

# PLURALISM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN INDONESIA: AN ETHICAL-THEOLOGICAL REVIEW BASED ON CHRISTIAN FAITH PERSPECTIVES

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## ABSTRACT

*This article discussed the discourse of pluralism and tolerance from a Christian perspective by understanding the scriptures of the Bible. The research applied library research. The study reached the conclusion that the understanding of pluralism and tolerance should be viewed positively and placed on the proportion of actual and be equipped concrete steps of interfaith dialogue and cooperation so as not to undermine the unity of the Indonesian nation and ultimately destructive to the life towards an impartial and prosperous society who represents the ideals of national life in our beloved republic. It is hoped this discussion can be a reference or evaluation of materials for readers to reduce the potential for horizontal conflict that often occurs among religious believers in Indonesia who use the name of belief/religious truth*

**Keywords:** *pluralism, religions tolerance, interfaith dialogue, cooperation*

## INTRODUCTION

Tolerance according to Webster's New American Dictionary means, "Freedom (to let) the opinions of others and apply patience with others". In Arabic, tolerance is with *tasamuh* which means letting something to allow, facilitate each other. While in Indonesian dictionary, tolerance is defined as mutual respect, to let, allow establishment, opinions, beliefs, other behavior owned by a person than the other one or establishment which is contrary to a person. In essence, tolerance is a modern concept to describe the attitude of mutual respect and cooperation between groups of different communities both in ethnicity, language, culture, politics, and religion is based on the principle of mutual respect. In other word, tolerance is not only the recognition and respect towards beliefs, but also demands respect for the individuals who belong in the society (Rahman & Khambali, 2013). Tolerance, therefore, requires an attitude which preceded that is inclusive and not exclusive (Fios & Gea, 2013). Tolerance is a great and noble concept which fully became an organic part of the teachings of the religions, including Christianity.

The problem arises in connection with the reality of frequent occurrence of horizontal conflicts among religious believers who carry the religion flag. The existence of any political content cannot be denied, or more precisely when it is said that religion often has been used as a vehicle for political authorities to achieve greater power at the expense of religious communities. Religious fanaticism that narrow and lumpy often used as the fire ignition. The ruler does not necessarily mean a government in the narrow sense; it could be individuals or certain groups that having religious attributes who feel powerful and make their power as tools to achieve the goal of power.

In the reform era, for example, religious conflicts have occurred due to misinterpretation of certain groups of people against the existing constitution and eventually led to a follow violence. For

example in the case of the interpretation of the joint regulations of two ministers (two ministerial decrees on houses of worship). This regulation is actually seen by a group of certain rules that legitimize the action of closing the home of worship. Then action to closing houses of worship arose simultaneously. In addition, there are also attacks carried out by Front Pembela Islam (FPI) to Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili (STTI) Arastamar in East Jakarta demanding that the school should be closed due to being distracted by the activities of the students and also stated that the school was illegal despite the fact that the school has a permit (Sihombing, www.academia.edu). These cases show us that even constitution can be manipulated to perpetuate the desire of individuals or a group of certain factions in gain the profit and greater power.

Currently, there is no longer a place and a community that does not have an encounter with elements of culture, including religion, of place and other communities; or even untouched and unaffected by other elements of it. The presence of other religions in society has produced the diversity and plurality of religions. Nation or society that was formerly homogeneous in religion has become heterogeneous. The plurality of culture, including religion, has become an absolute reality that even in societies on this earth. The plural reality of religions and how the attitudes that shown to them; also how dialogue can be implemented as a form of global responsibility religious communities Schumann (1980, 1982); Knitter (1985, 1995); Hick & Knitter (2001); Hick (1995); and Hick & Hebblethwaite (2001), as shown.

