



# Mission Sparks

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"AGAINST DISCRIMINATION  
AND RACISM TOWARDS  
RECONCILIATION AND UNITY"

A photograph of a protest. In the foreground, a person is holding a white sign with black text that reads "RACISM IS THE Real PANDEMIC". The word "RACISM" is in large, bold, black letters. "IS THE" is in smaller, black letters. "Real" is in a cursive script. "PANDEMIC" is in large, bold, black letters. To the left of "RACISM" is a small black icon of a virus. The background shows a crowd of people, some wearing face masks and hoodies, and other protest signs.



# Mission Sparks

Academic Journal of Asia Region

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# AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM TOWARDS RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

*An Editorial Note*

Discrimination and racism are complex issues which are expressed in conscious or unconsciously actions. Everybody can be a victim or perpetrator and even at the same time both victim and also perpetrator of discrimination in various forms, which are based on religion, gender, economic condition, social status, health, political context, and physical appearance.

Racism as a specific form of discrimination has multiple appearances and affects the life of all in multiple ways. The racial attitudes and supremacy are deeply rooted in system of thought, ideology, theology and political convictions. Through the educational systems, ideological convictions, and false theological interpretations the racial attitudes have been broadly and systematically implemented, transmitted, and justified.

In different regions and contexts, discrimination and racism are still alive and have shaped everybody. The constant reflection and action are required to overcome discrimination and racism in many areas. This Mission Sparks 12<sup>th</sup> edition which is brought to you on theme “Against Discrimination and Racism towards Reconciliation and Unity” is one of the effort to continue bringing the theme discrimination and racism up for discussion. Some topics which are represented by various writers in this edition, cover the broad perspectives of overcoming discrimination and racism and how to work on reconciliation and unity.

From the perspective of Papua, **Diana Binkor Jenbise**, introduce Christology, Jesus as Cenderawasih. It is an attempt to under-

stand Jesus Christ in the midst of the realities of the life of Papuan. A Christology represent the hope of Papuan to live in peace and equality with other people in Indonesia, and their effort against the discrimination and racism they have been experiencing until now.

**Amran Simangunsong** elaborated the gender issues in the Batak culture. He explored Dalihan Natolu, a basic principle of Batak community to challenge patriarchal practices in the understanding of Batak community and how its implication to the Batak society. He argued that the patriarchal system has distorted the principle of equality in Dalihan Natolu so that some traditional practices should be revisited.

Still from the Indonesian perspective, **Alokasih Gulo** explored issues of the culture of shame in the Indonesian context on the pastoral counselling ministries. Using an interdisciplinary approaches he mentioned that it is essential to implement holistic-integrated pastoral counselling ministries in Indonesia's context of the shame culture

From the biblical perspectives, **Merilyn** brought the voice of Vashti in the Old Testament against sexual violence. Her article is written with storytelling techniques and a feminist approach that explores women's stories which are often neglected because of the patriarchal systems and attitudes. Merilyn affirmed that the Vashti's voice is a representative of the marginalized people's voice that should be appreciated which encourage women speaking up for justice and liberation.

**Uwe Hummel** on his article focused mainly on the development of the paradigm of racial discrimination in the history of Western imperialism and colonialist theology which has culminated in the system of Apartheid. He brought a reflection on passages from the Bible which are often misused to justify racism, followed by the liberating new approach of Black-Consciousness and Black-Theology. He closed his article with "Ministry of Reconciliation" on 2 Corinthians 5:18 as the ultimate antithesis to the sin of racism.

The discussion on human right and structures of power is brought by **Jakob Nehls**. He elaborated many questions arise on how human rights are located in the existing injustices; what contradictions are apparent; what role do human rights play in responding to new challenges such as the climate crisis; what things that should rethink when people struggle together for a reconciled and united world. He emphasized the need to systematically incorporate the

criticism voices into human right works to strengthen economic, social and cultural rights and deconstruct the savages-victims-saviors pattern found in human rights work.

Last but not least, **Purjatian Azhar**, wrote from the Muslim perspectives on Islam and peacebuilding against discrimination and racism through non-violence approach. He argued that focusing on the Islamic study and peace will give more impacts and contributions rather than discussing violence in Islam, because Islam has abundance of sources about peace and on how to work together for peace with other religions.

Enjoy reading!  
Dr. Dyah Ayu Krismawati – Chief Editor





# **JESUS AS CENDERAWASIH STANDS WITH PAPUAN PEOPLE'S HOPE**

**(Christology from Papuan People's Perspectives)**

*Diana Binkor Jenbisa*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Everyone in this world hopes to live in peace without conflict. However, the reality is that humans' egoism to control others makes an unpeaceful life. For example, the war between Russia and Ukraine where one wants to rule another. Moreover, other parts of the world, such as Indonesia, still lives with many problems such as human rights violation, discrimination, oppression, corruption, inter-religious conflict, and so on. Relating to the World Church Council 11 Assembly theme: Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity, this writing tries to examine Papuan Christology which looks at Jesus as Cenderawasih who stands with Papuan people's hope to live in peace and equality with other citizens in Indonesia.

## **BACKGROUND**

Papua is an island in eastern Indonesia. Bounded by the country of Papua New Guinea,<sup>1</sup> its ethnic composition is complex. Papuans people speak 250 different languages.<sup>2</sup> The official language in Papua is the Indonesian language, known as *Bahasa*. The original

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<sup>1</sup> Jhon R.G. Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1993), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Nineteenth Edition* (Dallas, Texas: Summer Institutes of Linguistics International, 2016), pp. 1–2.

Papuan people have a similar structure of body and culture with Melanesian Groups in the Pacific. The Papuans people have dark skin and curly hair. According to statistical data, the total population lives in Papua Province is 3,322,526 and West Papua Province is 871,510.<sup>3</sup> The population in the two provinces consists of Papuans (indigenous) and immigrants from other parts of Indonesia. In addition, culturally, Papuans ethnic groups are rich in folk songs, myths, dances, carvings, poems, traditional houses, rituals, and initiations among others. Unfortunately, many of these cultural elements have been lost because they have been replaced by a more dominant culture and political elements from outside. The government has long suspected that Papuan cultural expressions are part of an independent Papua campaign, resulting in a ban.<sup>4</sup>

Papua is a land that has many problems. The primary problem is its political status. Previously, Papua was not known by colonizers. However, in 1545, Spaniard, Yñigo Ortiz de Retes began his exploration from Mexico and landed in Papua, which he named Nueva Guinea. According to him, the people were similar to Africans who lived on the coast of Guinea. The purpose of his exploration was to look for gold; however, he did not find it. Because of this, the Spanish did not occupy Papua. Sixty years later, in 1606, the first Dutch ships sailed along the coast of Papua but were not willing to occupy Papua. However, when the Dutch heard rumors that the British wanted to take over the whole Papuan island, they responded by building a fort in Triton's Bay, in Kaimana, Western Papua in 1828. The Dutch started to control Western Papua when two Protestant missionaries from Germany, William Carl Ottow and Johan Geissler sent to Papua by Dutch Protestant Christian foundation called the Christian Workman on February 5, 1855.<sup>5</sup> Politically, in 1895, the colonizers divided the island of Papua into two parts: eastern and western Papua. Eastern Papua belonged to British colonizers and was known as Papua New Guinea, and Western Papua belonged to the Dutch and was known as Netherlands New Guinea.<sup>6</sup> Today,

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<sup>3</sup> ICP Secretariat & Budi Tjahjono, *Human Rights in West Papua 2017* (Wuppertal, Geneva: International Coalition for Papua, 2017), pp. 120-121.

<sup>4</sup> Enos H. Rumansara dan Ferdinand Marisan, *Apresiasi Seni Budaya Papua Sebagai Identitas Orang Papua* (Jayapura: UNCEN, 2017), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Kal Muller, *Mengenai Papua* (Indonesia: Daisy Worlds Books, 2008), pp. 94–95.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Netherlands New Guinea is known by the name of Papua or West Papua.

On August 17, 1945 when Indonesia declared their independence from the Dutch colonizers, the territory of Indonesia only stretched from the island of Sumatra to the Moluccas without including Papua. In 1960, the Dutch government made a regulation that establishing the Morning Star flag as a symbol and the song “My Land of Papua” as a national anthem, together with the Papuan People’s Council, which prepared for the independence of Papua. On December 1, 1961 the Dutch Government declared the Independence of Papua. However, the first Indonesian President, Soekarno, through his three people’s commandments (*Trikora*) on December 19, 1961 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia legislated the dissolution of the Papuan state that was built by the Dutch.<sup>7</sup> The Indonesian government, in order to control Papua, used the Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Deliberately, Soekarno sought military support from the Soviet Union regarding the matter of Papua. The U.S. government found this Indonesian move as a threat to the Pacific region. In order to placate a communist-friendly Indonesia, America pressed the Dutch to hand over Papua to Indonesia. The New York Agreement on August 15, 1962 ruled that Papua should be transferred by the Dutch to the United Nations.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, between 1962 and 1969, Papua was administered by the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA), and the Indonesian military was regarded as a part of UNTEA. In 1969, the United Nations called for a Referendum for Papuan people based on the New York Agreement, saying that the Act of Free Choice should be organized based on “One Man, One Vote” principle, but in fact the referendum was performed through the representation of only 1,025 Papuans from a population of 800,000. The vote took place through military intimidation, psychological pressure, and holding people at gunpoint. After the ratification by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 1969, Papua was officially stamped by the UN as part of Indonesia.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> John Saltford, *United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua 1962–1969: The Anatomy of Betrayal* (London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> P. J. Drooglever, “Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat (PEPERA) 1969 Kajian Akademis,” in *Yubelium dan Pembebasan Menuju Papua Baru*, ed. Karel Phil Erari (Jakarta: Aksara Karunia, 2006), pp. 6–7.

<sup>9</sup> Jhon RG Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1993), 26. Cf. Karel Phil Erari, *Yubelium dan Pembebasan Menuju Papua Baru* (Jakarta: Aksara Karunia, 2006), pp. 57–58.

Since Indonesia secured control over Papua on May 1, 1963 and established formal sovereignty over the territory in 1969, Papua was designated a military operation area (abolished in 1999). The first thing that Indonesian government did was to erase all matters relating to the name of Papua. The name of Papua was replaced and prohibited. However, in 2000, the name of Papua could be used generally in Indonesia after President Abdul Rahman Wahid allowed it. From integration in 1963 to 2000, the Papuan people had lived as second-class citizens in their own land, deprived of their right to self-determination and experiencing serious human rights abuses in the hands of Indonesian authorities. Violent Indonesian military campaigns and extrajudicial killings claimed the lives of thousands of Papuans. Papuan people living in places where military operations were conducted had horrific stories to tell about the abuses they had suffered.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Indonesian Government evicted Papuans from their land, exploited resources, destroyed property and crops, denigrated and attacked Papuan culture, and excluded Papuan people from the upper levels of government, business, and education.<sup>11</sup> This situation made many Papuan people feel betrayed by the Dutch, who arranged the transfer of Papuan owned lands to the Indonesian government through the United Nations, without consent of the Papuans who owned the lands. This caused the Papuan people to struggle for justice and self-determination. Many people died struggling to achieve independence.<sup>12</sup>

In socio-economic terms, Papua which is divided by the Indonesian government into two provinces—Papua and West Papua—has suffered. Since joining Indonesia, Papua and West Papua have been the poorest regions in Indonesia although they are rich with natural resources. According to the Central Agency on Statistics, Papua province has the highest percentage of poor people in Indonesia, at 27.74% of the total population of 3,322,526. Meanwhile, West

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<sup>10</sup> Francesca Restifo, Budi Tjahjono, and Silvia Palomba, eds., *Report of Human Rights in West Papua 2010/2011* (Hongkong: Asian Human Rights Commission and Clear-Cut Publishing and Printing Co, 2011), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Brundige, Winter King, Priyeha Vahali, Stephen Vladeck, Xiang Yuan, eds., *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control* (The Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic: International Human Rights Clinic, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Genevieve Woods, Norman and Budi Tjahjono, eds., *Human Rights and Peace for Papua, Laporan Hak Asasi Manusia Di Papua 2015* (Geneva Swiss: Franciscans International, 2015), 76. More than 100,000 local Papuans have been murdered in their struggle for independence.

Papua province has the second highest percentage of poor people in Indonesia, at 23.01% of a population of 871,510.<sup>13</sup> In the Papua province, big companies have licenses from the government to exploit natural resources. These companies include the American owned Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Inc. (USA), which has been the biggest **producer of gold and copper in the world since 1967<sup>14</sup> and owns** palm oil and timber industry companies. In the West Papua province, the British Petroleum Company has been given license from the Indonesian government to explore petroleum and gas.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of health services, Papua (both Papua and West Papua provinces) is the worst than other regions in Indonesia. Human rights organizations have reported that the provinces of Papua and West Papua are continuously becoming the regions with the highest prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS infections, and the quality of health services is alarmingly low. Furthermore, maternal and child mortality rates are very high in Papua. Moreover, due to inadequate health facilities, severely ill patients are referred to hospitals, that have good health facilities, outside Papua.<sup>16</sup> The educational system in Papua has been left behind by regions in other parts of Indonesia. In 2015, the rate of illiteracy in Papua and West Papua provinces remained the highest in Indonesia, with 28.47% amongst residents, aged between 15 and 44 years, and 31.57% amongst people over the age of 45.<sup>17</sup> Even though both Papua and West Papua have been given special autonomy since 2001, as a response to the clamor for formal independence, such autonomy is limited. Autonomy is enjoyed only by Papuan people who hold positions in the government and by those who are close to the Indonesian government. However, the majority of Papuan people are poor, suffering in a land comprise with natural resources and wealth. The Papuan who struggle to retain their land, the government labels them separatists. On the

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<sup>13</sup> ICP Secretariat & Budi Tjahjono, *Human Rights in West Papua 2017* (Wuppertal, Geneva: International Coalition for Papua, 2017), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Karel Phil Erari, *Tanah Kita, Hidup Kita: Hubungan Manusia dan Tanah di Irian Jaya Sebagai Persoalan Teologis* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1999), 136–137. Cf. Tjahjono, *Human Rights in West Papua 2017*, pp. 135–147.

<sup>15</sup> Francesca Restifo, Budi Tjahjono, and Silvia Palomba, eds., *Report of Human Rights in West Papua 2010/2011*, (Hongkong: Asian Human Rights Commission and Clear-Cut Publishing and Printing Co, 2011), p. 41.

<sup>16</sup> ICP Secretariat & Budi Tjahjono, *Human Rights in West Papua 2017*, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

one hand, the Indonesian government considers Papua as part of the Republic of Indonesia, but on the other hands, Papuan people believe that Indonesia forcibly seized Papua. This has been debated up to now.

Papuans Christians try to develop their christology to answer they hope to live in peace and equality with other people in Indonesia. Their christology develops against the discrimination they experience from their lived experience of injustice by the state and the companies the state enables. Jesus as Cenderawasih appears here, in their reality and context. However, before discussing Jesus as Cenderawasih, it is crucial to understand the essence of christology.

## **CHRISTOLOGY AS THE CENTREPIECE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH**

Christology is the centrepiece of Christian faith. Christology is the Christian community's attempt to understand who Jesus is as the Christ in their life experiences. For a long time, the christological understanding of the Papuan people has been shaped by Western Mission theology. The theology of Papuan churches remains based on the legacy of western theology. The theology of Papuan churches cannot answer the challenges and needs of the Papuan people. Papuan theology has not been well developed. In general, theological education at the Theological School in Papua is still based on Western theology. So it can be said that the theology of the Papuan churches comes from the tradition of the Western Church. This causes the churches in Papua to be less sensitive to the Papuan Christians' perspective on Jesus as the Christ. Papuan Christians themselves, however, understand Jesus as the Christ through their political experience before and since integration with the Indonesian state in 1963. And also through culture and in association with indigenous religious belief systems that still exist today.

Papuan christology is still understood as an attempt to return to paganism and syncretism, and to uphold a certain political agenda. That is why Papuan christology does not develop freely in the theological process in Papua. The Papuan Christ image of Jesus must be given a place in Christian theology. It is important for Papuan Christians to share their experiences of how difficult it is to live as a people who are considered incapable of conceiving a christology for their own church! The Papuan people struggle to claim that they have the right to live, think, and manage their own land and country

without other parties intervention—other parties who consider themselves better. The experience of Papuans since the evangelism of the western mission and being part of the Dutch colony until the time of integration with Indonesia, 1963, teaches that Papuans must rise up to organize their lives, declare their identity and develop a christology that is able to answer their own challenges and needs. Jesus the Cenderawasih is one with the Papuan peoples' struggle to protect their identity, land, and liberation. In the Christ image of Jesus as Cenderawasih, Papuan Christians encounter Jesus in the whole of their lives.

Every Christian has the right to freely claim who Jesus is in the context of their life experience and culture. In this regard, Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, after studying the discourse of Asian women's christology concludes that "christology is a human effort to understand Jesus Christ in the midst of the realities of life. Christology can never be absolute or absolute."<sup>18</sup> It is important to find and describe Christ images of Jesus from the Papuan contexts. This means that Papuan christology must answer the reality of the Papuan Christian community in every era and their life experiences. Papuans have done this in seeing Jesus as Cenderawasih.

## **JESUS AS CENDERAWASIH STANDS WITH PAPUAN PEOPLE'S HOPE**

Jesus as Cenderawasih emerges from a study of the importance of Cenderawasih for Papuan people. For the Papuans, Cenderawasih is a symbol of greatness and the presence of a supreme being in their lives. Indeed, Cenderawasih is the name of a Papuan bird known as the bird of Paradise (*Paradisaeidae*). Cenderawasih birds live in Papua, Papua New Guinea, and East Australia. The Cenderawasih has 43 species characterized by extravagant plumage in gorgeous colors such as black, brown, reddish, orange, yellow, white, blue, green, and purple, with long and colorful antennae.<sup>19</sup> Based on the meaning of the name or its etymology, Cenderawasih combines two words: *cendra* meaning God or goddess, and *wasih* meaning messenger. Thus, Cenderawasih means the messenger of the

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<sup>18</sup> Muriel. Orevillo-Montenegro, *The Jesus of Asian Women*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books), 2006, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> Frino Bariarcianur and Ahmad Yunus, *Papua Jejak Langkah Penuh Kesan: An Expedition to Remember* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia, 2011), 81–83. Cf. F.J.F. van Hasselt, *Di Tanah Orang Papua*, ed. Joost W. Mirino (Jayapura: Yayasan Timotius Papua, 2002), pp. 9–11.

gods and goddesses.<sup>20</sup> Traditionally, Papuan people believed that Cenderawasih was an incarnation of the deity. Papuan people believe that Cenderawasih is a bird from heaven. In traditional ceremonies, Papuan people use the Cenderawasih bird or feathers as traditional hats and clothes. Papuan traditional leaders wear Cenderawasih as a symbol of the greatness that the deity gives. Moreover, the colors of the bird make up the primary form of painting that covers Papuan peoples' bodies when they perform traditional ceremonies. Papuans equate Cenderawasih's color with the skin of Papuan people, and the feathers of the bird reflect the shape of Papuan hair, which is curly.

Papuan people are very proud to be called Cenderawasih. One uniqueness of the Cenderawasih bird is it likes to dance and whistle beautifully. Papuan people create traditional dances and songs that use the way of the dance and whistle of Cenderawasih. Cenderawasih's feather colors are so beautiful that they amaze people who see them. Cenderawasih is a smart bird in terms of protecting itself. For instance, when humans approach Cenderawasih, it goes to a safer place that humans can not touch them. Cenderawasih avoids danger when threats come. Unfortunately, the population of Cenderawasih is decreasing due to hunting and logging of forests in Papua. To protect themselves further, these birds have migrated into Papua's untouched interior areas.

