collecting data by interviewing intellectual and figures from various religions. This research is expected to contribute a new fresh approach that can be taken by religions in Indonesia to undertake social transformation together.

Keywords: *Beyond the Wall, Interreligious, Dialogue, Social Transformation*

I. INTRODUCTION

Social transformation is defined as a change in overall: form, appearance, character, character and so on. The factors that influence it include population factors, technology, cultural values and social movements. While the cause of the emergence can be in the form of cultural heaps, contact with other cultures, heterogeneous populations, and social chaos.[1] In Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, the word transformation itself means changes in form (form, nature, function, etc.).[2] Mahmuddin defines the transformation from the root words in English, namely *trans* and *form*. *Trans* means across, or beyond, whereas *form* means shape, so transformation means the shift from one form to another form, beyond its physical appearance only.[3]

From that definition, the essence of transformation is a change. From the word change, it is assumed that there are preconditions as a starting point, and then it assumed there is a destination which intended to reach. Changing is

certainly fundamentally different from creating. There is any notion called '*creatio ex nihilo*' in Christianity which look the Christian holy text in the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis chapter 1, believes that all things are created out from nothing. Transformation is certainly different, because it always requires old context, form, nature, initial appearance firstly, and then transformed into another new form, secondly. In other words, social transformation before and after condition.

Furthermore, Mahmuddin analogized the transformation as metamorphosis that occurred in butterflies. Changes in butterflies are different from calves (*gudel*) which turns into buffalo, which only changes in shape that become larger. The transformation or metamorphosis of butterflies is not only in form, but also in the function, nature, and way of life.[4] Functionally, butterflies have far more advantages, especially in the process of fertilization in plants, compared to caterpillars which only become pests in plants. Thus, the desired transformation certainly has far more positive advantages than previous forms, functions and characteristics.

In this article, the context and background to be raised are Indonesian social life, in the context of religious diversity in it. I take the Indonesian context in general, because indeed in most parts of Indonesia, especially large cities whose population is greater than the majority of villages, have been more heterogeneous not only of race and ethnicity, but also religion. For example, on the easternmost island of Indonesia, Papua. In the big cities in Papua and West Papua provinces, such as Jayapura, Merauke, Manokwari and Sorong, now have heterogeneous populations, because the population consists of various ethnicities, races, cultures and religions.

From this Indonesian context, then I ask the initial questions, as a reference for thia research. In various contexts in Indonesia, what issues are being faced by Indonesian society in general, as an firstly form of society that is about to be transformed? How so far, these issues have been faced from the perspective of religious diversity? What social capital does the Indonesian Nation actually have to deal with these issues, in order to carry out social transformation? From these questions, then I propose an approach to interreligious dialogue 'Beyond The Wall', as a

new approach for carrying out social transformation in Indonesia.

II. BACKGROUND: THE CONTEXT OF INDONESIAN SOCIETY

Indonesia is a nation which rich in diversity. Indonesia consists of many different ethnic groups, customs and religions, so that the Indonesian nation is categorized as a pluralistic society.[5] Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups,[6] and has 1,340 ethnic groups based on the 2010 census of Badan Pusat Statistik.[7] It is based on ethnic diversity, not to mention religion. Based on religious diversity, after the decision of Mahkamah Konstitusi on November 7, 2017 regarding the constitutionality of the rules for emptying the religious column on the identity card (KTP and KK) for the belief group,[8] Indonesia not only has six official religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism alone, but there are many beliefs that are approved in this country.

From that diversity, of course there are negative sparks that arise due to the friction of one group to another. However, it is not wise the friction emphasized that cause from diversity, when we intend to emphasize harmony in diversity. Therefore, I put forward the social issues that are faced together, by all tribes, nations, races and religions in Indonesia. Thus, these social issues and problems become a common enemy, for the entire pluralistic Indonesian society.

In my another article, I emphasize that the issues faced by Indonesia are poverty, interreligious relations, and dialogue with culture.[9] But apparently the three issues do not represent the issues that are being faced by Indonesia as a wholeness. Presumably, Emanuel Gerrit Singgih is right to formulate there are five issues faced by Indonesia, as the context for doing theology, inter alia: religious and cultural diversity, severe poverty, suffering and disasters, injustice (including gender injustice), and ecological damage.[10]

These five issues almost became an issue in various regions of Indonesia. As I stated earlier, the diversity of religions and cultures is almost present in all parts of Indonesia, especially in large cities in each province. Even for the issue of severe poverty, as far as the cities I have ever visited, it has always been an poverty issue. The issue of suffering and disaster seems to be related to ecological damage, especially what happened recently at the place where the writer served, Sentani. In Sentani, ecological damage in the Cycloop Mountains resulted in flash floods disasters, leading to the suffering of the people around Sentani. Housing-residents housing was badly damaged, many casualties made the suffering was not over, even today. The issue of injustice is always easy to find in almost every region of Indonesia. Therefore, these five issues are relevant when talking about Indonesia and the aim of social transformation.