*Knitter was one of the many theologians in Christian circles that show serious concern and optimistic toward pluralism/religious plurality. Other figures are Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner, WC Smith, John Hick, Raimon Panikkar, M.M. Thomas, Stanley S. Samartha, Leslie Newbiggin, and Hans Kung. In Indonesia, the figures are known, among others, Th. Sumartono, Olaf Schumann and Eka Darmaputera.*

Plurality as an absolute reality can no longer be ignored or denied. No more force in modern times that can negate plurality. That can be done by the people, from any cultural or religious groups, is to accept this as part of a life that lived. The Objective and positive reception of the plurality created the concept of pluralism, which has become an important term in the discourse on society, especially on their religious plurality. Seeing the importance of the issue of interfaith relations in the community then it is appropriate and necessary that pluralism become part of the understanding, appreciation and acceptance toward the reality of that pluralistic religious society. Religious pluralism here means understanding and appreciation as well as the acceptance of the fact that there are other religions that are different from us and that in the religions God revealed himself specifically as well, and therefore within the religions that exist, people can find God and get pleasure, a blessing and His salvation (Hasting, 1951). Later on this posture of open mindedness will provide the best way out of inter-religious conflict and will empower peacemaking through forgiveness and non-violent action (Baidhawya, 2007).

Addressing religious plurality, in addition to earlier pluralism, tolerance term is also often used as an attitude willing to accept the fact that there are others who differ from us. Tolerance here, as has been previously described, contains within it the meaning of patience, willing, or resigned to accept. This understanding shows that tolerance is the acceptance that the actual situation is not preferable. This means that there is an actual burden borne undesirable. Therefore, the term tolerance in the context of the religious plurality has negative meaning. In religion, moral-ethical norms, attitudes needed to be shown in addressing diversity or plurality or even antagonism and hostility is seriousness, firmness and sincerity receive the different parties. If receiving different party, then the reception it is earnest, resolute and sincere; as well as rejecting attitude, must be earnest, firm and sincere. Tolerance term contains within it insincerity. This is because basically, the other parties have the same unpleasant accepted, or accepted with a heavy heart. Therefore, Knitter says that religious tolerance was based on and oriented outlook and indifferent attitude towards the other religions. Indeed, the term tolerance is generally used in a political environment, in particular relating to those

who are distinguished as a majority or minority status, or the ruling party and the ruled. Since, the term tolerance is particularly useful in the socio-political world, not in terms of religion. However this does not mean religion should not be talking about tolerance, even religion—Christianity in particular—should talk about it and apply less by passing lane or attempts interfaith dialogue and cooperation in order to maintain the viability of collective that is harmonious.

As part of the plurality of religions, Christianity would have a view and attitude towards plurality/pluralism. The views and attitudes of Christianity certainly have meaning and effect to the common life in a pluralistic society in Indonesia particularly. Therefore, the following explanation will discuss the views and attitudes towards Christians, and the problem of pluralism and religious tolerance. The discussion will first show how the Christian scriptures, namely Bible (Ind. Alkitab) discuss pluralism and tolerance. This is important because the Bible is the foundation and source of faith and doctrine for Christians. Any teaching that developed among Christians is always based on the Bible. Furthermore, opportunities or other forms of cooperation can be built to prevent conflict and build harmony among religious believers in a more open and transparent and wholeheartedly.

## **METHODS**

This research is based on literature. This study uses research methods of phenomenology. As a qualitative research approach, phenomenology used in various studies, including religious phenomenology (Suprayogo & Tobroni, 2001). In their work, phenomenology applies scientific methodology in researching the religious fact that subjective nature such as thoughts, feelings, ideas, emotions, intentions, thoughts, and so forth from a person disclosed in outside acts (words and deeds). To explain this research study author based directly on the Christian understanding of religious scriptures, the Bible in speaking of pluralism and religious tolerance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The Bible as a holy book of the Christian religion became the source of all the teachings and practices of the people. The Bible is divided into two parts; the first is called the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT). The Old Testament contains many stories concerning the relationship between God and man, from the first man to the history of life of the Israel nation is understood as God's chosen people or nation. The OT mainly contains the experience and reflection of religious life of the nation of Israel that began with the history of the first man and the ancestors of Israel such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and important figures such as Moses, Joshua, kings and prophets until the time after the Babylonian exile around the 400s BC. In Israel's history, the relationship between God and the nation was written, and that the books were also recognized by Jesus as the primary teaching book. For this reason, Christians acknowledge the OT as well as scripture. Therefore, the views and attitudes regarding pluralism of the Bible are important to be discussed here. The New Testament contains the roots of Christianity that occurred from the time or by Jesus, which is written in the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), and the writings of the apostle Paul, Peter and other disciples. The Gospels contain the words, teachings, and deeds of Jesus until he was killed on the cross. The writings of Paul, Peter and the other followers that contain advice, teachings about Jesus and how the life of a true Christian.