These birds of Paradise are diverse and spread evenly throughout the land of Papua. The Papuan people, consisting of 250 tribes, are united under the symbol of the bird of Paradise. The Papuan people also believe that the map of Papua's Island resembles the form of a Cenderawasih bird. The Papuan people use Cenderawasih to describe their characteristics and their land that differ from other people and places in the world. Cenderawasih has a special meaning for Papuan people. They look at Cenderawasih as a Papuan bird and as a unique symbol of Papuan identity. They use Cenderawasih to claim their identity. Cenderawasih appears in the song entitled "Sup Mambesak" (The Land of Cenderawasih). The song was written by Papuan musicians, Simon Wambrau and Sam Kapisa.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Diki Setiadi Permana, "Burung Cendrawasih, Bird of Paradise," *Forester Act News*, November 12, 2019. <https://foresteract.com/burung-cendrawasih/#:-:text=Burung%20Cendrawasih%20memiliki%20ciri%2Dciri%2C%20putih%2C%20ungu%2C%20dan%20hijau>.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold C. Ap, *Songger Berok* (Jayapura: Manyouri Group, 1978), p. 23.

Sup mambesak Manseren byuk be aya,  
 ya newen da man be a wawaos  
 Bon bekaki mandif nary or ro bo  
 Randak ro so ron isof maroke  
 Kuker sawarwar swa ruser yena  
 Manser'n Ryo us aya kada  
 Sup beryan Manser'n byuk be aya  
 Kuker payam yum na  
 Yawaren warek na?

The land of Cenderawasih, Lord gives to me  
 The land which has become a conversation  
 With the highest mountains  
 Spreading from Sorong to Merauke  
 With all my love and my mind  
 Lord protects us  
 The land which is given by Lord to us  
 With their beautiful panorama  
 May I be able to keep and protect?

In my opinion, the Cenderawasih symbolizes the presence of deity, beauty, protection, plurality, and unification among Papuans. Furthermore, mentioning Jesus as the Bird of Paradise or Cenderawasih tells who Jesus is for the Papuans. For Papuan Christians, Jesus is a symbol of beautiful grace that unifies all Papuan tribes. Thus, the Christ image of Jesus as the Cenderawasih of the Papuan cultural and natural symbol shares similarities with early Christian symbols.

The New Testament, specifically the Gospel of John, exhibits the analogy method that uses similarity, metaphor, and symbolism. In the Gospel of John, Jesus teaches in aphorisms, parables, and short discourses, however, John teaches in long discourses on symbolic themes. The christology of John witnessed that Jesus refers to himself by using symbols or metaphors relating to the culture of the time and to nature. This is evident when the Johannine Christian community confessed Jesus as Logos or the Word (John 1:1-3). Moreover, the christology of John begins with what Jesus said about himself. Jesus said "I am" the bread of life (John 6:35), "I am" the light of the world (John 8:12), "I am" the good shepherd (John 10:11), "I am" the way, and the truth and the life (John 14:1-14), "I am" living water (John 4:1-42), and "I am" the true vine (John 15:1-8).<sup>22</sup> The christology of John witnessed that Jesus used the "I am" sayings to address himself as Christ. The christology of John shows that the Christ images of Jesus can be found in the form of symbols that exist in culture and nature. Thus, as a Papuan, I confess Jesus as Cenderawasih. This confession asserts that Jesus is a part of Papuan peoples' lives. Understanding Christ's images of Jesus must come from the encounters of Jesus with Papuan Christians. Papuan Christians believe that Jesus is Cenderawasih, the symbol of the

<sup>22</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1994); Cf. Dennis C. Duling and Norman Perrin, (*The New Testament: Proclamation and Parenthesis, Myth and History*. The United States of America: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994).

beauty and prosperity of the Papuan people and their land. The Papuan song created by Yance Rumbino in 1985 entitled Tanah Papua reflects this,<sup>23</sup>

### **Tanah Papua**

Di Sana Pulauku yang ku puja slalu  
Tanah Papua, pulau indah  
Hutan dan lautmu yang membisu slalu  
Cenderawasih, burung emas  
Gunung gunung lembah lembah  
Yang penuh misteri  
Yang ku puja slalu  
Keindahan alammu  
yang mempesona  
Sungaimu yang deras  
mengalirkan emas  
Syo ya, Tuhan terima kasih

### **The Land of Papua**

In the distance is my island that I praise  
The Land of Papua, the beautiful island  
Your forests and your oceans leave me speechless  
Cenderawasih, golden bird  
The mountains and the valleys,  
Filled with mystery  
And I praise them always,  
I praise the beauty of your nature  
that humbles me  
Your rushing rivers  
filled with gold  
Oh Lord, I offer my thanks.

Accordingly, Cenderawasih, the bird of Paradise has become a symbol of honor for the Papuans. To confess Jesus as Cenderawasih is to confess that Jesus is a Papuan who shares the Papuan people's life experience and culture. Up to this time, however, the iconography in Papuan churches portrays Jesus as a Westerner or a person from another part of Indonesia. It is, therefore, about time for the people to see Jesus as the unique Cenderawasih. Jesus understands the hopes and prayers of the Papuan people to live in unity for the protection of Papuans and the land. The Papuan people, like the Cenderawasih, are beautiful with curly hair and dark skin. Unfortunately, they are hunted down and marginalized in their own land.

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus is Cenderawasih, who is in solidarity with the Papuan people and their land. In images of Cenderawasih, Papuan Christians meet Jesus throughout their lives. Through the Christ image of Jesus as Cenderawasih, new understandings can be opened to understand images of Christ not yet explored in Papuan culture.

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<sup>23</sup> Satu Harapan Magazine Jayapura Second Edition, 21 Mei 2017.

<http://www.satuharapan.com/read-detail/read/lagu-tanah-papua-ajak-oap-jadi-tuan-di-negerinya-sendiri>.

It is important to understand that christology does not only exist in certain traditional western christological spaces which are influenced by western church heritage; it exists in all the wonderful-created-corners of the earth. Jesus as Cenderawasih is a symbol of Papuan christological liberation. An image of Christ Jesus found through a Papuan perspective. Therefore, the Christ image of Jesus as Cenderawasih is part of Papuan christology.

Papuan christology introduces the Christ image of Jesus developed by Papuan Christians from their encounter with Jesus through their culture and life experiences. It is not only Papuan Christians who have gained a new understanding of who Jesus is based on both the richness of their land and culture and the injustice of their history. Their Indonesian brothers and sisters and all who encounter them can begin to see equality where once they saw only exploitation. Papuan Christians, in claiming Jesus as Cenderawasih are living the dignity of their identity and heritage through their theology. Their christology invites the Papuan church, bound in the controlling mind frame of missional western christology, and the Indonesian church, still influenced by the discrimination of its government towards Papuans, to view not only Papuan Christians with the dignity their Christ demands, but also themselves. It is a radical invitation to step out of a theology influenced by the egoism of control that brings unpeace.

Eventually, Christian communities can stand against discrimination and exclusion when they have a good understanding of the Christ images of Jesus as a part of their own life experiences and struggles to create reconciliation and unity between human beings and creation.

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# **DALIHAN NATOLU: TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY IN THE BATAK SOCIETY**

*Dr. Amran Simangunsong*

## **ABSTRACT**

Cultural equality is essential in the heart of Batak people. *Dalihan Natolu* is the basic principle for Batak community, which grant helping each other in equal position for men and women. However, the patriarchal system has distorted the principle of *Dalihan Natolu*. By investigating *Dalihan Natolu* through cultural feminist analysis, this article shows that there are some traditional practices which must be revisited. Eventually, *Dalihan Natolu* in feminist perspective is necessary against discrimination in the Batak society. The article also explains that the Batak church is indispensable to support gender equity.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Historically, Batak community conserves a patriarchal system, which considers men as the primary role in the society. The position of women is secondary (less important) and women's role is always exploited in the family. However, the foundation of Batak philosophy is based on *Dalihan Natolu*.<sup>1</sup> It illustrates the three sides of family: brothers, daughters, and parents-in-law. This concept declares the kinship of Batak community and the role of women is highlighted especially on the sides of daughters and parents-in-law.

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<sup>1</sup> Literally translated as the out-of-date tripod furnace, is used as a cooking device in an old traditional kitchen.

It can be perceived, the idea of *Dalihan Natolu* seems to account gender balance. Moreover, the influence of modernization and migration of people has led the freedom of women to participate in all areas of work and occupation. John Naisbitt, for instance, has predicted that the role of woman is vital in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

However, in reality, when *Dalihan Natolu* is applied in cultural practices and ceremonies, the position of women is much lower and exploited. It occurs not only among families or community but also in public life. It has caused sharp contrast on the role of women in society. On one side, they have to work at the office and on the other side they also have to work at home. This condition becomes a challenge for Batak people, especially women, because *Dalihan Natolu* has two sides which contradicts the position of woman, one side is supporting, but the other side is deteriorating.

Therefore, this situation arises problem and question: What is the principle of *Dalihan Natolu* in Batak society? How does Batak people see the position of women? What can feminist contribute to *Dalihan Natolu* for gender issue in Batak community?

This article conducts the methodology of cultural feminist analysis as a critical theory on the issue of gender in the Batak community by investigating the concept of *Dalihan Natolu* in Batak society.

The identity of Batak community is constructed by cultural heritages which have been inherited for hundreds or may be thousands years ago. Patriarchal system is also formed by one of cultural heritages. How the Batak people practice their culture on the basis of *Dalihan Natolu* demands an answer as people seek fairness and social justice.

This article mainly discusses gender issues in cultural values of Batak people. Since *Dalihan Natolu* is the focus, it explores some patriarchal practices in *Dalihan Natolu*, and its implication on the Batak society including the role of the Batak church in Indonesia.

## **TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF GENDER AND FEMINISM**

Traditional concept of gender and feminism in Batak community is to explain the difference between man and woman. These term has been confusing the term of sex. The two terms are usually used interchangeably. Both are defined as two different sexes. Sexes have biological orientation which differentiate human in two kinds: man and woman. Biologically, there are some organs or anatomy of hu-

man being which inherent and indicating their sexual types: woman or man. The nature of organs are given permanently.

Most of Batak people are religious person, and they believe that God has given these organs to human beings. Indeed, in modern science, gender is different from sex. Gender has social, psychological, and cultural aspects. The term of gender is often connected to identity, stereotype, norm, and role. Gender has an idea of social difference. This difference is deconstructed by a society. Therefore, the character of gender is typically dynamic not static, meaning it can change in specific time and space. A norm or culture can probably modify the role of man and woman in a society. This process, surely will take a long time, starting from internalization, socialization, at this point, religion and state can be involved in the process.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, Batak people have used this traditional concept and we will see how they treat women culturally through the philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu*. Before we discuss it further, we need to see the definition of gender and feminism lexically and how it emerges historically.

## **GENDER AND FEMINISM: DEFINITION AND HISTORY**

According to the Dictionary, Gender is either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. The term is also used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.<sup>3</sup> While feminism, the issue of rights for women, became prominent during the French and American revolutions in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> In Britain, feminism became prominent thing until the emergence of the suffragette movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that lead to a significant political change.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti N, *Kebijakan publik pro gender [Public Policy Pro-Gender]* (Kerja sama Lembaga Pengembangan Pendidikan (LPP) dan UPT Penerbitan dan Pencetakan UNS (UNS Press), Universitas Sebelas Maret, 2009), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Gender, n. : Oxford English Dictionary," accessed April 29, 2022, <https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/77468>.

<sup>4</sup> "Feminism | Definition of Feminism in English by Oxford Dictionaries," Oxford Dictionaries | English, accessed February 27, 2022, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/feminism>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Therefore, the term of gender and feminism have been misinterpreted in Indonesian society, especially in Batak community. The two terms are distinct. The definition of gender refers to sexual difference, while feminism refers to a movement addressing the rights of women in society, which has started in Europe and America.

Historically there are three waves of feminism. The first wave of feminism began in the United States and England. This movement was a long struggle before women won the vote in 1920.<sup>6</sup> The struggle went as far back as the Seneca Falls Convention in New York in 1848, in which during that time, more than 300 men and women assembled for the nation's first women's rights convention. The Seneca Falls Declaration was outlined by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), claiming the natural equity of women and outlining the political strategy of equal access and opportunity. This declaration awakened the suffrage movement.<sup>7</sup>

The second-wave of feminism refers mostly to the radical feminism of the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists, and other significant feminist groups joined the 1969 protest to show how women in pageant competitions were paraded like cattle, highlighting the underlying assumption that the way women look is more important than what they do, what they think, or even whether they think at all.<sup>8</sup> Marching down the Atlantic City boardwalk and close to the event itself, feminists staged several types of theatrical activism: crowning a sheep Miss America and throwing "oppressive" gender artifacts, such as bras, girdles, false eyelashes, high heels, and makeup, into a trash can in front of reporters.<sup>9</sup>

The third wave of feminism (1990s–onward) arose partially as a response to the perceived failures of second-wave feminism. There are three main concerns: the diversity of "women" is recognized and emphasis is placed on identity, gender, race, nation, social order and sexual preference, changes on stereotypes, media portrayals and language used to define women, and the last was sexual identities.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "6236\_Chapter\_1\_Krolokke\_2nd\_Rev\_Final\_Pdf.Pdf," accessed February 27, 2022, [https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/6236\\_Chapter\\_1\\_Krolokke\\_2nd\\_Rev\\_Final\\_Pdf.pdf](https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/6236_Chapter_1_Krolokke_2nd_Rev_Final_Pdf.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> "6236\_Chapter\_1\_Krolokke\_2nd\_Rev\_Final\_Pdf.Pdf."

<sup>8</sup> Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975* (U of Minnesota Press, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Echols.

<sup>10</sup> "6236\_Chapter\_1\_Krolokke\_2nd\_Rev\_Final\_Pdf.Pdf."

From this brief historical background, we found that people, especially women since modern era, are demanding their full rights as human beings. They are challenging the relation between men (as a group) and women (as another) which have been penetrating in male-bias society. They are also contesting all power structures, laws and conventions that keep women servile, subordinate, and being a second class in social reality.

## **PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM IN BATAK SOCIETY**

As the history told us that feminist movement is a response for male-bias and oppression toward women in almost all aspects of life, thus generally, women have been more often oriented towards the domestic realm than men always do in the public realm. This reality is also happening in Indonesian context, especially Batak society.

Patriarchal system is strong in the Batak society. Each family is expected to have son to continue the lineage generation, because man is the one who brings the clan (*marga*). For instance, my *marga* is “Simangunsong”, thus all my children must use Simangunsong as their last name or family name. This *marga* must be recorded in *Tarombo* (family tree record). Thus, for those who do not have son(s), their *tarombo* is lost.

The position of woman is lower than man. Batak woman will eventually leave their family after being married. Woman are considered as companion in all traditional occasions, but they have no significant role in decision-making, especially in the husband’s family. Woman is considered as a new “comer”. Traditional concept on the role of women is still maintained especially in rural areas. Women usually work in households, take care of children, and assist husband or father in the farming field. Before 1980, some parents have already decided their daughter’s future husband. Usually, the *pariban* (the son of the father’s sister) is chosen to be the husband. There is no chance for a girl to decide or choose her own husband. Choosing someone else as a husband would be possible after her *pariban* has chosen another girl.

Recently this tradition is eroded, because Christianity and modern influence have changed some of Batak cultures. However, the philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu* is still strong. And it demands an analysis, whether it supports or exploits gender fairness.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF *DALIHAN NATOLU*

*Dalihan Na Tolu* literally means “the out-of-date tripod furnace”. The tripod furnace consist of three supporting legs that is basically consist of three components. Those three components are arranged with the same magnitude, height, and space so that they have balance and support one another.<sup>11</sup> The Philosophy can be summarized in the expression of *umpasa* or proverb: “*Angka na so somba marhula-hula siraraonma gadongna, molo so Manat mardongan tubu, atajom ma adopanna, jala molo so elek marboru, andurabionma tarusanna.*”<sup>12</sup> This *umpasa* can be interpreted like this: those who do not respect his *hulahula*, his *yam* will be damage (*yam* can be interpreted as food or livelihoods), those who do not care or be cautious with his *dongan tubu* then something sharp would be face, and those who are impatient with his *boru* will dry up the breast (breast can be interpreted as affection). From this *umpasa*, it can be seen there are three important things. They are *somba marhula-hula*, *manat mardongan tubu*, and *elek marboru*.

*Somba marhula-hula* can be defined as to respect the *hulahula*. *Somba* in Indonesian language is *sembah* which means showing respect.<sup>13</sup> So *Somba marhula-hula* means the act of showing respect to the *hulahula*. For Bataknese (Batak people), there is a concept called the *hulahula*. In the wedding ceremony, the *hulahula* are the men from the wife’s family which in traditional wedding ceremony is the person who gives his *boru* to the family of the husband. *Hulahula* have to be respected for their willingness to give *boru* to be married by son-in-law. If you do not respect or honor your *hulahula* then you will be find difficulty in earning a living. *Gadong* or *yam* is a symbol of food. *Siraraon* is the condition in which cassava is rotten because of water. So *siraron gadongna* shows food or livelihood that will be damage. Formerly, land was controlled by many *hulahula*. Therefore if you do not respect your *hulahula* then the land will not be given to the *boru* to be processed. And as an outcome, it troublesome the livelihood.

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<sup>11</sup> Drs. H. Kondar Siregar MA, *Model Pengaturan Hukum Tentang Pencegahan Tindak Prostitusi Berbasis Masyarakat Adat Dalihan Na Tolu* (Perdana Mitra Handalan, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Basyral Hamidy Harahap and Hotman Siahaan, *Orientasi Nilai-Nilai Budaya Batak: Suatu Pendekatan Terhadap Perilaku Batak Toba dan Angkola-Mandailing* (Sanggar Willem Iskandar, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> “Publikasi1\_99001\_1610.Pdf,” accessed February 27, 2022, [http://repository.petra.ac.id/16705/1/Publikasi1\\_99001\\_1610.pdf](http://repository.petra.ac.id/16705/1/Publikasi1_99001_1610.pdf).

*Manat mardongan tubu* means it is necessary to care or be cautious with *dongan tubu*. *Dongan tubu* in Bataknese as communities shows one family clan. So in the traditional ceremony, if there is a Bataknese clan having a traditional wedding ceremony, the group which is called *dongan tubu* will be the “executive committee” that organizes the event. If someone does not care or *manat* to *dongan tubu* then something “sharp” will be faced. “Sharp” refers to the possibility of a dispute or conflict among *dongan tubu*. So if you are not cautious there can be conflict.

*Elek marboru* means Batak people have to be patient to *boru*. *Boru* in this context refers to the women of the clan. In daily activities *boru* is a group who must always be ready to help the work of *hulahula*.

In the traditional ceremony, the group who becomes *parhobas* (stewardess) is the *boru* or female. If you are not able to take care of the *boru*, then “her breast will dry up”. “Breast that will dry up” can be interpreted as love and affection that could be erode if you are not good in taking care of *boru*, she will stop giving her love or her affection. So with this concept of *Dalihan Natolu*, there is some sort of reference or basis for the Batak people to locate themselves in society since a person can perform 3 functions as the *hulahula*, *dongan tubu*, or *boru*. Someone can be called *dongan tubu* by their clan.

When a Batak’s man married to *boru* Batak, he is also categorized into the group of *boru* and very likely to be the *hulahula* if his sister gets married to another clan. At least these three roles indicate that the Batak people must be mindful in positioning themselves well.