As far as the writer's observations, these issues, when they peak, are often left to the government's responsibility. Every problem that is being faced by this nation, is often easily thrown at the government to solve it. If the problem does not end, the government becomes the target of complaints and even invective. Whereas, in various religious teachings, there are social responsibilities that are

given to the adherents to contribute to solving problems that are being faced in society.

Some religious organizations already have the awareness to take part in helping the government to solve problems that are being faced by this country. In various religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, each have a religious foundation which contributes to helping the government alleviate the problems faced by society. It's just that, if examined more deeply, each religious organization works independently. For example, one religious organization focuses solely on helping fellow believers. Even if there is a religious organization that is more inclusive, there is always suspicion if they are helping people from different religions!

For religious organizations that are exclusive, which are only limited to helping brothers from the same religions, it is certainly very easy to find examples. For example, the occurrence of flash floods in Sentani some time ago, the author observed that several different religious institutions prioritize helping people from the same religions as them. For example, there are religious institutions that help people who are not have the same religions, people are always suspicious of that help. For example, there are Islamic religious institutions who help Christians, there is suspicion from Christians asking the motivation of the assistance. Otherwise, even so. I experienced myself when involved as a volunteer during the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010. There are many Christian religious institutions that involved to provide assistance. However, the assistance was suspected of a veiled motivation for Christianization. Therefore, at that time it was not difficult to find billboards written "bantuan yes, kristenisasi no." Thus, a high wall has been built between religions to be able to interact with each other.

III. ROOT PROBLEMS: FUNDAMENTALISM AND EXCLUSIVISM

It's awry, if there is a religious humanitarian institution that only helps people from the same religions. Allegations of favoritism and not having human solidarity will be easy to judged. Especially for example when a disaster occurs, and assistance is only directed to people from the same religions. On the other hand, it is also wrong if there is an inclusive religious institution helping people from different religions. Suspicion of the motivation will be easily questioned, rather than thanking for the assistance.

Fundamentalism and exclusivism are the root problems causes these two phenomena. Some religious institutions that only help people from the same religions have an exclusive notion, which assume that only their religion is the most correct, and deny others. So that it is not surprising, in the second phenomenon, suspicion arises when there are religious institutions that help people from different religion. This character is easily find in the Abrahamic Religions, Islamic and Christian. Both of these religions are more familiar with the fundamental and exclusive nature. These both religion also give responsibility to its follower for spreading their religion. In Christianity there is term called evangelism, and in Islam there is also a term called da'wah which known as an effort to spread religion, Christianization and Islamization.

Christianity, for example, has a notion that believe outside of Jesus there is no salvation, the Bible is the word of God, and evangelism is the main task of the church.[11] With this in notion, it is not uncommon to find a number of Christian religious institutions working in the field of humanity so that those who are helped, accept Jesus as their savior, and join in becoming Christians.

In Islam there also such notion. Islam is believed to be the ultimate religion, the way of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad is believed to be the last prophet and is the first da'i to invite mankind to the path of Allah based on the guidance of the Koran, as a book that fulfill the previous holy books, namely: Taoret, Zabur and the Gospel.[12] So, every Muslim must be obliged to convey the mission of Islam to all humans.[13] Some Islamic religious institutions also provide humanitarian assistance with motivation, so that people who are helped want to embrace Islam. This kind of phenomenon occurs a lot in the Papua region, especially in the southern region.

If with the concept of thinking like this, then the assistance that had been willing to solve the problem would only cause new problems, and friction which could potentially happen lead to greater conflict. Therefore, religions have to work together with the same aim, namely social transformation, rather than shifting people from other religions with the lure of help.

In this section, the problems caused are clear, if the issues in the community are only done independently by each religious institution. Therefore, to solve social issues for the sake of the realization of social transformation, inter-religious cooperation with genuine motivation is needed, in order to realize the harmony of life between religious communities.

Rainer Scheunemann said there were at least five major obstacles to the realization of religious harmony in Indonesia.[14] First, the concept of jihad or religious revival that is primordial and extreme. He called the understanding of jihad which converged on the practices of violence as an obstacle to religious harmony. No doubt, as a Christian, I am worried when reading Fundamentalist Islamic writings which openly legitimize acts of violence in the name of jihad. Even though it must be admitted that there are many Islamic scholars who are more soothing when reading their reviews regarding jihad, which is totally nonviolent.

