

# Tolerance Through “DAI” (Dialog Antar Iman) Services in Local Church GBKP Bekasi

Martina Novalina  
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Ekumene  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
martina@sttekumene.ac.id

Juli Edi Sebayang  
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Ekumene  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
juliedi\_s@yahoo.com

Tinny Mayliasari  
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Ekumene  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
maylia@sttekumene.ac.id

Yohana Natassha  
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Ekumene  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
yohana@sttekumene.ac.id

Sugeng Santoso  
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Ekumene  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
agustinus.s@sttekumene.ac.id

**Abstract**—Tolerance is a basic element needed to develop an attitude of mutual understanding and respect for existing differences as well as being an entry point for the realization of an atmosphere of dialogue and religious harmony. This study wants to see the possible relationship between DAI (Dialog Antar Iman / Interfaith Dialogue) services that exists between religious communities within the GBKP Villa Galaxi church, Kelurahan Jakasetia, Kecamatan Bekasi Selatan, which has been running for a period of 10 years until now as a church service program. The research method of this journal is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach to evaluate the services that have been running by collecting and exploring literature related to the concept of inter-religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue in the perspective of the Christian faith, as well as studying reports on the development of the GBKP congregation for the last 5 years. The result is DAI's services to non-Christian communities within the GBKP Bekasi church strongly encourage togetherness and mutual respect. The seeds of tolerance planted in the values of togetherness grow and live into brotherhood regardless of ethnic or religious background, which in turn will build religious tolerance and distrust of the term Christianization.

**Keywords**—tolerance; religions; church services; interfaith dialogue

## I. INTRODUCTION

Intolerance incidents are still a source of conflict for some community groups. The method of spreading it can be through various means, such as hate speech against religious leaders or by demeaning someone or another group. The purpose of those actions is to create disharmony in religious tolerance. This condition is supported by some data, such as in Jakarta there were 196 cases of attacks on religious minorities,[1] 158 cases of violations of religious freedom with 187 incidents where 22 churches or houses were burned in six separate incidents.[2] In the GBKP Bekasi area, several churches were closed, such as: GPIB Jemaat Galilea, Santa Clara Church, ST. Stanislaus Kosta Church in 2019 and HKBP Jemaat Filadelfia in Kabupaten Bekasi in 2013. Not only in about church buildings, conflicts often occur between the community, the church and government where this conflict continues to grow and triggers the community to take prosecution actions such as prohibition of building churches. This condition can be formed supported by various pressures from the community which is reinforced by allegations of dishonesty over the church building process and the formation of suspicions of Christianization.[3]

With the emergence of issues related to the basic fracture of certain religious teachings, it can have an impact on the

emergence of riots and the destruction of churches which of course will have the potential to threaten the stability, security and integrity of a nation. The attitude of religious diversity if not maintained properly can certainly lead to conflict and violence with religious nuances and will be contrary to the basic values of religion itself which in principle teaches about peaceful life, mutual respect and mutual help.

Therefore, Jesus' commandment about respect must be a priority in people's lives as He said *"Love one another as brothers and take one another in honor"* (Romans 12:10). The Apostle Paul also advised the congregation because of the importance of togetherness in a unity that is useful for supporting one another (Romans 14:19). Whatever you want people to do to you, do to them also. That is the content of all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:12).

Differences in religious beliefs should not be a threat, but an opportunity for positive synergy of each other to create a sense of peace with mutual respect between religious communities. Interfaith Dialogue / Dialog Antar Iman (DAI) called "tract two diplomacy" is an interaction between religions to create tolerance and mutual respect for other religions and even functions to understand all existing religious complexities.[4] The DAI service is one part of the Marturia service (testimonial) for the Batak Karo Protestant Church (GBKP) and surrounding areas. DAI services have various activities, including: building communication and solidarity between religious communities and communities around the church's service area, conducting diaconia by caring for the needs of the community around the church, giving gifts as a form of sharing blessings on religious holidays, contributing to donating sacrificial animals in Eid-Al-Fitr Mubarak, distributing Eid gifts as a sense of togetherness to marginalized communities in the church environment, and strengthening institutional cooperation relations between churches around the service area of FKGG (Forum Komunikasi Gereja-Gereja Galaxi Bekasi) and FKUB (Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama Bekasi).

DAI's strategic service in actualizing tolerance and peace in everyday life in the community is expected to reflect the form of love from Christian values in terms of giving and can be an effort to create inter-religious harmony, so that it can help divided communities get to know each other and behave, mutual respect and respect for differences. The Word of God in Philippians 2:3b states that on the other hand, one should humbly consider the other as more important than himself.