## **PATRIARCHAL PRACTICES IN DALIHAN NATOLU: A CULTURAL FEMINIST CRITICISM**

As we have discussed in the “Patriarchal system in Batak community” section, thus, most of Batak traditions are designed to favor males of Batak. The philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu* has shown that the position of *Dongan Tubu*, *Hulahula*, and *Boru* are equal in Batak culture. Somehow, patriarchal system has distorted the equal value of *Dalihan Natolu*, which makes the *boru*’s hierarchy at the lowest level. Actually there are some more patriarchal practices but I will discuss three of them which are very contrast in marginalizing the position of women. The three practices are *marhobas*, *sinamot*, and *teanteanan*.

a. **The practice of *Marhobas* (stewardship) as a private space**

A Feminist thinker, Joan Kelly-Gadol has found that theories of social change sees women marginalized in private space and they have no chance to lift up the status because men have taken significant role in public space.<sup>14</sup> This problem also happens in Batak community, the dualism of thinking in private and public space must be criticized to specific extent. Kelly-Gadol is true when she suggests that private space can be distinct but it must be considered as focal point in the means of subsistence of economic life.<sup>15</sup>

According to Mangihut Siregar, since Batak men were prioritized in public space and Batak women were assigned in private space, the position of the men became more significant in ceremonial tradition and social relation.<sup>16</sup> In this condition, there is a gap between kinship system. It demonstrates that the position of *Dongan tubu* is in the middle or neutral position.<sup>17</sup> It means that the position of fathers, sons, grandfathers and grandsons (with the same *marga*/clan) are equal. Another position is *hulahula*. It means that the position of wives' family or family of mothers-in-law is in the highest level. They are claimed as advisory group in Batak culture and ceremony. While, the last position, *Boru* is indicated as daughters, sisters, nephews, cousins, and parents-in-law (on sisters or daughters' side) are categorized as the lowest level. They are assigned to prepare houseworks (food, chairs, venue, and other facilities) in traditional occasion or ceremony.

This form has distorted the philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu*. The hierarchy of *boru* are often perceived as secondary. If anything goes wrong about the food or some technical issues, *boru* will be blamed. This distortion is because Batak people, especially men have separated *marhobas* from public area. When *boru marhobas* or preparing food and facility, it has been perceived as secondary and separated from ceremonial occasion (for instance wedding ceremony). *Marhobas* is not a part of the

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<sup>14</sup> Sandra G. Harding, *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues* (Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Harding, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Mangihut Siregar, "Ketidaksetaraan Gender dalam Dalihan Natolu," *Jurnal Studi Kultural*, 1, II (January 2017). p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Siregar, p. 13.

occasion. Therefore, the status of *boru* as one of the supporting parties becomes imbalance. If it happens the firepots will not be in good position and it cannot work. In other words, the kin system in Batak community will not work properly.

#### b. The practice of *Sinamot* (Dowry)

The practice is a common thing in Asia and for Bataknese. They are very strict on this tradition. The *sinamot* is conducted in the house of *boru*. All things that are related to the wedding ceremony are also discussed. In the beginning, the philosophy of dowry is the compensation for *boru* because their daughter has to leave for marriage.<sup>18</sup> *Sinamot* is considered as the product of subsistence (usually money) and it is actually the expression of love from a man to woman whom he wants to marry.

However the term *sinamot* has slowly changed with the term *tuhor* and *boli*, meaning “to buy”. Therefore this change must be revisited because these terms have exploited the position of women. *Tuhor* and *boli* have connotation that woman is regarded as a “selling product”. This practice becomes worse when three components of *Dalihan Natolu: Dongan Tubu, Hulahula* and *Boru* meet together to discuss and bargain “the price” of bride in wedding ceremony (traditional ceremony).

I think the terms *tuhor* and *boli* are no longer relevant. Batak people should return to the term *sinamot*. Moreover the practice of *sinamot* should be evaluated, including *marhata sinamot* (bargaining), because it has underestimated the position of women in Batak community.

#### c. The practice of *Teanteanan* (property)

*Teanteanan* is the property which is inherited to children. It is distributed when the parents are getting old. The objective of *teanteanan* is to help Batak family survive and be prosperous. Usually, the beneficiaries must be married, for those who are not, they don't have any privilege to be the beneficiaries.

The privilege of beneficiaries is claimed for men not to women, or in some cases men are getting much more than women, because women are assumed as a “family members”

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<sup>18</sup> Hotli Simanjuntak, “Dalihan Na Tolu Dalam Perkawinan Suku Batak Toba,” accessed February 28, 2022, [https://www.academia.edu/29216587/Dalihan\\_Na\\_Tolu\\_Dalam\\_Perkawinan\\_Suku\\_Batak\\_Toba](https://www.academia.edu/29216587/Dalihan_Na_Tolu_Dalam_Perkawinan_Suku_Batak_Toba).

who will enter their husband's family. Usually men will get 20%, while women 5% according to the situation. But I think this tradition must be revisited.

I suggest an alternative that all children (men or women) must have equal *teanteanan*. Daughters are part of family, they are not "moving-out member". Because in the context of *Dalihan Natolu*, the kinship of Batak is apparent and stronger after the daughters are married by son-in-law. For instance, if my daughter gets married, then my position including my wife and sons become *hulahula* in the light *Dalihan Natolu* principle. So, in regard to this, daughters or women must have equal *teanteanan*. Actually in Batak tradition, for daughters, the term of *teanteanan* is never mentioned, the term is *pahuseang* (means "the symbol of love"),<sup>19</sup> but even the term of *pahuseang* must indicate an equal benefit.

## **THE IMPLICATION OF DALIHAN NATOLU FOR BATAK WOMEN**

### **Breaking the gap of private and public space**

From the history that we have discussed above, the beginning of first wave feminism and the fight for women's suffrage, women have been using politics to enter the public realm of men, thus challenging the division between public man and private woman. A goal of the feminist movement has been to create equality between the sexes, both in the public and private realm of life. For me, it is slowly being recognized that the public and private are not oppose one another, but are in reciprocal connection with one another. There should be political efforts, through legislation, to rectify the gender differences of the public sphere. There should also be initiatives taken to get rid of the law and social policy of assumptions that based on stereotypical images of women as economically dependent wives and mothers.

One of the major goals of this feminist theory is to create a gender equality both in the private and public. This equality is an equality that encompasses the individualities of all genders instead of forcing all genders to adopt the stereotypical characteristics of men to succeed in the public, or the stereotypical characteristics

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<sup>19</sup> Simanjuntak.

of women to do the work of the private. The achievement of this equality is not just to create equality within the public sphere of work and politics, but to engage people of all genders in every aspect of life including cultural spheres. *Ulaon marhobas* is part of tradition in Batak community which entails the role of *boru*. Hence, working towards gender equality will facilitate in the de-gendering of the areas of public and private without collapsing the divide.

### Enhancing Woman Scholarship

There is one positive contribution in the coming of Western missionaries to Batak society. Christianity in Batak land is brought by Ludwig Nommensen, Missionarist from Reminische Mission Gessellschaft, Germany. Nommensen had emphasized education in his missionary work in Batak land. He established schools and seminaries so that Batak people can afford not only religious teaching, but also secular education. Eventually Batak people are aware of the importance of education. In the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity became the majority in Batak Land, especially Tapanuli.

Scientific knowledge which are taught in schools and institutions has transformed Batak people to think universally. It is applied not only to men, but also to women. Education has motivated Batak people to support their children (men or women) to attain scholarship.

There is a popular song in the Batak community entitled “Boru Panggoaran” [My eldest Daughter]. Below is a section of the lyric:

*Ho do borukku tappuk ni ate atekki  
Ho do borukku tappuk ni pusu pusukki  
Burju burju maho namarsikkola i  
Asa dapot ho na sinitta ni rohami*

["You are my daughter, my sweetheart  
You are my daughter, my sweetie  
Go study dilligently  
So that you can reach your dream..."]

This song shows that the first-born is very special to Batak people, whether it is a boy or girl. Meanwhile, the Batak people follow the gender balance of education. Therefore, it is primary for Batak parents to fullfill their children basic need especially in the matter of education because they are priceless. Furthermore, this

song reflects the tender love of parents to their daughter to progress in the future. This mention is also to emphasize that children should not be “left behind” in the society.

Children in the concept of property or wealth is most valuable so that all their needs will be fulfilled. The most important need of children is education. Children must get education as high as possible. Parents will strive so that their children can get education as high as possible even though their daily life is difficult. Education shows a highly cherished value for Batak people. They are new generations who will perform as one of the three legs after being married. In other words they will become one of the components of *Dalihan Natolu*, especially the daughter will perform as *boru* and consequently the parent of *boru* will perform as *hulahula* in the daughter’s family.

As the time changed, some Batak women have equal privilege to pursue scholarly attainment. Nowadays some Batak women have transformed from private space to public space. Domestic work is no longer a women’s obligation but men also. Now husband and wife can work together as partners in domestic space. In this sense, the philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu* is apparent in the heart of Batak society.

### **Supporting Woman Leadership**

The impact of equality in education has supported women into leadership. Some women have strategic position in politics or government. One of the popular figures is Megawati Soekarno Putri who was a former President of Indonesia from 2001–2004.

In religious spheres, women have participated in Church leadership as ordained ministers like Bible vrou (*woman evangelist*), Pastors, and central position in the church. Therefore, the performance of *boru* is no longer perceived as the secondary in society. *Ulaon marhobas* now is not merely perceived as performance in private space, but also in public space. Ordained women are now performing as public figure, as well as men. They have the same privilege in the church. Ministerial works in Batak community are called *ulaon parhobasan*. Church workers are called *parhobas*. When church workers are serving their member, we call it *marhobas*. These three words: *parhobasan*, *parhobas*, and *marhobas* are taken from the word *hobas* (stewardship). Therefore, *marhobas*, which was formerly considered as private space, is assimilated into public space. I would

like to share my personal experience in my church, Huria Kristen Indonesia (HKI).

In my church, the majority of the congregation consists of Batak people. It was in 1998 that HKI allowing women to study theology, after several years it became controversy and even not acceptable. Then, after debates, studies, and meetings between pastors and scholars, HKI allowed and encouraged women to pursue theological academic for ordain pastors and ministers. Now, the number of women that become a pastor are significant and some of them have held strategic positions (Head of District, church council and head officer). I hope that this progress will continue in the future.

August 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> August 2013 is a momentous history in HKI, because we had amended our constitution on general election system of Ephorus/Bishop, from "One Votes" to "Cast Lots" system. Thus, the next General Synod 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> August 2015, through General Synod, HKI has chosen Bishop/Ephorus and General Secretary with "Cast Lots" system. This system has opened more chances to any status of pastor including gender balance. Some day, HKI will probably be preceded by women Ephorus/Bishop or General Secretary.

Indeed, some position in public space and church are not necessarily dissolving gender discrimination in the Batak society. The church of Batak must see some elements which express feminist concern. Among them is to consider the essence of ministry in the area of eco-theology, earth spiritualities which are very closed to feminist sense. Some of liturgies are also need to consider languages or terminologies which accommodate feminist tone.

## **CONCLUSION**

*Dalihan Na Tolu* has three components (*Dongan Tubu, Hulahula and Boru*) which is arranged with the same magnitude, height, and space so that they are balancing and supporting one another. *Dalihan Na Tolu* for Batak community is an important structure in the life of Batak people, related to the decision making and kinship in Batak society. *Dalihan Na Tolu* concept in Batak society is known with the existing of family according to patriarchy line believed by Batak people. This family system is the identities of the people that has the same roots according to father ancestry. The clan system in the Batak culture as individual identity and functioned as the strong kinship in interacting between society members.

The position of women, somehow is lower than men. Through cultural feminist analysis, the patriarchal system has marginalized the position of women and *Dalihan Natolu* become distorted into inequality in relation to gender issues, which can be apparently seen in social reality among Batak community.

Through cultural feminist analysis, *Dalihan Natolu* actually has a notion of justice and equality through the principle “three legs supporting each other. One leg can not be shorter or higher, the three legs must be equal, or else the fireplace falls down and kinship and even social relationship will collapse. The Batak church has a significant role to carry out ministry which contributes to the gender equity and feminist proportion.

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# PASTORAL COUNSELING IN THE CONTEXT OF SHAME CULTURE IN INDONESIA

*Dr. Alokasi Gulo, MSi.*

## ABSTRACT

Shame culture is not a disease, but it can be a severe problem if a person can't manage it properly. People who can't control their shyness are often "lost" in their relationships with others. This article intends to explore issues surrounding the culture of shame, particularly in the Indonesian context, assuming that pastoral counseling ministries have not yet entered this area. Using an interdisciplinary approach to several kinds of literature, I argue that it is essential to implement holistic-integrated pastoral counseling ministries in Indonesia's context of the shame culture.

Keywords: pastoral counseling, shame culture, interdisciplinary approach, holistic-integrated, Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

Shame is a universal phenomenon and experience that everyone has experienced. It is present everywhere in various contexts and is very influential in humans, the dominant-negative influence. In his book *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes*, Gershen Kaufman states that shame plays a central role in humans and can even cause severe disorder such as depression.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2004), p. viii.

Several experts and practitioners of counseling (pastoral and psychology), anthropologists, and philosophers also expressed the negative impact of shame.

Shame in our society sounds simple, but it is so complex, sometimes even confusing. On the one hand, shame can make a person feel terrible about himself, but on the other hand, that ominous feeling arises due to other people's assessment of him. The point is that this shame is very disturbing to the human being and even the community to which he belongs. Unfortunately, this shame phenomenon has not yet received a significant place in pastoral counseling ministries.

Based on the problem stated above, it is essential to study the sense or culture of shame and then see how best pastoral counseling intervention is. This article reviews pastoral counseling intervention regarding shame culture in Indonesia connected with pastoral counseling ministry.

This article begins with a description of the definition of shame, both in terms of language and the basic concept itself. After that, I will discuss the relationship between shame culture and guilt culture, especially highlighting the differences between the two. A brief review of the basic types of shame will introduce the classification of shame. I then describe the various approaches used to comprehend or explain shame. For a better comprehension of the emergence of this shame, in the next section, I will describe the sources and causes of shame so that in the end, I will highlight the importance of pastoral counseling ministries for those who suffer of this shame.

## **THE BASIC CONCEPT OF “SHAME”**

In pre-Teutonic English, the word “shame” means “to cover.” In those days, the term “covering oneself” was considered a natural expression of shame. In ancient Greek, the word *aidoia* is a derivative of the word *aidos*, usually used in connection with the genitals, with the connotation of a desire to hide oneself.<sup>2</sup> In German, the word “shame” comes from the word *skam/skem* with the root word *kam/kem*, means to cover, to veil, to hide.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Luna Dolezal, “The Phenomenology of Shame in the Clinical Encounter,” *Med Health Care and Philosealth care and philos* 18 (2015), p. 569.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 40.

Etymologically and historically, shame is related to the body and nudity, namely the desire to hide because of being naked.<sup>4</sup> This idea arose from the story of Adam and Eve about their fall into sin. In the story, it is told that they realized their naked state, then covered themselves because they felt ashamed of their nakedness. From this story, it can be understood that then the word “shame” is always associated with “covering and hiding”, with the intention that other people cannot see it.

Generally, the word “shame” is understood concerning mistakes or failures, followed later by evaluations, judgments, and other people’s views of people who made mistakes or experienced these failures. The Indonesian Dictionary, for example, notes shame as:

1 feels very bad (despicable, low, etc.) because of doing something that is not good (not correct, different from habit, has a disability or deficiency, etc.); 2 reluctant to do something because there is respect, a bit afraid, etc.; 3 less happy (low, low, etc.).

1 merasa sangat tidak enak hati (hina, rendah, dsb) karena berbuat sesuatu yg kurang baik (kurang benar, berbeda dengan kebiasaan, mempunyai cacat atau kekurangan, dsb); 2 segan melakukan sesuatu karena ada rasa hormat, agak takut, dsb; 3 kurang senang (rendah, hina, dsb). (KBBI, s.v. “malu”).

Based on the definition above, “shame” is understood as feeling bad, afraid, low, or humiliated because of doing something wrong or not good. Here shame is associated with guilt and involves the judgment of others.

Likewise, the Oxford Dictionary defines “shame” as a painful feeling associated with wrong behavior, action, or situation. The Oxford Dictionary lists the word “shame” as:

1 a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behaviour; ▪ a loss of respect or esteem; dishonour; ▪ a person, action, or situation that brings a loss of respect or honour; 2 a regrettable or unfortunate situation or action. (Oxford Dictionary, s.v. “shame”).

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<sup>4</sup> Dolezal, “The Phenomenology of Shame in the Clinical Encounter,” p. 569.

The understanding that shame arises because someone has made a mistake or has failed is also expressed in “The Counseling Dictionary.” The dictionary notes that the word “shame” is a disgrace, stain, or other painful emotion because someone has failed (The Counseling Dictionary 2001, s.v. “shame”).

The basic concept of “shame” is related to a person’s wrong/failed actions and other people’s assessments of him and related to the person’s view of himself, with or without making mistakes/failures. Gershen Kaufman’s definition can help us to comprehend this concept: shame is a disturbance in oneself, a source of low self-esteem, self-doubt, and a bad self-image.<sup>5</sup> This concept still considers the other party’s assessment necessary, but the very influential thing is the assessment or understanding of oneself.

The concept of shame described above assumes that a person is wholly exposed (such as naked) and aware that they are being watched or under the “supervision/judgment” of the people around him. It is referred to as “self-awareness” in the basic concept of shame. The problem is that the self-aware person is not ready to be seen. Instead, he feels so despicable, inadequate, and incompetent that he becomes the object of ridicule, insults, and rejection by those around him. That is why shyness was initially conceived as an urge to cover one’s face with one’s hands or bury one’s face in the ground. A shy person desperately wishes the world would not stare at him, not be aware of his presence. He wants to block the eyes of those around him to make himself invisible.

The question is whether the person who feels ashamed is open? Are the people around him looking at him? It could be yes or not! In addition to being influenced by the external environment and its facts, feelings of shame with such a concept mainly depend on how the person views himself (self-concept). In general, people who are ashamed will (always) see their image as inadequate, unimportant, worthless, and inappropriate; even in Paavo Kettunen’s research, some feel they should never exist.<sup>6</sup> This self-concept does not arise by itself without a source and cause. This will be discussed further in the “Sources and Causes of Shame” section.

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<sup>5</sup> Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes*, p. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Paavo Kettunen, “Religious Shame Theology and Assistance,” in *Encounter in Pastoral Care and Healing: Towards an Integrative and Intercultural Approach*, ed. Daniel et.al Louw (Zurich: LIT VERLAG GmbH & Co. KG Wien, 2012), p. 171.

## CULTURE OF SHAME AND CULTURE OF GUILT

Paavo Kettunen notes that there have been various attempts to examine the relationship between a culture of shame and a culture of guilt. Some try to separate the two, but some almost think they are the same.<sup>7</sup> The polemic regarding the relationship between the two continues, both in theory and practice.

Attempts to sharply distinguish the culture of shame and guilt are mainly made in cultural anthropology, which even tries to contrast them. This dichotomy was pioneered by the famous American anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901–1978). Margaret Mead and the experts who support it show that shame culture is static, “primitive,” economically backward, and more dominated by mass psychology. According to them, almost all Asian cultures and parts of America (especially Indians) adhere to a culture of shame. In contrast, guilt cultures are more progressive, economically advanced, and individualized. This guilty culture is abundant in Europe and America.<sup>8</sup>

However, the distinction between a culture of shame and a culture of guilt with the characteristics and examples described above seems weak and cannot be applied absolutely. Japan, for example, is a developed country located in Asia and is very progressive in various aspects. Still, they are famous for their culture of shame, because of which they can commit suicide (*jisatsu*). This fact reminds us that although shame is a universal phenomenon, it has its uniqueness in each culture and tradition. The implication is that this universal culture of shame must be understood more specifically in specific contexts, just as Emmanuel Y. Lartey experienced and did.<sup>9</sup>

Shame and guilt are indeed two very close cultures, and it is difficult to separate them. The difference between the two, in general, is that shame refers more to oneself (“self-awareness”) without ignoring external aspects, while guilt refers to actions, such as violating certain norms. Compared to people who feel guilty, people who feel ashamed will be more sensitive to other people’s assessments of themselves. There is an awareness that they are small/low, unimportant, inadequate, incapable, unworthy, and bad,

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Schirrmacher, “Culture of Shame / Culture of Guilt,” in *World of Theology Series 6* (Bonn: Culture and Science Publication, 2013), pp. 19–20.