Like the scriptures, of these two books (OT and NT) became the basic and main reference for the views and attitudes of Christians. Therefore the following will be given a description of Biblical's views on pluralism and tolerance.

In the history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament, it appears that Israel has been living in a pluralist society. Many other nations and religions live side by side with the people of Israel. Israel ancestors also had an encounter with other nations. For example Abraham and his offspring like Isaac and Jacob. In fact, they also had to live in the territory of other nations. The most obvious example is Abraham out of Ur in Kadim town and lives in the area to move the Gentiles until the offspring (i.e., the twelve tribes of Israel) live in bondage in Egypt. In Egypt, Moses became an important figure because it was he who led the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in the country. The Israelites then lived 40 years in the travel in the wilderness to go and occupy the promised land, Canaan. Under the leadership of Joshua, they managed to seize covenant land. Israel into the kingdom with the famous kings such as David and Salomo. Under the leadership of these kings, Israel lived in triumph. However, their substitutes live in unrighteousness, making God punished Israel. The empire collapsed, and the people of Israel exiled to Babylon. About 200 years later they were released. This event is the end of the story in the Old Testament, as follows.

*The Israel's history was more readable, especially in the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, I & II Chronicles and some Prophets (Rambitan, stanleyrambitan.blogspot.com).*

In the history of which is not recorded in the Old Testament, the Israelites (Jewish) controlled by the Greeks and then the Romans. In the time of Roman rule, Jesus appears and works.

From the experience of the Israelites encounter with other nations, the common or dominant attitude shown are exclusive attitude and superior. Israel in a special position, is recognized as the chosen people. As the chosen people, he was privileged since he got the blessing and protection of God. He even used as a channel of blessing to other nations. In this status, Israel is in a position to judge other nations. However, especially those criticized are the nations who do wrong and hostile to Israel. Who criticized a crime or the evil, both of which exist in other nations as well as existing among the Israelites themselves. The God of Israel is intolerant of despotic nation. Other nations, has been criticized and despised because they worship idols/numbness (Baalism). Against nations and crimes like this, the Israelites were given the task to convert them. In the book of Jonah, the story of Jonah who was sent by God to deliver a message to the people of Nineveh shows the execution of tasks to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Here there is an understanding that other nations need to be saved; because it is the task of the prophet-Israel to convey God's message to them that they may repent.

Thus, nations/other religions are seen as a party that is not safe and need to be rescued. Nation/religion plurality here is not understood and addressed as a diversity that must be accepted, but must be saved by making the different peoples they repented and switch-trust in God. Nineveh, who later repented, God's forgiven and saved. However, Jonah who was originally given the task to convey the message to the people of Nineveh (but defected) become angry or jealous because God took Nineveh of condemnation. Jonah here actually represents the position of Israel as the chosen people who feel and who want to monopolize the love of God to the Gentiles. However, God loves the people of Nineveh and the love that can not be defeated by Jonah disappointment. Jonah's story shows that God loves other nations.

In the history of Israel, as the implications of the rejection of pluralism and tolerance, there are other nations who fought and controlled, particularly nations that inhabit the regions in Palestine, the land promised by God. The nations who fought for example city of Jericho (Joshua 6), Ai (Joshua 8), Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites nation, Amon, among others (Joshua 9-24). War in order seizure of territory is not based on a denial of the existence of these nations because they worshiped other gods, so it was not because of anti-pluralism, but because of other nations that inhabit the land that was promised and given by God. To seize the land, the Israelites had to do battle. In other words, war committed against another nation not because of religious differences,

but because of God's promise to give the land. Although from another perspective, that is the political view, it could be said that war carried out by Israel against other nations because of political power interests, which for the sake of their territory to be inhabited and controlled.