## II. METHOD

The research method of this journal is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach by collecting and exploring literature related to the concept of inter-religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue in the perspective of the Christian faith and the life of a pluralistic society with various ethnicities and cultures. The writer is also directly involved in DAI service tasks at GBKP Bekasi church and evaluated it in the 2019-2024

service program. In addition, the writer uses parallel Bible texts that support the concept of tolerance to obtain descriptive information about the meaning of religious tolerance in the perspective of the Christian faith as a form of understanding and example to be applied in social life.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. *The Dynamics of Religious Life in the GBKP Bekasi Church Environment.*

Bekasi is a buffer zone for the nation's capital with a regional position adjacent to the administrative area of East Jakarta. This location creates a diverse community, who comes from various ethnicities and cultures, and settles in the new settlements built in this region. In principle, social life among Bekasi residents is absolutely needed togetherness and brotherhood values regardless of ethnic and religious background.[3] Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Bekasi City states that the population in South Bekasi is 211,268, of which 182,078 are Muslim, 18,465 are Protestant Christians, 7,644 are Catholic, 1,736 are Hindu, 1,297 are Buddhist, 13 are Konghucu, and 97 people have other beliefs.[5] The GBKP Church (Batak Karo Protestant Church) is located in the Villa Galaxy, Kelurahan Jakasetia, Kecamatan Bekasi Selatan, with a congregation of 535 families or 1,803 people. GBKP Bekasi is located in an area adjacent to various churches, including: GPIB Jemaat Galilea, Gereja Methodist Jemaat Sungai Yordan, Gereja Katolik Bertholomeus, Gereja POUK Jemaat Anugerah, Gereja Toraja Villa Galaxi, Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) Camar, GPDI Jemaat Elsadai, dan HKBP Duta Permai.

Religious tolerance in Bekasi is also supported by the Bekasi City government policy through activities carried out by the Kesbangpol with dialogues between interfaith leaders and socialization at the government level to the RW administrators. The role of Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) and Ministry of Religion Bekasi also cannot be separated in order to maintain inter-religious harmony.[3]

In general, the people of Bekasi City reflect a tolerant society. The conflicts that occurred in this area were due to the lack of dialogue (communication) between the parties involved in the conflict and the lack of approach to the community and "Ormas" so that harmony between people did not materialize effectively.[3] The meaning of tolerance developed among Protestant Christians and Catholics is almost the same as that interpreted by Muslims. Tolerance is interpreted as an attitude of respect for different religious teachings, including the harmony of daily life.[3]

### B. *Servants of DAI (Dialog Antar Iman / Interfaith Dialogue) Impact on Society.*

The Interfaith Dialogue/Dialog Antar Iman (DAI) in this paper refer to: action-oriented activities and evidence of service through discussion forums that can be attended by participants from various religions. The dialogue does not always deal with

faith, although some people think that the dialogue has no purpose, but actually dialogue will produce an impact that has implications for change. This impact is not always direct and tangible, but can be very subtly felt in the environment and supports the formation of a mutually respectful communication attitude. This change is expected in the Interfaith Dialogue / Dialog Antar Iman (DAI) which leads to a new paradigm of society and the growth of an open understanding of the church. Understanding the positive impact of DAI's service actions can encourage the development of a positive and constructive approach to the needs of the community other than Protestant Christians around the galaxy church area. Examples of DAI activities include caring about giving sacrificial animals on every sacrificial festival as a sign of the congregation's concern for the Muslim community in their environment, giving Eid gifts as a sense of empathy for marginalized communities in the church environment. Leaders of diverse communities must provide time to discuss together for religious harmony, get to know each other and open up to other people, so that it will have an impact on harmonious living together at the expense of the spirit of brotherhood.[6]

The GBKP Congregation Progress Report for the last 5 years shows that the congregation's DAI service has been concerned about giving 10 sacrificial goats (2 goats every year) to church community members and giving Eid gifts to 500 people in non-Christian and marginalized communities around the church area, 100 people every year (Majelis Jemaat GBKP Runggun Bekasi, 2020). The approach of the congregation through the DAI service program which is carried out every year, including the installation of banners at the church gates, is a form of tolerance and mutual respect and is not a dialogue that stops only on discussions and conversations but is more visible from actions in service (Jamlean, 2009). Jesus' teaching about love is a concrete fact that Christianity must be a blessing and a light for others, but all of it must be based on a binding unity, namely love. Put on love as the bond that unites and perfects (Col. 3:14).

The results of DAI's services to non-Christian communities within the GBKP Bekasi strongly encourage togetherness and mutual respect, as can be seen from the presence of the community and congregation meetings as well as dialogue with the community and religious leaders while handing over contributions from the congregation in the church and at the mosque, which can be carried out with mutual openness and respect.