<sup>9</sup> See Emmanuel Yartekwei Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), pp. 159–162.

and other people are looking at them. This is where the person who feels ashamed tries to cover and hide himself.

Shame and guilt are difficult to distinguish, but they can't be considered the same and not automatically affect each other. Pembroke asserts that shame is closely related to guilt, but the two also have differences.<sup>10</sup> There is a sense of shame strongly influenced by guilt for having made a mistake or failing to meet the expectations/standards of other parties or a particular society. Still, a sense of shame arises from seeing oneself as insufficient, unworthy, or inadequate. Guilt can indeed give birth to shame, but embarrassment is not necessarily caused by making a mistake, violating norms, or failing to meet specific standards.

According to Paavo Kettunen, the distinction between guilt and shame is essential because both respond differently.<sup>11</sup> In his research, Kettunen identified several differences between guilt and shame. However, this distinction is not meant to separate the two significantly, let alone contradict them (a dichotomy), as has been done in cultural anthropology before. This distinction is intended to see the uniqueness of each, especially concerning different cultural contexts.

## **BASIC TYPE OF SHAME**

Stephen Pattison reminds us that shame is more like a collection of various concepts and their uses, not a single entity that has a single clear meaning.<sup>12</sup> That means that shame can be divided into various types/categories. Moreover, etymologically and conceptually, the word "shame" has its own problems.

There are 5 (five) types of shame, namely situational shame, aesthetic shame, inherited identity shame, inferiority shame, and moral shame.<sup>13</sup> There are also those who distinguish this shame into two types, namely shame as a choice and shame as a shame. The other division is a shame that builds and shame that destroys; healthy shame and unhealthy shame.

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<sup>10</sup> Neil Pembroke, *Pastoral Care in Worship, Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue* (London: T and T Clark International, 2010), p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Kettunen, "Religious Shame Theology and Assistance," p. 178.

<sup>12</sup> Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> Pembroke, *Pastoral Care in Worship, Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue*, p. 26.

I will not describe one by one the division of shame above because I focus more on the basic types and is more relevant to this paper, namely positive shame and negative shame. This simple division will make it easier for us to determine what kind of pastoral counseling approach is more effective in dealing with this shame problem.

Positive shame is a shame that is used wisely, which gives birth to the realization that we are limited human beings, not a perfect God. Shame with this kind of understanding can help us to be more humble as well as be careful (be wise) in our actions without preventing us from developing well. If humans never feel ashamed, it means we have lost touch with the people around us. This positive shame will always remind humans of their limitations; thus, humans need each other and need God's help. Theologically, shame is a gift from God (only) for humans because other creatures do not have it.

Negative shame is a shame that destroys the sufferer, and this shame is the most experienced by humans. Negative shame will make humans suffer from pain, feel bad, isolated, inappropriate, unimportant, and even non-existent. This shame can bring humans to the lowest point in life, making them feel helpless, inferior, and lose the will to develop properly. In some contexts, this shame makes the sufferer closed, especially if the person concerned lives in a closed family and society. This is where pastoral counseling must be present to accompany the sufferer so that he becomes healed and recovered.

## **SHAME CULTURE IN VARIOUS APPROACHES**

Efforts to understand the shame culture comprehensively are largely determined by the approach used to explain it. Experts who study the phenomenon of shame have almost the same view that shame cannot be understood from only one approach. This is because the phenomenon of shame is quite complex, includes the human self as a whole, is very dynamic, and is influenced by both internal and external factors. So, according to experts, there must be several approaches used to study and examine the sense of shame/culture.

Agnes Heller notes 5 (five) approaches to explaining this shame phenomenon, namely the anthropological approach, the sociological approach, the ethical approach, the psychological approach, and

the historical approach.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Stephen Pattison describes 9 (nine) approaches, namely the psychoanalytic approach, the self-psychological approach, the bio-psychological approach, the eclectic/synthetic approach, the sociological approach, the cultural approach, the philosophical approach, the literary approach, and the social construction approach.<sup>15</sup>

In the Indonesian context, in my opinion, there are at least 4 (four) approaches to detecting the sources and causes of shame, namely anthropological, sociological, psychological, and cultural approaches.

## **ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES**

Anthropologically, the shame culture is an empirical phenomenon and a universal human feeling. Humans from various contexts must experience it. It has become a common thing in all human cultures.<sup>16</sup> This approach does not explicitly explain the sources and causes of shame; it only emphasizes that shame culture is an integral part of human beings. Therefore, according to this approach, we should focus more on its manifestation or expression and the triggers for the shame.

Some of the characteristics of the manifestation or expression of people experiencing shame in this anthropological approach, among others, are red faces, thrown eyes, bowed heads, etc. This manifestation or expression is universal and can be seen anywhere in the world. According to this approach, whatever its image or presentation, shame encompasses the entire human being—psychic or soul and body.

This approach distinguishes shame as a “feeling” and an “expressive feeling.” Humans own both, and if humans do not feel or experience one of them, then that person is considered not to have adequate capacity, abnormal. This shame (feeling and expressive feeling) is an innate instinct that originates from the dismantling of human instincts by self-domestication.<sup>17</sup> However, this innate instinct will not come to the surface if there is no trigger or stimulus.

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<sup>14</sup> Agnes Heller, “Five Approaches to the Phenomenon of Shame,” *Social Research* 70, no. 4 (2003): pp. 1015–1030.

<sup>15</sup> Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*, pp. 45–58.

<sup>16</sup> Heller, “Five Approaches to the Phenomenon of Shame,” p. 1015.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1016.

In other words, the potential for shame is already present in humans, but it will not appear until something pulls it to the surface.

## **SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Humans live in the world and are born to live together with other people and live in society. That is why sociologically, humans as individuals can influence the society in which they are located and vice versa. Society can influence itself in various aspects. In this context, according to Stephen Pattison, shame is caused by humans because of comparisons with one another in a society.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the culture of shame is created because of the standard of living in a society, which is usually regulated by norms or rules in that society. That is why one's actions, even oneself, are seen and judged based on the eyes of others, the eyes of the community, and the benchmark is the norms, rules, or traditions that apply in that society.

According to the sociological approach, a person can feel ashamed if he/she is unable to meet the expectations or standards of the society in which he is located. Furthermore, Heller said that this shame arises not only because of failure to meet societal expectations but also because one person acts differently from others.<sup>19</sup> That is, a person may live his life according to the standards/norms/rules that apply in society, but if he/she works, for example, in a different way from other people, then he/she feels ashamed because society sees her/him as different from the others.

Just like the anthropological approach, sociologically, shame arises because there is something that triggers it, pulls it, and or forces it to the surface. According to Heller, the main trigger is the eyes of other people around her/him, the eyes of society.<sup>20</sup> In this concept, wherever a person goes, other people's eyes or the public's eyes always observe and/or watch her/him. Whatever he/she did had to meet the standards or benchmarks of the eyes watching her/him; otherwise, he/she would be judged negatively, and that was a huge shame. That is why the person being observed is trying her/his best to cover her/himself up and hide from the sight of those around her/

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<sup>18</sup> Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Heller, "Five Approaches to the Phenomenon of Shame," p. 1019.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

him. For her/him, shame is something that is very painful. Therefore he/she will try to avoid the emergence of shame.

In my opinion, this social dimension is widely found in Indonesia. Just like other Asian countries, Indonesia is dominated by mass psychology, where personal freedom is under the “power” of other people or society. Several cases occurred, for example, in Indonesia, including the controversial decision of the judge on the Ahok case several years ago. One of the judges’ considerations was that Ahok’s words had caused a commotion in the community. Or another example is the rejection of LGBT. Apart from being considered contrary to religious teachings by certain groups, LGBT is also considered to damage social values and norms. Thus, the shame culture in Indonesia is much influenced by this social aspect. The person is more closely monitored and evaluated by the people around him (society).

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Shame culture is studied more from a psychological perspective than other disciplines. One of the most famous is the study of psychoanalysis, with Freud as the pioneer. In contrast to the anthropological approach, which tends to focus on manifestations or expressions and triggers of shame that generally come from outside (external factors), this psychological study or approach focuses more on internal factors. According to this approach, shame is caused by a bad self-image.

The shame caused by this bad self-image in the perspective of psychoanalysis is born from the tension between the ego and the ego-ideal, not between the ego and the super-ego as found in guilt. In this understanding, shame arises because of the failure to achieve the goals of the psychic structure identified by Freud as the ego-ideal.<sup>21</sup> In this connection and subsequent developments, traumatic experiences are also very influential in the emergence of the feeling of shame, especially experiences in childhood. These are all sources and causes of shame psychologically.

I agree that the psychological aspect is essential in understanding the phenomenon of shame. It’s strange to explain or study shame culture without involving the discipline of psychology. It is because shame is one part of human “emotions” included in the

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<sup>21</sup> Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*, p. 46.

study of psychology. Another factor is that shame always consists in the human psyche, and this aspect is included in the study of psychology.

Every normal human being must experience shame because being a human must be able to feel ashamed, just like other basic feelings (sad, happy, painful, etc.). A person may free themselves from the observations and judgments of those around them, but s/he cannot free themselves from their ego-ideal self. This factor then encourages him to try to fulfill his goals. Otherwise, he will feel ashamed. This shame includes both cognitive and affective aspects of humans.

In Indonesia, many psychological factors are formed since childhood, especially the experiences and values obtained in the family and even in society. A person's failure to fulfill his ego-ideal goals will give birth to shame because a person is born and raised in a family (and community) that associates personal self-image with the family's good name. That is why Indonesians find it difficult to open up, especially about problems, struggles, or issues related to family life. That is, psychological factors are also heavily influenced by sociological factors. It is where the psycho-social approach is very relevant to the Indonesian context.

## **CULTURAL APPROACH**

Shyness can be understood in various ways in different cultures. In Emmanuel Y. Lartey's experience as a counselor, he deals with clients who live in a different culture from western culture.<sup>22</sup> Counselor is strongly influenced by a culture that forbids her/him to tell things about her/his family to others. That's the teaching he/she received in the family, and that teaching has become entrenched. Personal and family issues must be covered in such a way and should only be discussed within the family. Otherwise, it will be a disgrace to the family. A culture like this certainly dramatically affects the level of openness a person is telling about the problems he/she faces.

Another well-known example is in Japan. The Japanese adhere to a strong and even extreme culture of shame. As I explained earlier, Japanese people can commit suicide rather than bear shame. Stephen Pattison<sup>23</sup> shares Miyaka and Yamezake's views on this:

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<sup>22</sup> Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, pp. 159–169.

<sup>23</sup> Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*.

Miyaka and Yamezake argue that in Japanese society characterised by group dependence and perfectionism, shame and its concomitant emphases upon social conformity, maintaining appearance and respect, and avoiding ridicule, are deliberately engendered as a major technique of child-rearing.

Most Asian cultures, including Indonesia, although not as extreme as the Japanese, understand that respect, reputation, good name, prestige, status, and prestige must be maintained. In Nias, there is a saying: “sōkhi mate moroi aila” (better to die than to be ashamed). So, culture can also be a source and cause of the emergence of a shame culture.

The cultural approach is more effective in several aspects. We can see this, for example, in recent events in Indonesia, where our society more readily accepts the cultural approach than the structural approach. It also applies to understanding the phenomenon of shame. For the people of Indonesia, shame, respect, self-respect, and a good name are very important. They are an integral part of the concept and culture of Indonesia.

## **SOURCES AND CAUSES OF SHAME**

Shame culture is a relatively complex universal phenomenon. It embraces the human being and is responded to uniquely by each person and even by every culture. There is no single definition that can apply to all contexts. That is why there are several approaches to explaining shame, as described earlier.

The question now is, where is the source and cause of that shame? From various perspectives, it is explained that this shame does not arise by itself. There is always a source and cause. The following describes the factors that lead to the emergence of such shame.

## **INTERNAL FACTOR**

The internal factor referred to here is a factor that comes from within the sufferer of shame itself. As explained earlier, every human being must have a sense of shame, and positively it is a privilege. It means that shame already exists in humans and cannot be removed, just as other basic feelings in our life, such as sadness, joy, etc.

In addition, psychologically, shame arises because there is a tension between the ego and the ego-ideal in humans, and it encourages humans to fulfill their psychic goals.<sup>24</sup> When humans can't fulfill it, then the person concerned will feel ashamed.

## **EXTERNAL FACTOR**

As previously explained, anthropologically, shame occurs because there is something that triggers it. The question now is, what triggers the shame? That is the external factor referred to here. There are also external factors, including:

### **a. Traumatic Experiences**

Traumatic experiences vary and are usually experienced by humans when they are young. There are many bitter experiences that children go through as a child. It leaves deep wounds that are hard to lose in the human being. In Indonesia, some have experienced abuse or violence as a child, some have experienced various forms of abuse, including sexual harassment, and some have even experienced tremendous pressure from their family or those around them. The bad experience will traumatize him, and one form of it is chronic shame.

### **b. Family**

We all know that the family is the smallest social unit humans first encounter and experience. The family should function to help the child thrive in various aspects. Unfortunately, many families are still not working correctly (dysfunctional families). Often family members, especially children, are rarely or not appreciated for whatever they do. On the contrary, criticisms and ridicule become the "daily food" of family members. Many families provide care for their members based on shame, including, for example, a prohibition against telling others anything related to family life. Phenomena like this often occur in Indonesia because the values taught in the family are about a good name, self-respect, and family honor. Here, parents (and the rules that apply in the family) play a significant role in

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<sup>24</sup> Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*, p. 46.

establishing the identity of their children, making them shy or happy to be themselves.

**c. Environment Outside the Family**

This environment is diverse, ranging from neighbors, schools, churches, and the wider community. As social beings, humans naturally tend to build relationships with the people around them, and it is hoped that these relationships will be positive. Unfortunately, sometimes the people around us—whether intentionally or not, directly or indirectly—actually instill a sense of shame that one day will appear when there is a trigger. It includes when children interact with their friends at school, where there is often ridicule, insult, and even humiliation. Likewise, in the church. People often come to church carrying burdens, while the church usually requires them to be perfect with various religious obligations and demands. When they are not able to fulfill it, then shame will arise.

## **INTEGRATED-HOLISTIC PASTORAL COUNSELING MINISTRY**

As previously described, shame is a very complex universal phenomenon. That is why there is no single approach to pastoral counseling that can apply to all contexts. Pastoral counseling experts are constantly reminded that the method used to heal those who experience shame must pay attention to the various aspects/dimensions that give rise to shame itself. That means the information revealed regarding shame in the different approaches/perspectives above must be appropriately considered in the context of effective pastoral counseling ministry.

Stephen Pattison sees the need for an integrated effort to overcome the shame problem. Pattison recommends that we use all the potential we have to help those experiencing shame.<sup>25</sup> According to him, therapy is essential to healing those who experience shame, especially chronic shame. Therefore, Pattison reviews that this integrated work will include: first, efforts to address chronic shame within the individual, and secondly, efforts to address the social and political factors that create and exploit unhelpful shame and

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154–180.

alienation at the institutional and societal levels.<sup>26</sup> The implication of the integrated approach of this model is the need to involve or use other disciplines in pastoral counseling ministry to overcome this shame.

Meanwhile, Paavo Kettunen explicitly offers the integration of pastoral care with psychotherapy. Kettunen encourages us to pay great attention to the emotional base of shy people and to communicate empathically about their emotional reality.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, Paavo Kettunen explicitly offers the integration of pastoral care with psychotherapy. Kettunen encourages us to pay great attention to the emotional base of shy people and to communicate empathically about their emotional reality. Therefore, pastoral counseling can be carried out in various forms, including preaching and teaching ministry.<sup>28</sup> In addition, spiritual support is also beneficial for them, and this must be a counselor's consideration in carrying out the task of caring.

The approach used by Neil Pembroke is exciting because it tries to combine the liturgical and psychological dimensions.<sup>29</sup> The counselor needs to provide a confessional space for the counselee if their shame relates to their mistake or sin. Here Pembroke emphasizes how attractive the use of the Christ icon in the confessional liturgy is, despite the reluctance of the Protestant church to use it because it is perceived as idolatrous. This Christ icon can help the counselee get verbal communication of God's unconditional acceptance.<sup>30</sup> It is one form of using religious facilities in pastoral counseling ministry. These religious means are intended to help the counselee live the shameful experience so that later he/she can see and feel God's involvement in solving his problems.

The question now is whether this shame needs to get pastoral counseling ministry like those offered or carried out by some of the experts above? In my opinion, shame is a universal case that needs special attention from pastoral counseling ministry. It is confirmed by Indonesian culture, which generally seems to provide a vast space for the development of shame in all its complexities.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>27</sup> Kettunen, "Religious Shame Theology and Assistance," p. 179.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>29</sup> Pembroke, *Pastoral Care in Worship, Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Shame is generally harmful and destructive. This shame often makes people who experience it feel incompetent to develop their potential constructively because they are hindered by feelings of alienation, unworthiness, non-existence, and imprisoned in a bad self-image. This self-image will be worse when they live in a society with a culture that places more emphasis on prestige, self-respect, prestige, and honor. It means there is no instant cure for this problem, especially for chronic cases of shame.

Meanwhile, pastoral counseling ministries are intended to enable people to develop their God-given potentials and understand themselves holistically. That is why pastoral counseling ministries need to pay serious attention to shame so that those who experience it get healing, recovery, and thrive.

Therefore, I agree with integrated pastoral counseling ministries such as those offered by the counseling experts. In this framework, I see that pastoral counseling ministries need to be enriched with other fields of knowledge, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and culture. Here, it is necessary to integrate the knowledge of pastoral counseling with various other relevant knowledge. The term is interdisciplinary. Indeed, this integration is quite problematic because questions will arise: what knowledge we can integrate with? What knowledge that the parents have, and what knowledge is a branch?

Given the problems that could arise, we must be careful in carrying out this integration. The integration must be dynamic, multidimensional, and focused on the substance. This integration model can help us utilize various relevant knowledge to benefit pastoral counseling ministries oppose the culture of shame in Indonesia. Likewise, those tasked with accompanying those embarrassed are no longer centered on the pastor, as is generally the case in Christian churches in Indonesia. The involvement of other professions (non-pastors) and even the laity helps us resolve the shame that often overwhelms our congregation members. The term is interprofessional. We must also realize that we live in Indonesia, which is culturally plural. Therefore, pastoral counseling ministries against shame must be intercultural, at least cross-cultural.

Another fundamental thing that needs to be considered by counselors is the holistic dimension of human life. A culture of shame indeed arises due to various factors, so an integrated pastoral approach is essential. However, with or without shame, the human

self is holistic, consisting of physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects. I see that the integrated pastoral counseling ministry must be holistic. This holistic-integrated pastoral counseling will see shame as a uniquely complex phenomenon that must be understood from various approaches or relevant fields of science and, at the same time, look at people who experience shame from various holistic human aspects. Pastoral counseling ministries with this approach help us to accompany, heal, and comprehensively restore shame sufferers.