However, there is a different view of the above, namely the recognition of the authority, the protection of Allah and appointment by God to the Gentiles. Apparently, there are other nations which are recognized as a nation blessed by God, namely Egypt and Assyria (which is actually the enemies of Israel). The Word of God through the prophet Isaiah says:

*In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the middle of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at the edge of the land. Moreover, it will be a sign and a witness to the Lord of armies in the land of Egypt: when they are crying out to the Lord because of their cruel masters, then he will send them a savior and a strong one to make them free. Moreover, the Lord will give the knowledge of himself to Egypt, and the Egyptians will give honor to the Lord in that day; they will give him worship with offerings and meal offerings, and will take an oath to the Lord and give effect to it. (Isa. 19:19-21; cf. Ariarajah, 1987:11).*

Moreover, according to the prophet Isaiah, the nations is the same as the people of Israel and the people of Israel together with other nations. The Word says:

*In that day, there will be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt will come into Assyria; and the Egyptians will give worship to the Lord together with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third together with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the earth: because of the blessing of the Lord of armies which he has given them, saying, A blessing on Egypt my people, and on Assyria the work of my hands, and on Israel my heritage. (Isa. 19:23-25; cf. Ariarajah, 1987:11-12).*

In addition, it shows that other nations as a tool and a means of blessing of God is a statement of the prophet Isaiah:

*The Lord says to the man of his selection, to Cyrus, whom I have taken by the right hand, putting down nations before him, and taking away the arms of kings; making the doors open before him, so that the ways into the towns may not be shut; (Isa. 45:1; cf. Ariarajah, 1987:12).*

Here it seems clear that God chose and put on another nation king (Cyrus was king of Persia) as his right hand to subdue the kings of other nations. Recognition and acceptance of the truth of other nations so that they are also recognized, blessed and used by God because the fact is that other nations also are God's creation and God loves them. Their ancestors are the ancestors were related or a descendant and a single source, namely God the Creator. Their ancestor is Abraham/Ibrahim, Noah and Adam-Eve. Therefore, although admittedly, expressly and generally understood that Israel is God's chosen nation, but it does not mean that God does not bless other nations. God still bless other nations. In fact, other nations also enabled God to rebuke Israel or be a channel of blessing to Israel (e.g., Egypt that God used to provide food for the people of Israel when they face starvation). In the state of war between Israel with the other nations, when Israel defeated them there but there are also times when they beat Israel.

From the exposure of the views and attitudes of the OT-Bible towards plurality above, it is clear that besides recognition of Israel as the chosen people, it is clear too that God also accepted and recognizes the existence of other nations. God loves and blesses them. This fact shows the various attitudes towards plurality, which is exclusive and pluralist; and tolerance, compromise and even submissive to the fact that there are others around, and they even loved and used as the right hand of God as well.

The main source of the views and attitudes of Christians in the New Testament (NT) about pluralism and tolerance is shown exemplary by Jesus. Jesus or Christianity emerged, worked and began to circulate in the community of Judaism. Thus, when this community appeared, plurality has become part of it. Therefore, Jesus-Christian teachings regarding pluralism influenced by an encounter with other religions, particularly Jews and Hellenistic (Greek religious culture). Broadly speaking, particularism or exclusivism which understand Jesus and his teachings as the main truth appear in some parts of the New Testament, both the theology of the gospels and the letters of Paul, as well as the letters of the public. Jesus is seen as the only way to salvation. John's Gospel shows the distinctive role of Jesus:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)*

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me (John 14:6)".*

So here it appears the exclusive or particular view of his words; that he is the only way to God, or he is the way of salvation. This particular teachings of the New Testament Bible coloring the New Testament teachings and Christianity throughout history. This is the core teaching of Christianity that Jesus is the Savior; he gives or takes people on the right path to God and to attain salvation.

However, Jesus did not rule out the presence of the nations around him. He also did not give a negative evaluation, or he did not consider them bad or evil. Jesus accepted the existence of other nations and wanted to hang out with them, and even he used a man of foreign in his ethical teachings, i.e. the Parable of a good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). In fact, Jesus was willing to meet and talk with any groups regarded as an enemy by the Jewish community, such as the Samaritans. So, Jesus, and then the apostles, acknowledging the existence of other nations, and think of them as those who need to hear the good news of the gospel.

The views and attitudes of Jesus to the other nations/religions shows that Jesus acknowledged and accepted their existence; and that those people needs to be treated well, by giving attention and raised the dignity of their lives. Also that they are the "object" of Jesus' and the apostles' missionary work, so that they can survive; or that they can be freed from the shackles of ignorance, poverty, pain and suffering, and they can live at peace.

