



Religious Moderation in the Digital World: Learning from Christ the Transformer of Culture

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Abstract — Religious Moderation is one of the pillars of religious harmony that needs to be implemented in the life of a plural Indonesian society. The implementation of the pillars of religious harmony is not only visible in the real world, but also in the digital world. Because cases of religious conflicts and disputes between social media users are still massive, it can even be a trigger for religious conflicts in the real world. This study explores religious moderation in the digital world and analyze it with the model of faith and cultural relations, namely Christ the transformer of culture (CTC). This study used descriptive qualitative method. The results of the study reveal that Niebuhr's CTC Model presents three meanings of digital culture in implementing the values of religious moderation. The role of these three meanings is: digital culture actually provides positive changes with loads of religious values that encourage humans as God's creation to have a mutually constructive and harmonious life. Second, digital culture actually produces transformation for humans created by God to improve the quality or quality of the humans themselves. Third, digital culture actually produces cultural transformation with noble goals and for the good of humans themselves.

Keywords — christ the transformer of culture, digital world, religious moderation

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital world technology actually has a positive impact on users. For example, the abundance of information sources offered has become an increasingly popular learning medium [1]. Even so, there are still serious problems. In the era of digital disruption as it is today, many people can easily access the internet, spread hoax news with hate speech, and become provocateurs that can cause conflict [2]. In fact, conflicts and divisions are often born from misunderstandings that flow profusely through digital space and are used deliberately to create narratives that tear each other down, and this tends to be dominated by religious values that lead to exclusivity [3]. Another problem is that students as users of digital space are exposed to radical teachings that are vulnerable and extreme [4]. The development of digital information and communication technology seems to influence social behavior, including religious behavior.

The use of digital media in conveying messages of religious harmony in religious moderation is very important to do. Religious moderation is really needed in implementation in the current digital era so as to produce a generation that is moderate and not easily influenced by

radical ideas spread from cyberspace [2]. In line with that, strengthening inter-religious relations is very important because the position of religion is complex, sensitive, and crucial in the midst of the recent rise of the issue of radicalism in Indonesia [5]. Religious moderation is a crucial issue, along with religious and cultural values that develop in society [6]. The urgency of religious moderation in the development of information technology in digital culture needs to be balanced with an open and positive religious attitude. This is because digital culture has changed traditional culture which has encouraged new forms of creative expression and offers new perspectives for intercultural communication [7].

Responding to the problems of the development of digital culture and moderation of religion in the digital era, the author offers a model of the relationship between faith and culture from Richard Niebuhr's theory, namely the Christ the transformer of culture model [8]. The principle of this model emphasizes that true cultural transformation provides change for humanity to a new life, as God has transformed humans into new creations. For this reason, the research question is How does the Christ the transformer of culture model become the adhesive for the implementation of religious moderation in today's digital world?

The results of previous research are related to this topic as described by Ismatu Ropi. Their research examines the life of religious moderation with Pancasila values as the basis of the ideology of the Indonesian State [9]. Subsequent research offers the concept of religious moderation *Nostra Aetate* (NA) in interreligious dialogue as a concrete manifestation of the moderate attitude of the Church and people [10]. Next is the results of research that examines religious moderation with approaches to changing mindsets and attitudes in learning, critical-dialectical teaching methods [11], by producing a curriculum design that offers moderate values in academic activities and direct experience religiosity in religious diversity [12], as well as students as agents of change through religious moderation [13]. Subsequent research examines the implementation of religious moderation values with local wisdom, especially Tana Toraja cultural values such as: *kasiuluran* [kinship], *tengko situru* [togetherness], and *karapasan* [tenacity] [5]. Finally, research on religious moderation in the digital era in the scope of: education management [1], state Islamic religious colleges [3], as well as various religious traditions in the digital era [2]. The gap in this study compared to previous studies is that this study analyzes religious moderation in digital culture through the Christ the transformer of culture (CTC) model by Richard H. Niebuhr.

This study used descriptive qualitative method.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a discussion of the meaning of Niebuhr's CTC model. This CTC model has three meanings: *culture is a social activity, culture is a human achievement, a quality that distinguishes it from creation, and culture deals with the world of values*. The three meanings of the CTC model are used in analyzing the value of religious moderation in digital culture.