## **CLOSING**

As previously explained, shame is a very complex universal phenomenon. In my attempt of quest, various things related to this shame were found, showing its complexity. There is nothing wrong with shyness because it is very human. The problem is when shame harms humans. This problem worsen when there are no adequate pastoral counseling ministries for those who experience it.

It is a challenge for pastoral counseling ministries because our main task is to help those in need live their struggles and then guide them through these difficult times, and in the end, they can see or feel God's work in every problem in their life.

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# THE VOICE OF VASHTI IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

*Merilyn*

## SUMMARY

Many people nowadays misunderstand sexual violence and become indifferent to the victim. The victim's voice is frequently silenced. Because he is being intimidated, the victim himself is hesitant to speak out. Wasti was a sexually abused queen in the Persian Empire during the time of the Old Testament. He expressed his displeasure with the violence he had witnessed. Despite being removed from the role of queen in the palace, he has developed into a self-sufficient individual.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's Annual Report for 2021,<sup>1</sup> which was only released last month, 2021 was the year with the largest number of cases of Gender-Based Violence (KBG) in the last ten years. That indicates the number of KBG instances has increased by 50% from 2020, to 338,496.<sup>2</sup> The case involves information gathered from victims, victims' relatives, or witnesses (with the victim's permission) who visit services such safe homes, Social Services, P2TP2A (Women and Children Empowerment Integrated Service Center), or the police. Of fact, many incidents

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<sup>1</sup> The National Commission on Women launches CATAHU (Annual Record) every year. CATAHU 2022 is a collection of data from the year 2021 that detail violence against women. "The Shadow of Stagnation: Preventing and Handling Power vs. Increasing the Number, Variety, and Complexity of Gender-Based Violence against Women," is the topic of CATAHU 2022. On March 7, 2022, the catahu 2022 launch event was held at the Harris Tebet Hotel in Jakarta.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/opini-pendapat-pakar> (last retrieved in 12.03.2022).

continuously occur, but they settle and disappear because they were never recorded or followed up on legally.

Cases of violence are not or are difficult to report for a variety of reasons. First, there is a long distance between the victim's location and the service location. Cases of violence in rural areas frequently go unreported since service is still limited and difficult to get, particularly from isolated areas. Second, there is a lack of public awareness of victims' rights, reporting channels, and the presence of service agencies. Some participants indicated that they only learnt about the service forum, reporting methods, and the relevance of reported instances for victims through the forum during a Directed Discussion Group (FGD) hosted by the PERUATI (Association of Theologically Educated Women in Indonesia) of Central Kalimantan in different districts in 2018 and 2019. When there is an instance of violence during this period, the family reports it to the village officials, and the problem is settled solely on a familial level. The victim was not treated as he or she should have been. Third, a society that views cases of violence as a disgrace that does not need to be publicly publicized and known is typically considered a disgrace. Cases of violence should be securely sealed rather than publicized, according to culture. Fourth, when it comes to culture, the impact is that victims are afraid to speak up. It could be because the offender, the perpetrator's family, or even the government intimidated both the victim and the victim's family. Furthermore, if the victim reports (speaks), they are frequently bullied, persecuted, used as gossip, and excluded from communal social groups. The victim is frequently blamed for the violence she witnessed since she is thought to be the perpetrator.<sup>3</sup> However, the victim is judged as the perpetrator of the assault because of a night out alone.

Victims of sexual violence often do not dare to speak out. The most common explanation given is that the victim is unsure of where to report and to whom. This is due to a lack of knowledge regarding service institutions' existence. Especially if it takes place in a faraway

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<sup>3</sup> On Monday night, July 23, 2012, a workwoman with the initials IS was robbed and sexually abused in Angkutan Kota (Angkot) C 01. IS rode from his workplace in the Johar Baru neighbourhood to his residence in the Bendungan Hilir Market at around 23.00 WIB. There were already three men in the back and one close to the driver at the time. When the angkot arrived at Jalan Medan Merdeka Barat, the three guys began strangling IS's neck and holding both hands, then took the victim's bag. Sexual harassment was also attempted by the assailants, but IS yelled and rebelled. A kopassus member riding a motorcycle heard the shout and decided to follow the angkot. <https://www.jurnalperempuan.org/kekerasan-di-angkot.html> (last retrieved 12.03.2022).

location. Furthermore, the victim of terror will encounter new types of abuse such as being harassed, gossiped about, shunned from social interaction, and intimidation on a monthly basis. People do not perceive the victim as a true victim,<sup>4</sup> nor as a criminal. Victims are frequently mistaken for the perpetrators of the violence they witness. Stigma from the outside and within the victim, who believes that sexual abuse, rape, pregnancy outside of marriage, and domestic violence are a disgrace that should be hidden rather than exposed to the world. Especially if the perpetrator is a family member. Society accepts the tremendous influence of power relations and patriarchal culture as the sole correct way of thinking. If reporting or speaking up is deemed excessive and humiliating oneself and family, sexual assault is always perceived from the perspective of men, therefore the victim is seen as a cause, the victim's suffering is minimized, and the victim's trauma is underestimated (disgrace).

Many examples of harassment against women who are quiet are recorded in the Bible story. The narrative of Dina being raped by Shechem is found in the Old Testament (Gen. 34:1-31). Dina's voice is drowned out as a victim of violence by the voices of Shechem and her new father admitting sentiments of love for her after rapping her, and the vengeful voice of Dina's brothers carrying out the Shechems' murder and plundering. There was also a mistress who had been raped and had her body mutilated (Jud. 19:1-30). The woman (the so-called mistress, Hebrew=*piylegesh*) appears to be defenseless, violently raped to death by numerous people, and endures her husband's rage and contempt by mutilating her dead body and scattering it in various locations.<sup>5</sup> Tamar was also raped by Abnon (2Sam. 13:1-22), but she became a rape victim who wanted to give the impression that their relationship was sanctioned by their father, the king. Abnon, on the other hand, despised it.

Many women (known and unnamed) were involved and present in Jesus' ministry and the early church in the New Testament, yet their voices were never heard. They exist, yet they act as if they don't. Then there was Sapphira, who chose to side with patriarchal power to safeguard her husband's good name rather than refuse to

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<sup>4</sup> In Online Indonesian Dictionary, a victim is a person, animal, or other being who suffers (death, for example) as a result of an event, evil conduct, or other factors. <https://kbbi.web.id/korban> (last retrieved 12.03.2022).

<sup>5</sup> This anonymous woman made the mistake of doing serong (lbr=zanah) and fled to her father's house for shelter. After that, she received love from her husband, who drove her to her father's house.

commit embezzlement, which led to her own execution, in the early church's history (Acts 5:1–11).<sup>6</sup> The same things happen to women who are thought to be impolite when speaking in congregational meetings. If they have a question, they must first consult their husband (1Cor. 14:34–35). In a number of crucial times, the female voice is not raised to the surface and becomes inaudible. Even though they were harmed and hurt, the women were portrayed as submissive and resilient. If only Dina, anonymous' mistress, Tamar, and the other women in the early church community had their voices heard in the text, the repercussions and significance of violent and discriminatory occurrences would be more clear to modern readers. The question is whether they are indeed silent or are they voiceless or being eliminated?

Esther is highlighted in the Book of Esther, according to conventional interpretations. In Fort Susan, Esther is lauded as a symbol of the immigrant nation, having been elected as a queen in a strange realm to replace Vashti (Est. 2). Esther's success is inextricably linked to the way she presents herself in patriarchal terms. Esther was involved in the death of Haman's children (Est. 9:12) and the 75,000 gentiles (Est. 9:16), as well as the destruction of Haman's children's corpses (Est. 9:13). Esther's position was initially intended to protect her country from the possibility of mass murder, but it quickly devolved into mass retaliation. The attitude of a woman, let alone a queen like Esther, is not one of violence. She is a queen who is obedient. However, violence and sorrow followed Esther's humble and obedient attitude. Esther's voice was quite loud, but it was also oppressive. Esther's attitude does not help victims of sexual violence speak out and combat violence in the face of today's concern.<sup>7</sup> Esther is opposed by Vashti. Vashti opens the Book of Esther's sequence of stories with a less pleasant tale. The reader can already infer the story's content based on the title of the paragraph. She is portrayed in the scripture as a rebellious queen, the polar opposite of Esther. Vashti dared to defy the king's command (Est. 1:12). Vashti had no idea that his activities were fraught with danger. Vashti's intransigence resulted in his dismissal from the office of queen. Vashti's defiance, on the other hand, is well-founded. He refused to have his body exploited and used as a source of amusement

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<sup>6</sup> Asnath Niwa Natar, *Membongkar Kebisuan Perempuan*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2021), p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Setio, "Wasti sebagai Kritik Ideologi", *Studia Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. 11 No. 1, (March 2001), p. 44.

for the king's and his guests' lust. Both Esther and Vashti live in a patriarchal society where sexual abuse is commonplace. In a huge country like Vashti, it's hardly surprising that a queen would be sexually abused. Vashti, on the other hand, had a firm stance on the brutality he witnessed. She rejects not simply sexual behaviors, but also a culture that devalues her womanhood. Vashti's bravery appears to be a role model for victims of sexual violence who are reluctant to speak up and fight back.

This article was produced utilizing storytelling techniques and a feminist approach to explore women's often neglected stories. Vashti's voice as the victim's voice will be sharpened as a result of this. We hope to find the church's voice against sexual assault and injustice towards the end of this paper.

## WHO IS VASHTI?

The Book of Esther is the only book in which Queen Vashti is mentioned. There is few information about her that can be found in this book. She is only alluded as a queen who disobeys the king in the book. Vashti was regarded as no more important than Esther in Jewish eyes, according to the Jewish Rabbi. She is thought to be a Persian woman who is anti-Semitic.<sup>8</sup> However, we are grateful for the extensive study that was conducted on her and the additional information that was discovered. King Ahasuerus' wife, Vashti, was the monarch of the Persian Empire. For 15 years, she was married to King Ahasuerus. Hama Mirwaisi explained in her writings that Vashti was the king's dutiful and loyal wife. It's only that he stood firm in her opposition to several of the king's measures that he saw as jeopardizing the kingdom's continuity and the people's welfare.<sup>9</sup> Vashti was the daughter of King Belshazzar and the great-granddaughter of King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, who made her a Babylonian, according to the Midrash. Vashti is referred as an evil in the Talmud because she is a descendant of the terrible King Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>10</sup> Vashti was well-known among monarchs'

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Setio, "Wasti sebagai Kritik Ideologi", *Studia Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. 11 No. 1, (March 2001), p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Hama Mirwaisi, *Queen Vashti Was The Victim of Jews Lord's Conspiracy*, (2017), p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Ariela Pelaia, *Vashti in the Bible*, in Learn Religions, <https://www.learnreligions.com/who-was-vashti-2076497> (last retrieved 19.04.2022).

wives as a committed woman who cared about women.<sup>11</sup> She is concerned about the safety of the queens who have been subjected to violence. Long working hours are required, for example, when organising houses and children.<sup>12</sup> The king's wives appear to have their own agenda in the kingdom, in addition to home and personal matters, and they moan about their dual function because it consumes so much time. The political clout that Vashti has is also worth considering. Her event, which took place during King Ahasuerus' magnificent feast, provided an opportunity for her and other women to critique their husbands' policies. The king's wives had a hand in royal politics because they intercepted the king's talk with the royal servants, which became the subject of the king's inter-wifeation. Not only that, but the women of high-ranking royal officials can sway their husbands, who in turn can sway the king's policies. Zeresh, the wife of Haman, the Persian empire's chief official (Est. 3:1), was highly good at persuading her husband in many of King Ahasuerus' judgments. She was concerned about the consequences of King Ahasuerus' feast. Rapid would not only allow King Ahasuerus to disregard royal matters, but it would also provide an opportunity for his opponents to assassinate him. Vashti had a particular talk with Queen Amytis of Babylon, who was present at her celebration, regarding the political ramifications her husband was facing.<sup>13</sup> According to Hama Mirwaisi's account. Vashti, it appears, wielded that power over the wives of the kingdom's officials. Vashti also has a thorough understanding of the political movements of the time. She was concerned about the consequences of her husband, King Ahasuerus', feast. Vashti is clearly a powerful and intelligent individual. As a result, while many of his companions admire her, not all of them are supportive of her.

## **A ROYAL PARTY AT FORT SUSAN**

The Book of Esther is preceded with a picture of King Ahasuerus' splendor and prosperity. He ruled over 127 provinces (Est. 1:1). King Ahasuerus hosted a large and colorful feast at Fort Susan for 180 days in the third year of his reign. Persian kings were known to

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<sup>11</sup> Hama Mirwaisi, *Queen Vashti Was The Victim of Jews Lord's Conspiracy*, (2017), p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

hold feasts at the period.<sup>14</sup> The invited guests are served a variety of foods, beverages, and entertainment banquets. The king entertained invited visitors, including dignitaries and servants from the Persian and Media armies, aristocrats, and provincial authorities, for 180 days (Est. 1:3). In addition to dining, the monarch had the opportunity to display his kingdom's wealth, splendor, greatness, and beauty (Est. 1:4). According to Erich F. Schmidt, King Ahasuerus was also known for being an arrogant king. "I am Ahasuerus, the mighty king, the sole king, the monarch of all kingdoms who speak all types of languages, the king of the great earth," reads an inscription in Persepolis bearing the king's personal record.<sup>15</sup> However, evidence acquired from other sources indicates that King Ahasuerus is a weak king figure, unwise, less accountable, similar to a spoiled child.<sup>16</sup>

After 180 days, the king held another seven-day feast in the royal palace's garden court for all of the people (Est. 1:5). The ambiance of the party becomes much more wonderful with very festive decorations and sufficient food and drinks, as indicated in chapter 1 verse 6. In addition to the king's feast rules, which include "nothing by force" (Est. 1:8). This means that all invited guests are free to do anything they choose. The speedy king of wine drunkenness was enjoyed by all who attended, including the king himself. The spectacular feast of King Ahasuerus inside Fort Susan looked like this.

Queen Vashti also hosted a secret feast for women in the king's palace elsewhere (1:9). These ladies were the wives of the king's invited guests who came to Fort Susan for the party. The language specifies that the celebration for the male invited guests is distinct from the gathering for the female invited guests. Vashti is surely quite busy as a hostess or host of a private party, escorting her visitors. The celebration that Wasti threw was wonderful and exciting, just like King Ahasuerus' feast. The women were dressed elegantly and wore pricey jewelry. All of them appear to be charming and sophisticated. And one of them is Vashti.

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<sup>14</sup> F. L. Baker, *Sejarah Kerajaan Allah 1*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1987), p. 621.

<sup>15</sup> Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis III: The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments*, Oriental Institute Publications, Vol. 70, 1970, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> A.H. Syace, *An Introduction To The Book of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1889), p. 107.

## THE RESISTANCE VOICE OF QUEEN VASHTI

The narrative of Queen Vashti is told in only four verses in Chapter 1 of the Book of Esther, specifically verses 9, 10, 11, and 12. The four verses are as follows: <sup>9</sup> *Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.* <sup>10</sup> *On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,* <sup>11</sup> *To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.* <sup>12</sup> *But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.*

The arrival of seven eunuchs assigned to bring up Vashti to face the king interrupted Vashti's festivities. Vashti was summoned by the monarch to display her beauty by donning the royal crown in front of the king's invited guests (Est. 1:11). However, the king received an odd response: Vashti declined his proposal. The king is unquestionable in royal tradition. The queen, like everyone else, should obey the king's directives. The Queen has power in the realm, but she has very little when it comes to dealing with the monarch. In this sense, Queen Vashti has disobeyed the king's and monarchy's directives.<sup>17</sup>

The reason for Vashti's rejection is not mentioned in the Bible's narrative. However, there is a hidden subtext in the text that Vashti's refusal has a cause. First, Vashti, who was hosting a party at the time, was unlikely to abandon her guests like manner. Second, in Persian culture, it has become customary to demonstrate.<sup>18</sup> If she complied with the king's desire, the same thing would happen to her. She was a righteous queen who would never do such a thing in front of a multitude. Third, she does not want to lose confidence in herself as a woman who flaunts her body in front of men. Vashti and women in general were abused by King Ahasuerus' request. Her beauty was utilized as a source of amusement for them. Vashti is clearly ready to be turned into a male spectacle. The invited guests

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<sup>17</sup> J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, Vol. 2, 1960), p. 267.

<sup>18</sup> Norman K. Gootwald, *The Hebrew Bible A Socio-Literary Introduction*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 561.

to the king's party, Robert Setio assumed, were all men.<sup>19</sup> When urging Vashti to face the king's intoxicated state. Because this type of show is sexually sophisticated, she is at risk of being abused in this situation. The king and his guests were sexist, and they were unaware that their actions were insulting to women. The monarch desires to offer Vashti the same wealth and splendor that King Ahasuerus displays in his palace. Vashti is nothing more than a tool to him, which he may treat anyway he wants. King Ahasuerus' acts could not be justified. Someone he was supposed to protect had been harassed as a result of his activities.

Vashti may not have the capacity to control power inside the palace, but she can control her decisions. She raised her voice and said "no" to the sexual abuse she had been subjected to. She was firm in her refusal to do anything that did not match her personality. She had no choice but to do it, despite the fact that her actions were dangerous. And it is correct. The king's rage and wrath were incurred as a result of her refusal (Est. 1:12). Because she was not only guilty to the monarch but also to all the males in the Persian realm, Vashti's attitude was thought to be the catalyst for the women's "rebellion" against her husband (1:16;18).<sup>20</sup>

All men, including kings, nobles, dignitaries, and soldiers, feared a rise of women, which would destabilize the Persian Empire and the Media.<sup>21</sup> Memucan encouraged King Ahasuerus to publish a Persian law, and the Media annulled Vashti's rank (Est. 1:19) and sent a message to the entire region stating the absolute authority of men in the household, which the wives should not oppose (Est. 1:22). The law was enacted to legitimize the suppression of women's voices. It's remarkable that the author of the Book of Esther raises the voice of Queen Vashti's rejection in this chapter. Didn't the text regarding Vashti's refusal to humiliate the king and all the men? The story of Vashti's rejection, in my opinion, is merely a prelude to the true argument, which is patriarchal authority over the struggle of oppressed women. The king, through Memucan, repressed Vashti's resistance against sexual abuse in the narrative. There's a perception that no matter how great a woman's voice is, it will

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Setio, "Wasti sebagai Kritik Ideologi", *Studia Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. 11 No. 1, (March 2001), p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Lauren Jacobs, *The Power of Vashti*, <https://laurenjacobs.co.za/the-power-of-vashti/> (last retrieved 19.04.2022).

always be overshadowed by male sounds. Men are concerned by Vashti's speech, as seen by King Ahasuerus' rage, established laws, and writings emphasizing male power throughout the region. This suggests Vashti's voice was able to overthrow the feminine body's rule.

Vashti's voice and struggle were forgotten after the event. In the succeeding chapters, his story was never mentioned again. Feminist theologians, on the other hand, never forget her efforts and voices. Feminist theologians hold her up as an example in the face of growing sexual assault and injustice against women.