In carrying out the work, one must have a strong faith and lifestyle which implement love (according to the law of love: God and to man). This task has been undertaken by Jesus and then he sent his disciples to continue the work into the life of the world. Jesus' command is:

*Moreover, Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and know, I am with you always, to the close of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)*

Some Christians understand the words of Jesus as the Great Commission. For example, Orthodox Christianity regarded this as the main task given by Jesus to the Christians. This command is contained in the meaning of the views and attitudes of Christianity to the world, including to other religious communities, that other nations (including the followers of other religions) is the address of the message of salvation. Thus, other religious communities perceived and addressed in terms of evangelism. Their existence is not denied, but it is considered as the unsaved, so they need to be saved. As Jesus said: "...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8 in Sidjabat, 1982).

The understandings on the Great Commission has encouraged many Christians, from the early history of the church in the apostles until this point in the missionary, to preach the gospel (which may be judged among other religions in an effort Christianization). So, in the Bible, the plurality considered as a good situation, which even became a hotbed for the spread and the values of God's kingdom. In other words, pluralism is understood as something that should be included; but pluralism was not there for himself. Pluralism is the socio-cultural and historical, not theological-doctrinal. This is because, even though Christianity recognizes the existence of other religions, but they are still considered as groups that still has shortcomings, namely the need for salvation. And, the duty of the followers of Jesus is to take them to salvation. The Christians has to be ready to suffer (or endured the cross) or even die. This is done by the apostles in the early developmental history of the church and then in the subsequent spread of Christianity.

Within the framework of such teaching understanding, tolerance is not a term that fit. Tolerance is only relevant if the circumstances, or the presence of different parties, are not required to exist. However, in the Bible, it is precisely Jesus or Christians would feel happy if they are in a plural society or go to the area that consists of various cultural backgrounds and religions as places or people like that into place for the performance of testimony that Jesus saves.

From the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament of the Bible, it appears that there are views and exclusive attitude in dealing with the plurality. However, it does not indicate rejection or antipathy toward the plurality of Jesus. The plurality of fixed received, understood and appreciated as an absolute fact. Jesus responded to the reality of this diversity in a story about an encounter with a Samaritan woman herself. Jesus and the woman and dialogue. This measure was to generate mutual understanding, mutual acceptance and mutual raise the dignity of life. He took the example of the good of others; in this case the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). Thus, the acceptance of plurality/pluralism should generate benefits and bring peace to all parties.

Religious tolerance in Indonesia can be built through interfaith or interreligious dialogue and cooperation because the dialogue will produce some mutual understanding among the people, which in turn give rise to tolerance and harmony. So tolerance and harmony among religious believers who live in harmony is a goal of dialogue. Through dialogue, we expect a religious community who have the spirit of harmony that led them to collaborate in unity to face the problems of social injustice, terrorism, secularism, materialism, hedonism and consumerism that threaten the life of humankind.

Interfaith dialogue is an essential need for religious people. Dialogue is an interpersonal relationship between people who give themselves in their process to get to know the other one. In the dialogue, persons should share information and values to deal with the problems of humanity. This is done to increase mutual understanding and critical objective and regrow a natural spirit, in order to build the cooperation to meet common interests (Fios & Gea, 2013).

There are several models of dialogue and cooperation that can be offered. First, create a grouping. Knitter (1985, 1995) divides the model of dialogue into three parts. The initial part is to focus on the theme: "there are many paths to the divine source (Devine Center)" as a point of departure or criteria. Next, the same variety of categories used to classify them according to Ecclesia centric (centered on the church) or Christocentric (centered in Christ) or theocentric (God-centered) as a point of departure or criteria. Finally, using criteria of elaboration of exclusivism understanding, inclusivism, and pluralism (Christ rejects other religions, Christ in religions or Christ with other religions).

The second model is to perform multilevel dialogue. This idea was proposed by Krishnanda in his "Wacana Buddha Dharma" (Discourse on Buddha Dharma) (in Fios & Gea, 2013). Krishnanda believes that there are some forms of dialogue, but not every form is suitable for every person in every opportunity. Because of that, the inter-religious dialogue is distinguished into four types of dialogues.