Second, the concept of evangelism is carried out aggressively and insensitive to the situation of the community. According to Scheunemann, some churches are also ecclesiocentric (church-centric), and emphasize aggressive evangelism which creates negative reactions from other parties. The aggressive evangelism is certainly Christianization as I explained earlier.

Third, Scheunemann mentions that there is covert racism, namely primordialism, which considers its tribes and races superior to others. This also happened between churches. In the western world, as the mainstream of churches in Indonesia, also experienced the same thing. The Presbyterian-Calvinist Church, for example, recognizes that it is difficult to realize the unity of the church among Presbyterians, because in America there are 21 Presbyterian-Calvinist church institutions.[15] One of the factors that caused the disunity of church institutions was tribal spirit. Most of them are of Dutch descent, and others are from

Germany or Scotland.[16] A similar phenomenon also occurs in Indonesia. In one of the church institutions in Papua, they deliberately and broke themselves because of tribal factors. Fourth, the abuse of religion, and the five the mistakes of the New Order.[17]

IV. SOCIAL CAPITAL: DIVERSITY AS THE MAIN CAPITAL OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Social capital is aspects of a social organization, such as belief systems, norms, and networks that can improve community efficiency by facilitating coordinated actions.[18] This concept can also be interpreted as a series of informal values or norms that are shared, among members of a group, which enables the establishment of cooperation.[19] In the Indonesian context, of course social capital for the realization of social transformation becomes richer, because it consists of a large number of cultural and beliefs diversity.

The diversity of tribes, nations, races and even religion is a necessity in Indonesia. Andreas Anangguru Yewangoe wrote that since proclaiming its independence, Indonesia declared itself as a pluralistic society. Pluralism is not only because of the diversity of ethnicity and ethnicity, but also because of religious diversity. Yewangoe acknowledged that this could potentially lead to disintegration if not handled wisely. However, he also said that this plurality could be a great potential that could advance the Indonesian people.[20]

I agree with Yewangoe's thoughts. If the plurality of tribes, nations and religions in Indonesia is a necessity, then it can be considered as a gift from the God, Creator, Who creates it. The consequence is that of course there is great potential from that gift, if it is understood and addressed wisely.

With the social capital mindset above, the diversity contained in the Indonesian nation can be a great potential, which can be used to realize social transformation in various aspects of social life. For example, for the issue of poverty. Of course in various religious teachings, there is a responsibility to be able to help people in need. With a diversity of perspectives in helping the poor, religions can be enriched and enrich each other, in order to realize social transformation. Therefore, this diversity is a useful social capital to realize social transformation in Indonesia.

To get into an interfaith collaboration in order to manifest this social transformation, a fresh approach is certainly needed, so that every religion involved in the collaborative process and work in the same corridors and genuine motives, in order to avoid friction in it. In this section, the author will introduce the concept of 'beyond the wall' which was first coined by Tabita Kartika Christiani.

V. BEYOND THE WALL: AN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE APPROACH

At first, it must be admitted that the concept of 'beyond the wall' is a concept in the theory of Christian education. Tabita Kartika Christiani followed the wall metaphor that was coined firstly by Jack Seymour.[21] Seymour himself formulated a model of Christian education

that supports peace into two, namely 'behind the wall' and 'at the wall'. [22]

Christian education 'behind the wall' presupposes that students read and study the Bible contextually, and connect directly with the reality of life, then use a new perspective to see the poor and victims of violence. Christian education 'at the wall' presupposes that students study other religions and engage in dialogue directly with people from other religions. So, the students not only learn the Christian faith, but also learn other religions.

Christiani then added 'beyond the wall', which presupposes that students immediately involved doing a real work to realize peace and justice in society. [23] This model of Christian Education uses a social transformation approach.

Randy White also uses the wall analogy for the church he founded. White is a senior pastor and founder of the International Church Without Walls, in Tampa, Florida. [24] The aim of this church service is to reach the rarest, wildest and poorest areas in the city of Tampa, Florida. [25] The congregation in this church is heterogeneous because it consists of various backgrounds of different ethnic groups, races and socio-economic positions, namely the Asian, African-American, Caucasus, South African and some of Spanish descent. [26] He uses term 'church without walls', because he thinks that all this time the churches have built a high wall around them, which ultimately makes them difficult for the church itself to reach out and interact with others, outside the church. In the absence of the church wall, the church becomes more inclusive and flexible to be able to interact and dialogue with others, outside the church.