## **THE RESISTANCE OF TODAY'S SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS**

The National Commission on Violence Against Women publishes data on gender-based violence every year. Gender-based violence reports have surged considerably in 2021, as they did in Catahu (annual report) 2022. Women are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence. They are subjected to a variety of sexual violence forms. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's monitoring from 1998 to 2013, there are 15 types of sexual violence: sexual intimidation, including threats or attempts at rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking in women for sexual purposes, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced marriage, including hanging divorce, forced pregnancy, and forced prostitution, sexual torture, inhuman and sexual punishment, practices of sexual nuanced traditions that endanger or discriminate women, sexual control, including through discriminatory rules based on morality and religion, forced abortion, forced contraception, and sterilization, sexual torture, inhuman and sexual punishment, practices of sexual nuanced traditions that endanger or discriminate against women, and sexual control.<sup>22</sup> However, according to the Sexual Violence Crime Act, there are nine types of sexual violence: rape, obscene acts, sexual exploitation of children, acts of violating decency against the victim's will, pornography involving children or explicitly containing sexual violence and exploitation, forced prostitution, criminal acts of trafficking intended for sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation

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<sup>22</sup> National Commission on Violence Againsts Women, *15 Bentuk Kekerasan Seksual Sebuah Pengenalan*, <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/instrumen-modul-referensi-pemantauan-detail/15-bentuk-kekerasan-seksual-sebuah-pengenalan> (last retrieved in 19.04.2022).

of children, domestic sexual violence, money laundering offences whose original crime is a crime of sexual violence, and other criminal acts that are designated as sexual violence under the law are all prohibited.<sup>23</sup> We know that sexual violence is a serious crime based on that description. Sexual assault is frequently thought to take only one form. This is a tough reason to find and address because sexual violence has always been linked to a culturally expressed idea of community morality. Women are viewed as symbols of purity and honor in many cultures. When he is subjected to sexual assault, such as rape, he will be a disgrace. The victim is always the target of mistakes, not the culprit. The victim is accused of not being able to retain her morality as a woman, which leads to sexual violence. This is why, when confronted with sexual abuse, victims prefer to remain silent. Victimized women<sup>24</sup> must be traumatized. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women, 95 percent of rape victims suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Post Traumatic Disorder).<sup>25</sup> Unresolved trauma leaves the person with an unending sensation of rage, inner wounds, hatred, and terror. Imagine if a woman who had been a victim of trauma had to live her life in the shadow of that experience. When he gets along, works, marries, and has children, he gets along, works, and instills anger, bitterness, and terror in his children. Children who witness their mothers being violent will be affected on a psychic, mental, social, and spiritual level. They are also the next victims. The more victims of sexual violence who do not recover, the more gray the world becomes. The deeper the trauma within the victim, the more silent they are. It was a nightmare. We can't envisage a nation's future if its generation is moulded by unending rage, hurt, resentment, and dread. As a result, in cases of sexual violence, silence is not an option!

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<sup>23</sup> Melani Hermalia Putri, "Isi UU TPKS: Bentuk-Bentuk Kekerasan Seksual hingga Sanksi buat Pelaku", <https://www.idntimes.com/news/indonesia/melani-hermalia-putri/isi-uu-tpks-bentuk-bentuk-kekerasan-seksual-hingga-sanksi-buat-pelaku/2> (last retrieved 19.04.2022).

<sup>24</sup> Young children, girls, housewives, and elderly women are all victims of sexual violence. Sexual assault occurs in a variety of settings, from private homes to public places including schools, orphanages, offices, hospitals, public transit, markets, and churches. The attacker is not only a stranger, but also a family member, such as the victim's father, uncle, brother, grandfather, nephew, or even grandson.

<sup>25</sup> National Commission on Violence Against Women, *15 Bentuk Kekerasan Seksual Sebuah Pengenalan*, <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/instrumen-modul-referensi-pemantauan-detail/15-bentuk-kekerasan-seksual-sebuah-pengenalan> (last retrieved 19.04.2022).

Culture has an impact on Indonesia's thinking patterns and processes, as well as its society. The patriarchy notion governs familial connections in which the male lineage (grandfather, father, son, grandson) takes precedence.<sup>26</sup> Where do women (grandmother, mother, daughter, and granddaughter) fit into this picture? They are an element of the subordination. The structure of role sharing in homes and societies where men work in the public sector and women work in the domestic sector reflects this distinction. This position portrays women as the weak and deserve to get control by male. This is where women's violence and injustice originate. Surprisingly, most Indonesians still believe in this concept.

However, in the midst of the present pandemic of sexual violence, there is one thing to rejoice about. The draft Sexual Violence Crime Law was passed into the Sexual Violence Crime Law in early April 2022, and the Indonesian people should feel relieved. For all campaigners and women's rights advocates in Indonesia, the passage of this bill has been a long and painful battle. The law governs the rights of victims, the government's responsibilities through legal institutions, and the expectations made on perpetrators. For victims of sexual violence who have been silenced, the establishment and passing of this law is a beacon of hope. This law offers a vehicle and assurance for victims to dare to come up, in addition to measures to abolish sexual abuse. Due to the lack of laws that protect and guarantee victim's security and future, the victim did not dare to come out and report the violence she had witnessed during this period.

This law also demonstrates the government's and the people's representative institutions' seriousness in addressing sexual assault in the country. The government's and people's representative institutions' attitudes urge religious, customary, and social institutions in the community to be actively involved in the fight against sexual violence. These institutions, which are quite close to society, are particularly vulnerable to violence. In reality, all members of society should be socialized so that they are aware of the law's existence and the benefits it provides to people's lives, particularly victims of sexual violence. Furthermore, those who have comprehended the law must be involved in overseeing its implementation in society. As a result, victims who have been rendered helpless and traumatized

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<sup>26</sup> Israpil, "Patriarchal Culture and Violence Against Women (History and Development)", *Jurnal Pusaka*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2017, 142. <https://blamakassar.e-journal.id/pusaka/article/view/176/144> (last retrieved on 19.04.2022).

realize that they are not alone. Through the Sexual Violence Crime Law, victims who dare to speak out today have a lot more protection than Vashti did in the past. She fought alone, without friends and the assurance that her voice of resistance would be heard. Vashti's voice, however, remained unaffected.

## **THE CHURCH'S VOICE AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

The church, according to Chr. de Jong and Jan S. Aritonang, can no longer avoid the difficulties that occur in all parts of life.<sup>27</sup> The Church was brought into the world to deliver salvation to all of its creatures. It also asserts that the church's presence in and for the world is no longer limited to pulpits and rituals, but includes social deeds rooted in faith, hope, and love for Christ. One of the areas where the church should focus its attention is sexual violence. Many members of the church have been sexually abused. They're an important part of the church that has to be healed.

Three years ago, the rape and murder of a Vicar in South Sumatra was a smack in the face for the church. Many Indonesian churches have expressed their displeasure with the incident. However, as far as I am aware, no church synod has yet published explicit prohibitions on sexual violence in general or inside the church. In a virtual conversation with PERUATI (Association of Theologically Educated Women in Indonesia) in 2021, we learned that sexual violence occurs in the church as well. Only a few perpetrators are prosecuted in the many incidences of sexual violence that occur within the church. More cases go unheard because of lack of legal clarity. Some problems can be remedied simply by reassigning the wrongdoer to a new job station. In some cases, victims are even required to apologize to the perpetrator. Such situations, according to the church, should not be made public since they harm the church's reputation. The church has a tendency to overlook the victim while siding with the criminal. The church is no longer a safe haven for victims. This is a pretty depressing image of the church.

The patriarchy understanding that controls the system and teachings in the church is to blame for the church's passivity. The Bible's text is typically read, understood, and taught based on men's understanding and experience, with women's experiences being

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<sup>27</sup> Chr. de Jong and Jan S. Aritonang, *Apa dan Bagaimana Gereja?*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993), p. 6.

ignored.<sup>28</sup> Traditional doctrinal interpretations of biblical scriptures tend to discriminate against women. This understanding creates power dynamics in the church leadership system, resulting in a very bureaucratic church. Church materials and doctrines continue to be found to be discriminatory and gender inequitable. As a result, the church must become accustomed to a new balanced and freed interpretation.<sup>29</sup> Gender justice as a religious concept will liberating new ideas. This can aid the church in reexamining biased church documents, liturgy, teachings, and pastoral techniques, as well as containing violence.

As stated in the Sexual Violence Crime Act, the legislation is built around the victim. The victim should be the center of attention. It is the same as supporting violence if a church does not support the victim. The Church must not mute the victim's voice, but rather speak for him or her. The church must combat sexual abuse and offer a safe environment for all, particularly victims.

The moment has come for the church to evolve. The church must become more open. It's encouraging to see that some progressive church entities currently exist. Some of these churches already have distinct institutions that provide vital support to victims on a professional level. It's remarkable that the victims were not only from ecclesiastical circles, but also from the general public. Others can be an example of what some of these churches do. This is not a simple customer service job. It can, however, be done well if all sections of the church are committed to combating sexual assault and injustice. Sexual violence is a major national and societal issue as well as a church issue. It's a poor thing to ignore sexual violence and injustice. It also goes against Christ's teachings. The more the church recognizes the need to change, the more victims are assisted and restored.

## CONCLUSION

It's incredible to learn about Vashti's struggles. The story of its battle lies buried for thousands of years in the Book of Esther. She was

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<sup>28</sup> The terror texts in the Bible are extremely unjust, and they tend to marginalize women's roles and the importance of womanhood as immutable truths and religion teachings. For centuries, the manuscripts were passed down from generation to generation.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Untuk Mengenang Perempuan Itu: In Memory of Her Rekonstruksi Teologis Feminis tentang Asal-Usul Kekristenan*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1997), pp. 20–21.

introduced thousands of years later as a dissident woman who was unworthy of examination. Silence for thousands of years. Vashti, on the other hand, is a valiant hero. She was a fierce fighter, not the type of lady who enjoyed living in a golden cage with all of her privileges and pleasures. For her, the throne and crown of the kingdom were less important than dignity and honor. She lifted her voice in protest of the sexual assault and injustice she had witnessed.

Vashti's voice is for all individuals who are marginalized and face prejudice socially, economically, legally, politically, culturally, and religiously, not just for women who are oppressed and subjected to sexual abuse. Her voice is a representative of the marginalized people's voice. She had demonstrated that speaking up can lead to emancipation.

The church ought to be a part of Vashti's and liberation's voices. It is not true that the church justifies violence and injustice as a religious organization. Such a church is no longer deserve to bear the title of church. As the Head of the church, Christ has established an excellent example of liberating love. It is the time for the church to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

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# THE SIN OF RACISM AND THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

*Dr. Ume Hummel*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this essay, I will reflect on racism as an expression of the dark side of both individual human beings and communities. In accordance with Reformed and Lutheran statements since the 1980s, I call racism a “sin”. Whereas the phenomenon of discrimination based on so-called racial characteristics remains quite common in most societies, racism as a system was largely limited to countries who engaged in Western imperialism, slavery for economic purposes, and countries that imposed Nazism and Apartheid (e.g. Germany, South Africa, South West Africa/Namibia, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe).

The caste-system of India is arguably the oldest model of social stratification based on discrimination. It is still intact today, despite the fact that discrimination based on caste had been prohibited after their independence in 1947 (Act 15 of the Constitution of India). The caste system is an integral part of mainline Hindu teaching to which the category of “racial differentiation” seems to have been added by British colonialists. This caste-system does not fall inside the scope of this investigation.

Starting from personal experience, this article focuses mainly on the development of the paradigm of racial discrimination in the history of Western imperialism and colonialist theology culminating in the system of Apartheid. Henceforth, there will be a reflection on passages from the Bible, often misused to justify racism, followed by the liberating new approach of Black-Consciousness and Black-Theology. Finally, there will be a reflection on the “Ministry of

Reconciliation” (2Cor. 5:18) as the ultimate antithesis to the sin of racism.

## **2. RACISM AS SIN**

As I was raised in a rather liberal German Lutheran middle-class family from Hamburg, there seems to have been no explicit, let alone ideological influence of racism in my childhood days. In fact, I have fond memories of a close family-friend who used to play with me, a Consul of the African country of Liberia. My parents, who had experienced the horrors of Nazism and World War Two, were rather progressive in associating with foreigners, including “people of colour”. This attitude was considered as “Hanseatic openness”, in accordance with the tradition of a number of commercial cities including Hamburg.

Despite having grown up in rather tolerant surroundings, I remember an incident at the age of seven or eight, when I spontaneously joined a group of children in my street chasing a terrified black passer-by. While running after him we repeatedly shouted “*Neger. Neger, Neger!!!*” (a word commonly used for black African people in my childhood-days). Fortunately, the poor man got away without physical harm. No adult cared to reprimand us. But, after that silly frenzy, I had a bad feeling about it. Only much later, I realised that this inhumane act had been my first “sin of racism”. The somewhat hidden dark side of my human nature had suddenly overpowered me, contrary to all prior education and even my conscience, which should have guided me. I experienced such unintentional, stupid racist streaks on a few more occasions during my life and although I regret it, it is a negative force to be reckoned with. Like other prejudice it can overcome you when you’re not vigilant enough.

## **3. RACISM IN COLONIALIST THEOLOGY**

Theoretical, racism started developing since the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the context of Western imperialist expansion and subsequent colonisation in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania. In 1492 AD, two very significant things happened that inaugurated changes of global magnitude. Firstly, on 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, the “reconquista de Iberia” or expulsion of Islam from Spain and Portugal by the Roman Catholic kings was completed. Secondly, on 12<sup>th</sup> of October, the

“discovery” of the “New World” or the Americas by Christopher Columbus was accomplished. The reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula was the culmination of increasingly intolerant, exclusive attitude of Western Christianity towards Islam, which started with the Crusades in 1096 AD and then was institutionally implemented by the Roman Catholic Inquisition. The discovery of the Americas marked the beginning of Western conquest of non-Christian lands, large scale colonisation, as well as the exploitation and enslavement of non-European indigenous peoples. The year 1492 was the starting shot of both European imperialism, as well as “racism” as its justifying world-view.

Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503) divided the whole world into two domains, one under the patronage of the Spanish crown and the other under the patronage of the Portuguese (*Leonese*) kingdom. In his Papal bull “Inter Caetera”, dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1493, Alexander drew a line defining the dominions of the Spanish and Portuguese respectively. As vicar of Christ on earth, the pope decided to

“ ... give, grant, and assign to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, forever, together with all their dominions, cities, camps, places, and villages, and all rights, jurisdictions, and appurtenances, all islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered towards the west and south, by drawing and establishing a line from the Arctic pole, namely the north, to the Antarctic pole, namely the south, no matter whether the said mainlands and islands are found and to be found in the direction of India or towards any other quarter, the said line to be distant one hundred leagues towards the west and south from any of the islands commonly known as the Azores and Cape Verde ...”.<sup>1</sup>

Henceforth, colonialism by Spain and Portugal was legitimized by the Roman Catholic Church under the pretext of Christianization. This practically justified all subjugation of non-Christian nations, exploitation of their lands, as well as slavery. As the Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Alexander VI, *Inter Caetera. Division of the undiscovered world between Spain and Portugal*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 1493, in: Papal Encyclicals Online, library, Kindle, Nook, EPUB © Copyright 2000–2022. “Leon” is equivalent to “Portugal”. The baptismal name of Pope Alexander VI was Rodrigo de Borja (lived 1431–1503; as pope: 1492–1503).

or Portuguese explorers arrived in a non-Christian land, they demonstratively planted a cross and declared the territory as the rightful property of either Spain or Portugal. In their endeavours to Christianize foreign lands, the Catholic monarchs, as patrons of Catholic domains (called *Padroado*)<sup>2</sup>, cooperated very closely with religious orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, and later Jesuits.

The Protestant churches at first did not have the resources for missionary activity. Gisbertus Voetius, an outstanding reformed theologian of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was the first to put much attention to Jesus Christ's call for mission to all nations (Matt. 28:19–20). Although he recognised the opportunities for propagating the Gospel in the dominions of the East India Company (VOC) in Africa and Asia, including what was later called "Indonesia", he did neither understand mission as a justification of the conquest of foreign lands by Europeans, nor as the task of "Christianizing" the world.<sup>3</sup>

As a staunch Calvinist, Voetius' mission theory was founded in the will of God and dual Predestination. The latter means that since eternity, God has determined a certain number of humans from among all of the nations to be His people and others not to be part of that selected group. It therefore is the core task of the church to proclaim the Gospel to all and to help "plant" local churches for the sole glory of God. Although all local churches include both true believers and hypocrites, it is difficult for church leaders to distinguish between the two. Only God knows His own. The Church and the Christian authorities have to establish a certain degree of piety or holiness in society, albeit only God can finally separate the "good wheat from the bad weeds" (Matt. 13:24–30).

Voetius believed that there should be a close bond between the churches in the Netherlands and the churches founded in the colonies of the VOC. But, he was not in favour of a dominance of Dutch Christians over Christians in the colonies. Every local congregation should as soon as possible be governed by its own church council.

Based on the above-mentioned outline, it can be concluded that the mission theories of Voetius (which very much represented official Calvinist teaching) were neither intended to justify colonialism,

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. J.L. Ch. Abineno, *Sejarah Apostolat di Indonesia 1*, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta 1978, pp. 11–30.

<sup>3</sup> For the Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius, see: J.A.B. Jongeneel. "Voetius, Gisbertus (or Gijssbert Voet)," 1998.

nor were they practically applied by the VOC in their conquest and subjugation of the people in Africa and Asia. Although the VOC was granted the right by the Dutch legislature (*Staten-Generaal*) to be the “Christian authority” in the colonies, it did not meticulously follow the teachings of the Dutch Reformed Synods. “The VOC could not really behave as a strict Reformed body”.<sup>4</sup>

Strange enough, though the 18<sup>th</sup> century is called the Age of Enlightenment with anti-church sentiments running high in some Western countries, the obsession with differentiation based on empirical observation led to many abstruse racial theories. This trend was eagerly followed in many Protestant circles. The Pietists (i.e. pious groups inside the church), however, at first rejected the rationalism of the Enlightenment. In fact, the early missionary societies founded by Pietists did not consider it strange for European missionaries to marry local women in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The early instructions of the London Missionary Society (LMS) even advocated marriage between European missionaries and local women converted to Christianity, an advice followed by missionaries such as James Read<sup>5</sup> and Johannes Th. van der Kemp<sup>6</sup> in South Africa, as well as Joseph Kam<sup>7</sup> in Ambon, Moluccas.

Unfortunately, the reservations against racial theories in Pietist missionary circles changed towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some leaders of missionary societies not only started following the trend of distinguishing between the “races”, but even made rather unhealthy concoctions mixing Christianity with “racial theories” in support of imperialism and colonialism.

One such theorist on “racial” and “colonialist” matters, and a top leader of the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMG) as well, was Friedrich Fabri.<sup>8</sup> Fabri joined the chorus of colonialist chauvinism, claiming

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<sup>4</sup> J.S. Aritonang & K. Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 2008, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> James Read, Sr. (1777–1852). Read, a missionary of the LMS in South Africa (arrived 1799/1800), married with the Khoi women Eilizabeth Valentyn in about 1810. Read was a champion in the struggle for equal rights for the indigenous peoples of the Cape Province, South Africa.

<sup>6</sup> Johannes Theodorus van der Kemp (1747–1811), a Dutch who founded the *Nederlandse Zending Genootschap* (NZG) in Rotterdam in 1797 and then worked for the LMS in South Africa. Van der Kemp married Sara Janse, a freed slave, in 1806.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Kam (1769–1833). A Dutch—partially of Swiss descend—who was sent out as a missionary of the NZG (in cooperation with the LMS) to the Dutch East Indies. In 1815, after having arrived at his destination in Ambon Moluccas, Kam married Sara Maria Timmerman who was of Ambonese-Dutch descend.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Gotthart Karl Ernst Fabri (1824–1891). In 1857, Fabri became the director (called

the superiority of white Christian civilization over other cultures. In widely read booklets<sup>9</sup>, Fabri argued that Germany as a Christian country necessitated it becoming a colonial power. He argued that ‘heathen’ cultures had no right to exist and would fade away in the face of a victorious Christianity. The pagan could be saved solely through individual conversion to Jesus Christ. Hence, this converted person must leave behind all fetters of his non-Christian culture which, as such, was doomed to extinction.<sup>10</sup>

Whereas such cultural imperialism is not necessarily “racist”, the racist intentions of Fabri are quite explicit in his use of the Biblical story of Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, in order to divide humanity into masters and servants. Especially the curse of Ham by Noah (Gen. 9:18–29), becomes Fabri’s Biblical justification of Western colonialism. The sons of Noah are seen as the prototypes of racial superiority and inferiority, all dark skinned people being associated with Ham, who had to serve his brothers. Fabri draws the conclusion that this underscores the right and duty of Germany to subdue people of inferior races. In turn they will be uplifted to some degree by Christian civilisation.