Behaviour change cannot be achieved instantly. The community receiving DAI services at least feels the message of empathy and concern for the people which has a positive impact on encouraging very subtle behaviour changes, so that a sense of empathy as an instrument for delivering teaching messages is useful for opening a sense of brotherhood among people with different teachings.

### *C. Inter-Religious Communication is Increasingly Respectful of Each Other*

Changing the behaviour of heterogeneous communities by means of a communication approach of mutual respect is very important to overcome the wrong paradigm in understanding Christianity. Communication in the language of humility is the key to success in opening new ways of tolerance with mutual respect.

Fanaticism/extremism/fundamentalism can also lead to physical violence, as well as verbal violence (discourse/verbal).[3] This violence arises when someone who is fanatical about his own religion attacks another religion blindly with the intention of bringing down the other religion, either through his sermons, teachings or writings that have no academic basis at all. In addition, it can be in the form of propaganda or black campaigns directed at other religions that they do not like, thus triggering physical violence.

Distrust and mutual suspicion among adherents of one religion to another can be a source of conflict. Therefore, an open communication approach between religious communities is needed to prevent repeated misunderstandings. At least through DAI services, the Bekasi GBKP congregation, who empathizes with religious holidays, can become the main element as the basis for establishing inter-religious communication which has an impact on the creation of security and comfort in the church environment. Furthermore, the seeds of tolerance planted in the values of togetherness will grow and fade.

Understanding harmony in social life requires tolerance and a spirit of communication that builds community associations that live in peace, live in love, especially mutual respect. Interfaith Dialogue / Dialog Antar Iman (DAI) must be supported as a frame in humanitarian tolerance. The frame of tolerance is not a pseudo or passive meaning, but as an active tolerance that respects, acknowledges its existence and participates in building calm and peace.[7]

Christianity teaches that God hates all forms of violence (Gen. 6:13, 2 Sam. 3:39, Ps. 7:16, 11:5 and others). God hates violence because He wants every Christian everywhere to be able to show Love within himself [8] including between intercultural and interfaith community.[9]

## IV. CONCLUSION

DAI's services to non-Christian communities within the GBKP Bekasi church strongly encourage togetherness and mutual respect, as can be seen from the presence of the community and congregation meetings as well as dialogue with the community and religious leaders while handing over gifts to the congregation in the church and at the mosque carried out in harmony and mutual respect. At least the DAI service of GBKP Bekasi congregation in empathizing on religious holidays can be the main element as the basis for building tolerance between religious believers, which in turn has an impact on the creation of security and comfort in the church

environment. The seeds of tolerance planted in the values of togetherness will grow and live into brotherhood regardless of ethnic or religious background, which in turn will build religious tolerance and distrust of the term Christianization.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] I. Kidung Asmara Sigit, *Intoleransi Semasa Pandemi: Kondisi Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan di Indonesia Tahun 2020 (Intolerance During Pandemic: Conditions of Freedom of Religion/Belief in Indonesia in 2020)*. Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2020.
- [2] Human Rights Watch, *Atas Nama Agama: Pelanggaran Terhadap Minoritas Agama di Indonesia. (In the Name of Religion: Violations against Religious Minorities in Indonesia)*. Human Rights Watch, 2013.
- [3] N. Shabrina, *Penyelesaian Konflik Rumah Ibadah di Bekasi (Studi Pendirian Gereja St. Stanislaus Kostka di Kecamatan Jatisampurna). (Conflict Resolution of Houses of Worship in Bekasi (Study of The Establishment of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Jatisampurna District) Jakarta: UIN Jakarta, 2019.*
- [4] M. Abu-Nimer, *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence*. Lexington Books, 2001.
- [5] B. Bekasi, "Proyeksi Penduduk Bekasi", ("Bekasi Population Projection,") Bekasi, 2020.
- [6] M. Novalina, "Spiritualitas Orang Kristen Dalam Menghadirkan Kerajaan Allah di Tengah Tantangan Radikalisme," (Christian Spirituality in Presenting the Kingdom of God amid the Challenges of Radicalism) *J. Teol. Kontekst. Indones.*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 26, 2020.
- [7] I. Machali, "Peace Education dan Deradikalisasi Agama," (Peace Education and Deradicalization of Religion) *J. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. II, 2013.
- [8] Y. Zega, "Radikalisme Agama Dalam Perspektif Alkitab dan Implikasinya Bagi Pendidikan Agama Kristen," (Religious Radicalism in biblical perspective and its Implications for Christian Education) *J. Shanan*, vol. IV, 2020.
- [9] E. Sabdono, E. M. C. Efruan, M. P. Takaliuang, L. M. M. Manuain, and Z. A. Dami, "Teaching intercultural competence: Dialogue, cognition and position in Luke 10:25-37," *HTS Teol. Stud. Stud.*, vol. 77, no. 4, Aug. 2021.
- [10]