Scheunemann explained that there are four basic principles that must absolutely be fulfilled in order to realize religious harmony, inter alia: first, guarantees of religious freedom. Actually Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 pasal 29 has guaranteed freedom of people to embrace their religion, but in fact there are still many people, especially minorities who don't have a freedom to embrace their religion. Second, communication and dialogue. Communication and dialogue are the absolute principles that must be fulfilled so that the harmony among religions can be realized. Of course, the dialogue is not an elitist dialogue, but a lower class dialogue that is natural, not artificial, and touches on concrete problems in society. Third, tolerance. And finally, pragmatic cooperation relations for humanity. [27]

From the explanation above, it can be seen that interreligious dialogue that leads to concrete actions is needed to realize social transformation in Indonesia. In an interreligious dialogue that is culminated to a social transformation, three core parts of communication need to be considered, namely: participants, context and message. [28] Participants from various religions must be in an egalitarian, equal position. One does not superior to the other. All are in an open position, respecting each other. The motivation of each participant must be genuine, without having a tendency that can lead to disintegration. The context referred to in a dialogue that leads to social transformation, certainly the social issues that are being faced and needs to find the solutions to solving the issues, which will be done together. And the message is the idea, performance and material contained in each religion, which

can become a contribution to the realization of social transformation.

VI. SHARED INTERRELIGIOUS PRAXIS: MODEL OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

I was inspired by the Shared Christian Praxis model that was coined by Thomas Groome. [29] Shared Christian Praxis is an approach to Christian education that supports the creation of concrete social transformations in society. I modified this approach in the form of a model of interreligious dialogue that is useful for social transformation. This approach has five stages, but starts with a preceding step, namely focusing activity.

In the focusing activity, each participant focuses on the generative themes to be discussed. This theme is certainly closely related to social issues that are need to be solved. These issues are concrete problems faced by the community, and they want to find a solution, which will be done together, involving all participants consisting of various religions. For example, the theme that is carried out is about poverty.

After the focusing activity phase, then each participant enters the naming stage. At this stage, participants share their respective experiences related to the theme presented at the beginning. Each participant can share their experiences about poverty. That experience can certainly be their own experience, or someone else's experience that is indeed valid and true.

After the naming stage, then proceed to the next stage namely reflecting critically. At this stage, each participant is invited to process and reflect critically on the experience that has been told in the previous stage. At this stage, participants are invited to find out the cause of the experience (*das sein*). At this stage participants are also invited to find out how is the ideal conditions from the experiences that have been told (*das sollen*). This stage can directly utilize a variety of disciplines, such as social sciences, politics, economics, law, psychology, etc., so that the understanding of these experiences becomes deeper and wider.

Groome actually made this approach specifically as a model of the Christian education approach, so he named the third stage as accessing the Christian tradition. However, because I modified this approach for interreligious dialogue, I named the third stage with accessing religions tradition. At this stage, the participants were invited to find narratives, teachings, thoughts and traditions from each of the participants' religions, related to the themes discussed. For example the theme of poverty, then seen from various religious traditions, and each participant are invited to explain the understanding of their own religious tradition about the issue, for example poverty.

After the accessing religions tradition stage, participants then invited to enter the integrating stage. At this stage, participants are invited to integrate the first stage, naming, and the second stage reflecting, with the third stage, accessing religions tradition. Participants are asked to formulate what is their religious responsibility in addressing

the social issue, based on the religious views expressed in the previous section.

Then, the last stage is responding. At this stage, participants are invited to make concrete decisions as a solution to the issue which become the dialogue theme before. This concrete decision is in the form of a real praxis plan that will be implemented in a real way in the society. This plan can be personal, that is, personal actions that the participants will personally do in order to alleviate the issue that become the theme. This plan can also be interpersonal, which emphasizes the participant's relationship with certain people. For example the participant will specifically do something concrete to certain people he finds, who specifically experience the issue that become the theme. In addition to the two traits above, this plan can also done together socially, that is, each participant together do something concrete, which is decided together in the midst of the society. Through this model of dialogue, it can be imagined the possibility of social transformation that can occur in Indonesian society.

VII. CONCLUSION

Social transformation is certainly a continual thing to do in a society. Because, there is no steady state of a society which presupposes that there are no issues that are facing by a society. The situation of social situation and conditions in Indonesia as a developing country also requires a transformation. There are concrete issues that facing by this nation, inter alia: religious and cultural diversity, severe poverty, suffering and disasters, injustice (including gender injustice), and ecological damage. Indonesia has a variety of ethnic groups, nationalities and religions. This is a great social capital that has great potential to realize social transformation. The 'beyond the wall' approach can be used as an approach to interreligious dialogue for the realization of social transformation in Indonesia. The dialogue model for social transformation borrows Thomas Groome's thoughts, which I later modified. This model has five stages, starting with the initial phase, namely focusing activity. In sequence, the five stages are: naming, reflecting critically, accessing religions traditions, integrating, and finally responding. Through this dialogue model, then it can be imagined the opportunity for social transformation in the context of religious diversity in Indonesia.

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