That this is not rightful interpretation but wilful misuse of the Bible becomes clear if we look closer at the text. Firstly, it has to be noted, it is not Ham himself, but his son Canaan and his descendants who are cursed. The other three sons of Ham, namely Cush, Egypt and Put, are not cursed as well (cf. Gen. 9:24–25; 10:6–20). From the Biblical point of view, the curse of Noah, therefore, has absolutely nothing to do with skin-colour, “race” or ancestry, but with the bad relationship between the people of Canaan (the descendants of Canaan son of Ham) with Israel. The Canaanites became the continuous enemies of Israel. We may conclude that Fabri’s race-theory is not only far-fetched, but tendentious. He seems so eager to justify colonialism that he instrumentalizes the Bible for that purpose, similar to the slave-traders earlier on. As Garrett Kell puts it: “The curse served as a proof-text for pro-slavery

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*Inspektor*) of the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS). During his tenure of 27 years, he became a strong supporter of the colonialist movement in Germany, providing it with “Theological” justification.

<sup>9</sup> F. Fabri, *Die Entstehung des Heidenthums und die Aufgabe der Heidenmission*, 1859, pp. 3–54. Cf. by the same author, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien? Eine politisch-ökonomische Betrachtung*, 1879.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3–54. Cf. Uwe Hummel & Tuhoni Telaumbanua, Cross and Adu, 2007, pp. 88–90.

preachers, enabling them to make heavenly sounding justifications for the hellish enslavement of dark-skinned image-bearers”.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4. RACISM AS A SYSTEM (APARTHEID)**

When I was about 11 years old, my father, a civil engineer, decided to move to South Africa and I joined him. So we entered the world of “Apartheid”, a segregationist, fascist ideology which preached “separate development” for different races. The whole population was divided into four main “races”: so-called Whites who stood on top of the social pyramid, so-called Bantu who—though by far the majority—were placed at the bottom, while so-called Coloureds and so-called Asians were put somewhere in between. There were weird exceptions, though, like darkish looking “Whites” who were “reclassified” as Coloured or whitish looking Coloureds became Whites. In 1984, two Whites were even “reclassified” as Chinese.<sup>12</sup> The little minority of Japanese was considered as “honorary Whites” (at least what the allocation of residential areas was concerned). According to Seiro Kawasaki<sup>13</sup>, this was mainly for commercial business reasons and because most Japanese only remained temporarily in South Africa anyway, but he also mentions some Apartheid ideologists who referred to the status of Japanese in Nazi Germany, where they were considered “Honorary Aryans” and therefore “racially” different from other “Asians”. The Cape Malays were considered “Coloured” and not “Asian”, and so forth. Nobody could really explain this, nor the whole set of race-classification for this matter. The mother of a friend once gave me a book on racial categorisation, but even as a teenager I got the impression that this did not make sense.

The reality of Apartheid was just as bizarre. For about a year, we lived in a remote town in the Cape Province called Graaff-Reinet. My father built a road there. His closest colleague was a land-surveyor. Our families got along well, they came by our place and one day we paid them a visit. The next day we got a visit of another kind. Two

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Garrett Kell, *Damn the Curse of Ham: How Genesis 9 Got Twisted into Racist Propaganda*, Bible & Theology, 2021 (access internet on 23.5.2022); “i.e. of Noah”, added by Hummel).

<sup>12</sup> Population Registration Act of 1950 (or Race Classification Act), cf. *Apartheid Law—The Story of Africa: Southern Africa*, BBC World Service (<https://www.bbc.co.uk › features>). “In 1984, for example: 518 Coloured people were defined as White, 2 whites were called Chinese, 1 white was reclassified Indian, 1 white became Coloured, 89 Coloured people became African.”

<sup>13</sup> Seiro Kawasaki, *The Policy of Apartheid and the Japanese*, 2001, pp. 69–73.

sinister looking security-policemen called in to reprimand my father that it was inappropriate for “Whites” to visit “Coloureds”, a condition which had not occurred to us before.

Apartheid demanded separation of races on almost all levels. There were separate living areas or suburbs<sup>14</sup>, especially for Whites (usually the good parts near the centre) and for Blacks or *Bantu* (usually in the poor peripheries or “townships”). For “Coloureds” and “Asians” the division was not always so clear to outsiders, though the “Native Resettlement Act”<sup>15</sup>, also forced millions of them to move to other, often desolate and inhospitable, places.

There actually were four different educational systems. Most “Blacks” got only the basic education necessary for a workforce in an industrialized country; “Coloureds” and “Asians” had a bit better system qualifying them for commerce, middle-management and skilled work; “Whites” had excellent schools which were to educate them for leadership positions. Generally, this resulted in an unjust, racially segregated class-society. All of the power and most of the land and money was in the hands of the “Whites” (and some very affluent “Indians”), while the vast majority of “Blacks” and “Coloureds” was politically disenfranchised, dispossessed of most of their land, economically poor and without proper civil rights. Whereas most of the Blacks (*Bantu*) lived and worked in areas controlled by Whites, only 13% of the South African territory was allocated to them in the form of ten homelands or Bantustans. This meant that many workers, who laboured in “white” industries or households, were separated from their families in the homelands. They often lived as illegal squatters in makeshift townships outside the boundaries of towns, or in little servants quarters in the back of “White” people’s estates. There was constant violence inflicted by gangs or the police.

But, despite so many disadvantages and obstacles, quite a number of “Non-Whites” found their way to professional success during the Apartheid era (which started in 1948 and ended in 1994), while many “Whites”—who enjoyed all kinds of privileges—dropped out of school or performed so badly that there had to be “job-reservation” (for instance at the South African Railways) so that they

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<sup>14</sup> Group Areas Act of 1950 (Act No. 41 of 1950 or Act to provide for the establishment of group areas, for the control of the acquisition of immovable property and the occupation of land and premises, and for matters incidental thereto). Repealed by the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Natives Resettlement Act, Act No 19 of 1954.

could still pretend to be masters. It were especially these uneducated “Whites” that fiercely defended the ridiculous “petty Apartheid” such as separation of restaurants, railway waggons, seats in mixed buses, beaches, swimming pools, park-benches and public lavatories. Even the entrance doors to certain stores had to be marked “Whites Only” or “Non-Whites Only”.

Besides the extreme socio-economic hardship for “non-White” South Africans, Apartheid also caused a lot of pain and suffering for all those who happened to fall in love with someone from another “race”. Apartheid, which was defined by its architects as “Christian-Nationalism”, believed it to be God’s plan that “races” should not mix in an intimate way. The underlying theory was that God actually made “races” and that the Bible demands “racial purity”. This, of course, is more of an ideological hypothesis, than a plausible Biblical theory. In reality it caused inhumane conditions of life and paralysed social dynamics. Apartheid laws (or rather the legal concoctions called “law”), such as the “Immorality Act”<sup>16</sup> and the “Mixed Marriage Act”<sup>17</sup>, not only prevented the natural encounter between men and women from different “races”, but actually criminalized such love relationships. Both extramarital sexual relations and official marriage between the “races” was therefore prohibited by law and many of the churches accepted this without protest. When my wife, who is Indonesian, and I seriously considered settling in South Africa after completion of my post-graduate studies in Germany, the White Lutheran church in South Africa turned us down because of “the laws of the land”.<sup>18</sup>

## **5. NO RACISM IN THE BIBLE**

The Bible is not colour-blind. When Shulamite says to her lover: “I am black and beautiful” (Song 1:5), she is aware of the fact that her skin-colour is different from his. When Prophet Jeremiah asks: “Can Ethiopians change their skin or leopards their spots?” (Jer. 13:23a), he is aware of the skin-colour of a distinct ethnic in Africa. Jeremiah

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<sup>16</sup> Immorality Act of 1927 (Act No. 5 of 1927) prohibited sex between “Whites” and “Blacks” (*Bantu*) and was amended in 1950 (Act No. 21 of 1950) in order to prohibit sexual intercourse between the four official “race categories” in South Africa altogether. This act was repealed in June 1985 but not fully abolished until the 1990s.

<sup>17</sup> Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 (Act No 55 of 1949). This act was repealed in June 1985 but not fully abolished until the 1990s.

<sup>18</sup> Strictly speaking, that law was about to be repealed (see footnotes above).

is using a characteristic of “Ethiopians” (Cushites or Nubians, now roughly Sudan), which is striking to him (i.e. the very dark skin), just as he is referring to a striking characteristic of leopards (i.e. the spots). The prophet is using these as metaphors for the unchanging, rebellious disposition of Israel. There is no racially disparaging intent towards black Africans, just as there is no notion of dislike towards spotted leopards. Nevertheless, such verses have been instrumentalized for racist purposes. Both racists and non-racists quote the Bible in support of their convictions.

There is, indeed, a clear distinction in the Old Testament between the people of Israel or Jews and other nations, just as there is a difference in the New Testament between believers in Christ and non-believers. This differentiation is, however, neither based on the colour of skin nor on other specific physical characteristics. God distinguishes between the people chosen for a specific purpose, and others. But no human is disregarded by the Creator. Even though Israel is chosen from among the nations, God loves the others as well. God repeatedly demands of His people to love “strangers”: “For the LORD your God ... loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deut. 10:17-19). Conversely, the criteria that determine whether “strangers” (or other nations) will partake in shalom are loyalty to the LORD, doing His will (e.g. justice, peace, mercy, love and forgiveness), and being well-disposed toward Israel. Those who worship idols, who do injustice and who are hostile to Israel, exclude themselves. “Race”, or “nationality”, do not matter for salvation.

Perhaps the most spectacular non-Jewish supporter of Israel mentioned in the Old Testament is King Cyrus the Great, the ruler of Persia. Whereas he was neither a Jew by “race” nor an adherent of the religion of Israel, he is called an anointed one of the LORD, a messiah! (Isa. 45:1-3). The reason for this is that after conquering Babylonia in 539 B.C. (seemingly without bloodshed), he freed the Jews from bondage and supported their return to Judea and the rebuilding of the temple of the LORD on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Impressive are also some non-Jewish women, who are held in great esteem, such as Rahab of Jericho, Ruth the Moabite, Yael the Kenite and the Queen of Sheba (*Saba*, present day Ethiopia and Yemen). These non-Israelites have shown respect to the God of Israel and loyalty to His chosen people. Therefore, they are incorporated

into the list of heroes of faith and became honoured ancestors of Israel. Ruth and Rahab are even mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5). What counts seems not to be the pure Jewish blood-line, but the tradition of faith.

The same pattern we observe in the complicated matter of Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. Moses, the great leader and receiver of the Law of God, himself was married to a black woman, Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro the Midianite (cf. Ex. 2:4). According to Numbers 12, she is called a “Cushite” (a woman from Ethiopia or Nubia in Africa). The criticism of Aaron and Miriam about Moses having a “Cushite” (black) wife is rebuked and punished by God. In the face of the anger of the LORD, Aaron acknowledges their “racism” as a foolish “sin” (Num. 12:11).

Later on in the book of Numbers, the worship of Baal of Peor becomes a great challenge to the Israelites, because it involved sex orgies. Just as Moses had condemned the cult of Baal-Peor, Zimri, an Israelite from the tribe of Simeon, challenged him. Zimri had brought along a Midianite women by the name of Cozbi, daughter of Zur. She most probably was a cult-prostitute of Baal of Peor. Despite Moses’ condemnation of this, Zimri brought her into his tent. For this, the couple was executed by Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron the priest (Num. 25:7-8).

This condemnation by Moses and execution by Phinehas had nothing to do with the colour of the skin or the nationality of Cozbi, but rather the insubordinate attitude of Zimri towards Moses and the fact that Zimri had succumb to the sensual temptations of the worship of Baal of Peor (Num. 25:1-2).

Special attention has to be paid in this regard to the book of Ezra (originally Ezra-Nehemiah) which prohibits mixed marriage between Jews and non-Jews and even demands that Jewish men divorce their non-Jewish wives for religious purification (cf. Ezz. 9-10). Why is the seed of a Jew called “holy” and shouldn’t be “mixed” with a non-Jewish woman (Ezz. 9:2)? Why are Jewish men who married non-Jewish women accused of “sin” (Ezz. 9:6), quite contrary to the above mentioned marriage of Moses? Isn’t the prohibition of mixed marriage blatant racism? Isn’t that just like the logic of Apartheid?

The answer to the last question is: “No”, unless we read the text out of context and wilfully inject a racist meaning between the lines. The “abominations” of the people of the land (Ezz. 9:14) had nothing to do with the colour of skin or other physical—let alone “racial”—

characteristics. The decisive point here again is religious adherence and the way of life that goes with it. Ezra, the scribe and priest of God, was wary of the danger of apostasy by an as yet unsteady, fragile minority of Jews living among a multitude of people whose religion and habits were contrary to the law of God. Israel has been chosen by God to be a “light to the nations” (Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 60:3). If, however, Israel assimilates into the dominant surrounding culture and religion, the very source of salvation for the nations (heathen) would be gone. Ezra refers to the Law in Deuteronomy 7:3-4a (“Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods.”). The justification for the existence of Israel is that it be God’s tool toward universal salvation. For this religious reason alone, Israel must be separated from the peoples around it. In that specific post exilic situation, separation from pagan spouses was in accordance with the Law of God (Ezr. 10:3). Many Jewish rabbis would argue, that this must be the case throughout history.

But, whereas the prohibition on mixed marriage for religious (not racial) reasons in the book of Ezra may still hold for many Jews until today, this does not necessarily apply to Christians. According to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:12-16, the Apostle Paul does not exclude the possibility of maintaining a marriage between a believer and a non-believer, albeit he acknowledges that this is his personal opinion and not the Lord speaking. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:14-15, Paul actually warns about a partnership being a “believer” and an “unbeliever”.

In principle, Jesus and the early church broke down the walls of ethnic, class and gender separation (Gal. 3:28). Of course these entities keep on existing in this world and they surely have temporal significance, even in church-life. But such cultural or natural attributes should not obstruct our unity in Christ and never be used to discriminate against a person.

## **6. THE ANTITHESIS TO RACIST THEOLOGY (BLACK-CONSCIOUSNESS)**

The fact that the Gospel does not support division or discrimination on racial grounds has always been a more or less disturbing corrective, even to the advocates of segregation. But, despite of this Biblical imperative, Racist Theology remained quite widespread

in churches way into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as it served as justification of Western imperialism or Apartheid.

But even in Democratic post-colonialist countries, racist patterns of thought and prejudices dominated the broad public opinion in society and church. Only in the 1960s, to some extent shaken up by the Civil Rights Movement in the USA led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others, racism in ideology and behaviour became seriously questioned by the mainline churches. Especially Black Theology in the United States of America and South Africa unmasked racist patterns in Christian opinion and theology.

The South African theologian and politician Allan A. Boesak (born 1946), in his book *Black Theology, Black Power*<sup>19</sup>, argues that both the victim and the perpetrators need to be freed of racist thinking in order to overcome injustice in society. Both the racially oppressed and the oppressor have to undertake the challenging task of total reinterpretation of both history and theological developments from the point of view of the racially oppressed and exploited.

Boesak dedicates his book to Steve Biko (*"In memory of Steve Biko, with respect"*), the father of Black-Consciousness, who was murdered by the Apartheid-Regime in South Africa. Whereas Boesak very much follows the analysis and exegesis of the US-American theologian James H. Cone (1938–2018), he applies the theory in the South African context and does not call for violent revolution. For Boesak, Black Theology is a fundamentally Biblical theology, its main themes being liberation from bondage (e.g. the Exodus), a God who sides with the poor and oppressed, a saviour (the black Messiah) who sides with the marginalized and downtrodden, and a Spirit of God who empowers for liberation and authentic life.

In this regard Boesak explains elaborately what he means by "Black Power". Often power is treated with suspicion or given a negative connotation by Christians. But power is essential to human relations and plays a big role in the Bible. Negative is only the negative use of power which subjugates or humiliates people ("power over"). But, the option to share power ("power with others") in order to bring about good must be seen positively. A fundamental prerequisite is that the oppressed gains the "courage to be" (e.g. the courage to be Black). Such "black-consciousness" is the basis of Black power as a positive force of life. The goal is that Black people

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<sup>19</sup> Allan Aubrey Boesak. *Black Theology, Black Power*, 1978. Boesak was influenced by James H. Cone and Cornel West (Cf. James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 1969).

(e.g. the poor, the oppressed, the exploited, the marginalized) start determining their own fate. “Black Power says ‘no’ to oppression and ‘yes’ to the dignity and worth of black people”.<sup>20</sup>

Boesak convinces with this approach which condemns racism, and particularly Apartheid, but not the white people. There is the chance of change, conversion, re-education and ultimately reconciliation between the “races” and also between the social “classes”.

Boesak was strongly involved in the drafting and subsequent adoption of the Confession of Belhar, the strongest Christian confession of faith against injustice and racism, yet upholding the vision of reconciliation in Jesus Christ.<sup>21</sup> The Confession has five Articles. Especially article 3 states that the reconciliation established by Jesus Christ is seriously questioned by race-segregation. Division based on race weakens the Christian witness. God is the God of the poor and downtrodden. In accordance with many passages from the Bible, the confession states:

“Therefore, we reject any doctrine which, in such a situation, sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and colour and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.”<sup>22</sup>

Since Boesak was elected as the general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in the same year (1982), this Confession soon shook up Protestant Christians worldwide. Even the Seventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Budapest in 1984, made the following strong statement against racism based on the conviction that “all people are created in God’s image” (Gen. 1:27).

“We can and must confess that racism is a structural sin that exists in our churches and communities, and commit ourselves to difficult conversations about the sin of racism and advocacy to overcome it. We can and must confess

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<sup>20</sup> Alan A. Boesak. *Black Theology Black Power*, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> The Confession of Belhar. English text of 1994. It was first drafted in Afrikaans in 1982. In 1986, the Belhar Confession was adopted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, and later taken over by many Protestant churches all over the world.

<sup>22</sup> Belhar, Article 3. The phrase “in such a situation” refers to, but does not mention explicitly, Apartheid.

and address our individual actions that perpetuate racism, both things done and left undone, in church, society and relationships.”<sup>23</sup>

## **7. THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION**

“Racism” as both a personal and a structural sin cannot be ignored or downplayed by the churches. Social-cultural prejudices have to be addressed and eradicated. Since I presently teach in Papua-Province, Indonesia, the development concerning racial discrimination in the Asia-Pacific region draws my attention. In fact, I notice different degrees of racism in this society, some becoming habitual if not systemic.

Incidentally, there are rather spectacular racist attacks on Papua, such as the one on Papua Students at their dormitory in Surabaya around Independence Day on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2019 (they were accused of defiling the Indonesian flag and they were racially insulted by so-called Indonesian nationalists; some Papua were apprehended by security forces). Although this ignited strong reactions by the national media, some NGOs and the Communion of Church in Indonesia (PGI),<sup>24</sup> as well as some big demonstrations, it did not bring about a change of awareness concerning racism in Indonesia.