Culture is a social activity

Niebuhr describes culture as a social activity. Social activity is related to someone who influences other people in society. One way to quickly influence someone is through digital media. The influence given can be either positive or negative. The danger is the influence of negative impacts. Regarding religion in digital culture, Ahmad emphasized that the media has become a new commodity in spreading certain religious ideologies and certain interests as a form of resistance against religious organizations that do not have the same understanding and also as a form of defense from their own group [14]. With a heavy negative influence, it can cause religious conflict. If conditions like this are allowed to continue, efforts to implement religious moderation values in the digital world will be difficult to achieve. Moreover, religious messages in the digital world can contain emotional dimensions [15] for adherents. So emotionally it can affect other people quickly, which in turn can trigger religious conflict.

Niebuhr's model emphasizes the importance of cultural transformation in social activities, including in digital culture. Digital culture is an idea that originates from the use of technology and the internet, which forms a new way for people to interact, behave, think and communicate as human beings in a social environment [16]. This digital culture is expected to have a positive influence through constructive religious messages as well. In line with that, Reed argued that a negative message given by someone on social media can have a fatal impact and even kill a person's human rights [17]. Including killing a person's human rights in implementing the religious values he adheres to. Therefore, religious messages contained in the digital world should contain messages that can influence other people for the better.

Culture is a human achievement, a quality that distinguishes it from creation

The second meaning of Niebuhr's CTC model is that culture is a human achievement in which there are qualities that distinguish it from other creations. That is, cultural transformation can actually have an impact on improving the quality or quality of the humans themselves. As God created man with a noble purpose. Based on this value, the implementation of religious moderation values in digital culture should increase the quality or quality of the humans themselves. Especially related to the quality of the religiosity of someone involved in conveying religious messages in the digital world. The digital world offers great opportunities and benefits for the public, including providing challenges to all areas of life to improve quality and efficiency in life [16]. Likewise with the mainstreaming

of religious moderation through the media, the role of the community as a filter for news content or wrong thoughts is very much needed [18] as a guardian of the quality of religion itself.

Efforts to improve human quality as God's creation through digital cultural transformation need to be examined wisely. In line with that, the values of religious moderation as a measure of human quality in interacting in the digital world need to be well understood. Because the progress of information technology is useless if it is not encouraged by a wise attitude in using it, so as to avoid religious conflicts. For this reason, religion and culture play a central role in building harmonious relations between adherents of different religions [5].

Culture deals with the world of values

The third meaning of the CTC model is that culture relates to the world of values. That is, humans produce culture for a purpose and to achieve a good. Niebuhr's idea emphasizes that cultural transformation actually produces good values. Likewise with digital culture, the development of information technology actually has a positive impact and provides good values for humans as God's creation. However, the problem is that humans themselves destroy the value system. As expressed by Michael, that humanity has always damaged this community by not believing in God and being disloyal to His purposes [19].

The same idea was expressed by Campbell, the impact of the digital era on people's way of religion, among which the most pronounced is the fading of affiliation with religious institutions, the shifting of religious authority, and the strengthening of individualism [20]. The waning of the noble goal of the development of information technology is a serious note for mankind as God's creation. For this reason, Niebuhr's CTC model needs to be seriously examined so that humans as God's creations make wise use of digital culture and with noble goals for the good of humans themselves. In relation to practice in society, cultural values that bring goodness to humans are in line with the values of Christian education and religious moderation. Where is the value of Christian education and religious moderation with indicators: an attitude of receiving with love, communication based on love, working together based on love, an attitude that gives space to differences in beliefs, and an attitude that accepts local wisdom as part of religious expression [21] can be the basis for creating a culture that brings goodness to fellow human beings.

Based on the description above, it is clear that the CTC model emphasizes the importance of the practical implications of faith in digital culture. This practical implication can be realized by being wise in using social media and avoiding negative comments related to other people's religions. As emphasized by Salamor, the young generation of the church who is good and law-abiding can use and utilize the information they receive well, always be alert and responsible for the truth of the information, and not spread hoax news, cross-check first when receiving news, use ethics in write something on social media without harming other people. The news or writings that are distributed do not contain negative things that harm other people [22]. With an attitude like this, the value of religious moderation in digital culture can be realized well.

III. CONCLUSION

Niebuhr's CTC model presents three meanings of digital culture in implementing the values of religious moderation. The role of these three meanings is: digital culture actually provides positive changes with loads of religious values that encourage humans as God's creation to have a mutually constructive and harmonious life. Second, digital culture actually produces transformation for humans created by God to improve the quality or quality of the humans themselves. Especially efforts to implement religious moderation values in the digital world. As well as human qualities which are the perfect work of God's creation compared to other God's creations. Third, digital culture actually produces cultural transformation with noble goals and for the good of humans themselves. Utilization of the digital world should provide noble benefits and bring goodness to fellow human beings as God's creation. This CTC model makes a significant contribution in transforming the way humans created by God use information technology media in the digital era.

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