Dialogue of everyday life. Dialogue is conducted through cooperation and exemplary daily life at home, school, workplace and so forth. Although not directly touch the perspective of faith and doctrine, there is a positive silver lining that could be used in learning. Dialogue through social work. Cooperation among religious people will improve the dignity and the quality of human life, such as helping those who suffer, working on the development projects and so on. The dialogue of religious experience. Mutually enriching and advancing the appreciation of the values and ideals of each personal spiritual experience with prayer, meditation and so on. Practice it can be done in live action, and prayed for the peace of the world and so on. Dialogue of theological views. This dialogue is done by experts in religion to understand and appreciate the spiritual values respectively. Through this dialogue, they raised the religious views and religious heritage in addressing the actual problems faced together.

In addition to the dialog, there are several forms of cooperation among religious believers to do (Fios & Gea, 2013). The first form is improved morale. The main task of religions is to keep the religions with many moral messages contained in them can be a source of spirit and morality for his people. This can be done with the cooperation of religious figures and related institutions that provide motivation and encouragement for moral improvement among the people.

The second form is doing justice. Arguably our society is long enough to suffer because of injustice. In various sectors of life lasts unequal treatment, both for individuals and groups (race, ethnicity, region, gender, religion, status and so on). Discrimination in various forms and levels occur. These are where religions are called to play a role release. It is not impossible for religions to take strategic steps together to reduce and even eradicate the practice that has been devastating to the people of Indonesia for a long time.

The third form is improvements in the living standards. Improvement of the living standards of the people and the community is very urgent. Backwardness in one area will affect other areas. If the economy is weak, the improvement of education, health, and other fields will be abandoned. Therefore, religions, especially Christians, should feel compelled to participate together with other religious communities to improve the living standard of the people and community members.

## CONCLUSIONS

Religious plurality has become a major concern of religions, including Christianity. This is because the plurality itself has become an absolute reality in the society, even in the days when the process of establishing a new religion began. In Christianity, this has been faced since the days of the patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then in the prophets in the Old Testament. In that encounter, there are exclusive, inclusive and pluralist attitudes. Such things are also found in the days of the establishment of Christianity in the time of Jesus, his disciples, and his followers. Indeed, in the history of Christianity, even since the ancestors of the people of Israel, especially began with Abraham, in the encounter with others, exclusive and even extreme attitudes have become the dominant element. However, statements which indicate pluralist view and attitude that acknowledges and accepts the existence of other different parties earnestly and sincerely also seemed well. Other nations are also accepted as channels of God's blessing. Therefore, the other party is understood as having the same status and role.

In conjunction with the pluralistic society, the spirit of pluralistic thinking which is characterized by inclusivism (openness to accept the others and different) needs to be enforced in social interaction—particularly with other members of the society which have different principals,

opinions, and beliefs. Pluralism and tolerance are relieving attitudes toward others without sacrificing one's own principle.

Tolerance creates a harmonious relationship. Otherwise, intolerance will cause a conflictual relationship, and this will not benefit the religious communities. Conflictual interreligious relationship actually often caused by narrow fanaticism factors which lead to misinterpretations as well as caused by social-economic factors, which sociologically called relative deprivation, a left-behind feeling of a certain religious community from the other communities in the field of social economy which later on brought into the issues of religion. This issue must be noted by every religion—especially through the path of dialogue and cooperation in various fields; among others, to reduce poverty and inequality of education that should be the most important agenda. In this context, interfaith harmony and tolerance are very important.

In the context of building up dialogue and cooperation, the views and attitudes of Christians in the face of the reality of diversity—especially the inclusive and pluralist model—should be able to encourage people to reformulate theology based on the experience of the encounter in the plurality. In other words, that view could produce new formulations of doctrine as a result of or in accordance with the circumstances and needs of religious life in a pluralistic society. The doctrines produced as guidance by a religious community should come from the experience of an encounter with people of other religions, not a doctrine inherited which comes from the socio-cultural and religious in a different era. This could be based on the understanding that God, who is believed in religions not only worked in the past, in the early formation of religious concept but also one who is also present and active in human lives here and now. For the needs of formation of contextual theological formulas or doctrines, in particular, based on pluralism, first, it requires an intensive and positive encounter, characterized by a true dialogue. This will result in a mutual understanding, a mutual respect and an awareness of the needs of the ethical-moral and spiritual values shared by the communities that bring to a harmonious and peaceful life, both locally and globally.

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