Generally, Indonesians are dismayed watching brutal incidents of racist violence, such as the murder of George P. Floyd Jr. by a policeman in Minneapolis (USA) on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020, but this does not lead to critical assessment of racial prejudice in the own communities. Quite often, I hear people complaining about racial prejudice against Papua, but then in the next breath I hear those from the coastal regions of Papua blaming those from the highlands for all unrest and misery, and vice versa.

Therefore, perhaps more than ever before, the Indonesian churches—including the ones in Papua—have to combat racism beginning in their own midst. The “Ministry of Reconciliation” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:18) should apply methods of critical, racism-sensitive assessment to all areas of church work. Analysis focused on racial relations must flow into teaching starting from Sunday School right up-to the colleges and seminars in the communities. Sermons should

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<sup>23</sup> LWF Report on “Racism in Church and Society”, No. 19/20. p. 244.

<sup>24</sup> “Sekum PGI, Pdt. Gomar Gultom Prihatin Adanya Pelecehan Kesukuan Kepada Mahasiswa Papua”. Nuel, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Retrieved on 27.05.2022 from <https://tabloidmitra.com>

also deal with the “hidden dark side of human nature”, which occasionally makes us think, say or do unintended racist things. Awareness raising for Anti-Racism must be accounted for in all curriculums, including the faculties of theology and Christian education.

Last but not least, pastors should bring people of different ethnic background together in Churches. The trend of building ethno-specific diaspora congregations under the pretext of maintaining cultural identities may actually strengthen racial prejudice, rather than enhance spiritual growth.

In Jesus Christ, “There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Jesus Christ is the one who brought about reconciliation between God and humans where sin had brought about alienation; Jesus Christ has brought about reconciliation between peoples who had been divided by culture or enmity for centuries. Jesus Christ can also liberate from the sin of racism, both personal and structural. In Him we may become a new creation, because “everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!” (2<sup>nd</sup>Corinthians 5:17). As disciples of Jesus, we should love one another. Love means unity and not forced separation or prejudicial judgment. As valuable as culture, language and tradition are, they should never turn into arrogance against others and thus obstruct our unity in Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the final analysis it is necessary to uphold that the sin of racism can only be overcome by love.

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# BETWEEN UNITY AND CONFRONTATION HUMAN RIGHTS IN A WARMING WORLD RIDDLED WITH POWER STRUCTURES

*Jakob Nehls*

In recent decades, the concept of human rights has become an almost sacrosanct ideal of justice. Only few would openly speak out against human rights. States and institutions - including ecclesiastical ones - explicitly profess their support for them. Especially in the fight against exclusion and discrimination, a term from the human rights vocabulary<sup>1</sup>, they are a frequently used tool. This triumph, despite all the criticisms discussed later, is certainly great news for the global struggle for justice.

Nevertheless, it appears that human rights, whether they are concretely enshrined in treaties or established through discourses, are not an apodictic claim. They describe a world that is fundamentally different from the one in which we currently live in. The postmodern reality is characterized by various forms of inequality, poverty and capitalist exploitation, as well as environmental degradation and the climate crisis. The latter, given its exponential character, its massive destructive potential, its structural, political-economic origin, as well as its geographic dimension, poses an unprecedented threat to human rights. According to *United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* Michelle Bachelet environmental change “constitute[s] the single greatest challenge to human rights of our era”.<sup>2</sup> Human

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<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights“, UN General Assembly 302, Nr. 2 (1948), Art. 2

<sup>2</sup> Emma Farge, “Environmental threats are biggest challenge to human rights -UN“, Reuters, 13. September 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/environmental-threats-are-biggest-challenge-human-rights-un-2021-09-13/>.

rights are thus not a description of a status quo, but rather a mission, a “concrete utopia”<sup>3</sup> to be achieved.

Given the extreme divergence between human rights claims of how the world ought to look like and the actual state of affairs, the question arises as to how human rights themselves are located in the existing injustices. What contradictions are apparent here? What role do human rights play in responding to new challenges, first and foremost the climate crisis? What is important, what do we perhaps have to rethink when we struggle together for a reconciled and united world?

In order to answer these questions, it is first necessary to clarify what human rights are. Human rights declarations, covenants and treaties in existence, in particular the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR<sup>4</sup>) proclaimed in 1948 provide a sound overview of the wide-ranging portfolio agreed upon by a broad community of states. Though not legally binding, the UDHR served as the foundation of following human rights treaties and is until today considered the working basis of the human rights movement, for which it has a nearly sacred status<sup>5</sup>. The declaration contained civil and political rights as well economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights, two groups of rights that were later embodied in legally binding, international human rights law in two separated covenants: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR<sup>6</sup>) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR<sup>7</sup>).

International human rights law is a good starting point to grasp what human rights are. However, a purely legal perspective does not do justice to what Habermas’ fittingly refers to as “Janus Face”<sup>8</sup>: human rights are both legal as well as moral rights. As he persuasively argues, despite some room for interpretation, moral promises are concretized and specified in legislative procedures.

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<sup>3</sup> See Wolfgang Kaleck, *Die konkrete Utopie der Menschenrechte: ein Blick zurück in die Zukunft*, Originalausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> UN General Assembly, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

<sup>5</sup> See Mary A. Glendon. *Knowing the universal declaration of human rights*. *Notre Dame Law Review*, 73(5), 1153 (1998), 1153.

<sup>6</sup> UN General Assembly, “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”, 1966, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> UN General Assembly, “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, 1966, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/cescr.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “Das Konzept der Menschenwürde und die realistische Utopie der Menschenrechte”, *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 58, Nr. 3 (2010), p. 348.

In other words, justice congeals into concrete norms in the form of human rights. The theoretical justifications for this process are manifold. A Christian theological derivation, for instance, is found in the image of God in human beings, according to which the divine potentials of recognizing, evaluating, and deciding are inherent within human beings<sup>9</sup>.

Civil and political rights as well as ESC rights equally stand side by side both on the paper of the respective treaties and in their moral justification. The idea that all rights can only be realized together is reflected in the indivisibility of human rights. Here, too, there is a gap between claim and reality. Even or perhaps especially human rights, which claim to be prepolitical and present themselves in a mantle of neutrality, are not isolated from political ideologies and power structures of the real world<sup>10</sup>.

This becomes particularly evident if one looks on how differently civil and political right as well as ESC-rights have been presented, promoted, and fought for. Many human rights advocates, politicians and representatives of rights-demanding institutions—again, including ecclesiastical ones—have been using the term “human rights” almost synonymously with “political and civil rights” when they correctly (!) demanded freedom of speech, freedom of assembly or the release of political prisoners, to name a few fairly prominent civil and political rights. On the other hand, issues regarding ESC-rights like the right to a descent standard of living, health or food were often not framed as human rights issues. This especially applies for dominant players located in the norm-setting Global North<sup>11</sup>. This bias is also reflected in the work of the international non-governmental human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International which only began to work on ESC rights on a larger scale around the turn of the millennium<sup>12</sup>. The deep roots in political ideologies become evident in the fact that

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<sup>9</sup> See Tine Stein, “Religiöse Begründungen der Menschenrechte: ein Spannungsverhältnis von Universalitätsanspruch und partikularen Traditionen“, *Jahrbuch Menschenrechte* 2009, Nr. jg (1. Dezember 2008), <https://doi.org/10.7788/jbmr-2008-jg04>.

<sup>10</sup> See Makau Wa Mutua, “The Ideology of Human Rights, 36 Va“, *J. Int’l L* 589 (1996). p. 605.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 604.; Mutua does not refer to the “Global North” but to the “Western World” which I regard as a synonym describing spaces characterized by a disproportionately large amount of power resulting from structural, historically created advantages.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Robinson, “Advancing Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: The Way Forward“, *Hum. Rts. Q.* 26 (2004), p. 866.

the ICESCR was not ratified by the USA and the ICCPR not by China until today.

We will come back to the role of political and civil as well as ESC-rights in a moment. Before that, I will introduce what Habermas calls the “discovery function”.<sup>13</sup> He argues that the formulation of rights has always been a result of violated human dignity. Therefore, the respective interpretations always depend on contemporary challenges—basically a mirror of the particular epoch. This approach seems compelling: It is widely agreed that the proclamation of the UDHR was a result of the terrible experiences of two world wars<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore, a look at the historical categorization of different types of human rights supports Habermas’ argument. Political and civil rights are often categorized as so-called first-generation rights, whereas ESC-rights are often referred to as second-generation rights. This division dates back at Karel Vasak who suggested three “generations” of human rights, the first of which represents the liberal defensive rights as well as political participation rights - classic civil and political rights - that were “discovered” in the course of the Atlantic revolutions (*United States Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and the French *Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen* in 1789) of early modernity. The second generation, in contrast, are the social rights—or ESC rights—“discovered” in the context of the precarious living conditions caused by capitalist organized industrialization. Vasak classifies the ongoing discussions about collective rights into the third generation, which took and take place in the light of the decolonialization processes as well as discussions about global inequalities from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> This generation has not yet been fully explored; it is, however, of central importance in the context of emerging human rights challenges.

Having the “discovery function” as well the idea of generations in mind it is worthwhile to have a look at current issues which concern human rights. When the iron curtain fell in the early 1990s and Francis Fukuyama proclaimed the “end of history”<sup>16</sup>, in other words

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<sup>13</sup> Habermas, “Das Konzept der Menschenwürde und die realistische Utopie der Menschenrechte“, p. 346

<sup>14</sup> See Johannes Morsink, “World War Two and the Universal Declaration“, *Hum. Rts. Q.* 15 (1993), p. 357.

<sup>15</sup> Karel Vasak, “30-Year Struggle-Sustained Efforts to give Force of Law to UNIVERSAL-DECLARATION-OF-HUMAN-RIGHTS“, *UNESCO courier*, Nr. 10 (1977), p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “The end of history?“, *The national interest*, Nr. 16 (1989), pp. 3–18.

the final implementation of and ultimately the lack of alternatives to the liberal and capitalistically organized social model, it has been proven that this was not the ultimate victory for human rights. The post-modern world is full of novel, complex challenges. For example, capitalistic patterns of production and consumption were globalized, a process which came along with structural exploitation of both humans and nature alongside intransparent global supply chains. In addition, a fundamental catastrophe is emerging that poses a serious threat to human rights: ongoing environmental degradation and the climate crisis<sup>17</sup>. A closer look at these exemplary challenges reveals that they equally concern ESC-rights to a very high degree: Whilst the globalized economy affects, inter alia, labour rights the climate crisis has a devastating impact on, for example, the rights to food, water, housing or health.

In terms of the climate crisis it is striking, that the “discovery” of rights is generally characterized by the formulation of ‘new’ norms, in other words by the expansion of the existing human rights range through the inclusion of additional rights. At the centre of this discourse is the right to a sustainable and healthy environment which was recently acknowledged by the United Nations Human Rights Council in October 2021. This step was rightly regarded as an important achievement; after all, victims of the impacts of the climate crisis no longer must rely exclusively on the rights that already existed beforehand<sup>18</sup>.

However, the question still arises as to how also the existing range of rights is to be thought differently and anew in order to be able to respond appropriately to the newly emerging crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the climate crisis. Considering the traditionally weak position of ESC rights described above, it seems obvious that precisely those rights are to be strengthened. Considering the increasing relevance of ESC rights since the turn of the millennium, both in theory and in practice, it can be suggested that this process is already taking place.

There are good reasons why it may be beneficial to enhance the status of ESC rights. Often, relevant concerns such as food,

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<sup>17</sup> See Stephen Humphreys und Mary Robinson, *Human Rights and Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Elena Cima, “The Right to a Healthy Environment: Reconceptualizing Human Rights in the Face of Climate Change”, *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law* 31, Nr. 1 (April 2022): 38–49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/reel.12430>. 39

water, or housing are referred to as basic needs. This is not wrong, though it falls short of potential in terms of framing: if one has a need, one requires something. Those who have a right, however, are entitled to it<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the fulfillment of any such rights ceases to be merely nice-to-have; it is to be guaranteed - first and foremost by the state, which has an obligation to do so. Such a “move from needs to rights, and from charity to duties”<sup>20</sup> brings the concept of accountability into play and therefore politicizes the struggle against discrimination based on as well as exclusion through the violation of ESC rights.

While strengthening ESC rights, the challenge now is to do so without weakening civil and political rights. In fact, one might even question how appropriate it is to effectively present the two groups of rights as separate from each other. A hierarchization that can, under certain circumstances, be harmful may be found in the previously mentioned metaphor of generations. As a rule, these not only follow one another chronologically, but also build each another. The different rights would therefore not stand horizontally next to each other in equal relevance and importance in accordance with the idea of indivisibility, but rather in a vertically sorted family tree. In addition, the figure may imply that older generations will eventually die, an analogy that was certainly not intended and can nevertheless be detrimental<sup>21</sup>. An intersectional approach pointing out how all rights equally depend on each other can be helpful to understand how blurry a categorization into separated groups of rights can be<sup>22</sup>.

It has already been mentioned that the unequally weighted understanding of human rights in the dominant discourse is already subject to massive criticism. Many of these criticisms come from the Global South, where not only ESC rights have a much stronger stance but human rights in general, understood both as legal tools in courts as well as political language on the streets, are often understood,

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<sup>19</sup> See Humphreys und Robinson, *Human Rights and Climate Change*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Uvin, “From the Right to Development to the Rights-Based Approach: How ‘Human Rights’ Entered Development”, *Development in Practice* 17, Nr. 4–5 (August 2007), pp. 597–606, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469617>. 602

<sup>21</sup> See Carl Wellman, “Solidarity, the Individual and Human Rights”, *Human Rights Quarterly* 22, Nr. 3 (2000): 639–57, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2000.0040>. 641

<sup>22</sup> See Ioana Cismas, “The Intersection of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights”, *Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in International Law. Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2014, pp. 448–72.

claimed and contested in a more holistic and politicized manner<sup>23</sup>. Against this background, the challenge does not necessarily lie in adapting the understanding of human rights in such a way that human rights can provide stronger answers for novel human rights issues. Rather, the challenge is to incorporate long-standing, often too little heard and marginalized perspectives from the Global South into the dominant discourse and ultimately the practice of major institutions, most of which are dominated by the Global North.

The question of what paradigm shifts are essential to think of human rights in emancipatory terms in a world shaped by power asymmetries goes beyond the interpretation and weighting of different groups of rights. To be critically viewed is also a Eurocentric black-and-white or good-and-evil logic found in the human rights community, referred in the literature (from the perspective of the South) as savages-victims-saviors construction<sup>24</sup>.

Accordingly, the promotion of human rights often follows a certain rationale: Non-white, helpless, innocent, and primitive victims located in the Global South, whose human rights are violated by non-white, barbaric, tyrannical and uncivilised savages, can only be saved and liberated by the white “savior or the redeemer, the good angel”<sup>25</sup> in the Global North. Importantly, the actors implied under the respective keywords, i.e., non-self-determined people (victims), regimes, military juntas or dictators (savages) and Western governments, UN agencies, human rights organisations or charities (saviors) merely serve as a facade and in fact represent a general understanding of culture. The racist subordination of the Global South as well as the superiority of the Global North inherent in this “metaphor” can be understood as a colonial continuity.

To grasp that this idea does not stand up to reality, one can again make use of the “discovery function” mentioned above: Without denying the Eurocentric character of human rights, it can be stated that the UDHR in particular, as a central document, is to be understood as a reaction to the barbaric atrocities of the National Socialists represented in the West or North, in particular of the white European Adolf Hitler. It was not with a concern for the enslavement

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<sup>23</sup> See Kaleck, *Die konkrete Utopie der Menschenrechte*; Mutua, “The Ideology of Human Rights, 36 Va”.

<sup>24</sup> Makau Mutua, “Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights”, *Harv. Int'l LJ* 42 (2001), p. 201.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

of Africans or colonial crimes against Africans, Latin Americans, or Asians that led to the creation of the human rights movement, but rather the experiences of World War II and the systemic logics of the Cold War<sup>26</sup>. This seems almost doubly tragic: first, the crimes against people in the Global South did not seem to be “enough” in the first place, and then, second, they were used for the colonial-continuous savages-victims-saviors construction.

Also, a look at present human rights “discoveries” of the 21st century, provides strong arguments why a radical rejection of this trifold construction is appropriate. The statement that the world is simply too complex for this condensed view may appear simplistic, yet it is correct. This becomes clear, to use the example once again, in the climate crisis, which cannot be categorized into a simple savages-victims-saviors pattern, although trends are certainly visible. Would the “savages” here be the governments of those often Global Northern countries which inadequately regulate their above-average greenhouse gas emissions? Or perhaps those 90 “carbon major” investor—or government owned businesses which are responsible for almost two-thirds of the industrial carbon dioxide and methane emissions between 1751 and 2010<sup>27</sup>? The fact that the association of these actors with the “savages” terminology appears counterintuitive underlines the colonial background of this term.

Similarly, a look at “victims” and “saviors” in the context of the climate crisis reveals the problematic nature of the construction. Even if the different levels of affectedness—the Global South is more affected than the Global North—are central, a depoliticizing narrative describing the victims as defenceless and passively exposed to the catastrophe is apparent. Island states affected by sea level rise, such as Tuvalu in the Pacific, have through a respective narrative each become a “poster child”<sup>28</sup> of the climate crisis. It is precisely the view through the lens of human rights that shows that this victimization falls short. Rights bearers are not defencelessly exposed to injustice; when their rights are violated, they can insist on the human rights obligations of others. It appears, that “victim” and “savior” here

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210ff.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Heede, “Tracing Anthropogenic Carbon Dioxide and Methane Emissions to Fossil Fuel and Cement Producers, 1854–2010”, *Climatic Change* 122, Nr. 1–2 (Januar 2014): 229–41, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-013-0986-y>.

<sup>28</sup> Anne Chambers und Keith S. Chambers, “Five Takes on Climate and Cultural Change in Tuvalu”, 2007.

become indistinct. Furthermore, this illustrates how essential civil and political rights are in order to tackle the climate crisis. Affected people depend on rights such as freedom of expression or freedom of assembly in order to claim their rights and turn from victims into saviors.

In conclusion, the question remains to be answered as to what action can be taken in response to the criticisms mentioned above. The author is keen to state that what has been said is in no way a call to turn away from human rights. On the contrary, the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, first and foremost the climate crisis, require human rights as rarely before. While the principles laid down in the UDHR in 1948 are not changing, the world in which they operate is transforming. Human rights are conceptualized in a dynamic way; their interpretation and political realisation can be adapted to specific contexts. Human rights issues are more globalized than ever before; the climate crisis decouples cause and effect geographically across the globe. It is more important than ever to understand the struggle for human rights as a common one which transcends national boundaries, while taking existing power asymmetries into account. Criticism voiced are to be systematically incorporated into human rights work, which might result in a strengthening of ESC rights and a deconstruction of the savages-victims-saviors pattern found in human rights work.

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His research focuses on the interface between the climate crisis, human rights, and businesses. Jakob was active for many years at Amnesty International Germany, where, among other things, he helped establish climate-related human rights work. He has been associated with UEM for many years; in 2014/2015 he completed a one-year voluntary service in a protestant church (GKPM) in Mentawai, Indonesia.



# ISLAM AND PEACE BUILDING: EFFORTS TO FIGHT DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM THROUGH NONVIOLENCE

*Purjatian Azhar<sup>1</sup>*

## INTRODUCTION

History of Islam has experienced several phases of situations proving Islam is varicolored. It is in accordance with socio-political and cultural-demographic contexts in which Islam has emerged and developed. Dialectics and interactions as well as the intersection of Islam with these matters continue to face various problems, especially encounters with other religions that often cause tensions and even conflicts between religious communities.

Islam is currently facing various pivotal issues regarding its contribution to world peace. The reason is Islam often portrayed as a religion of violence. Then, the teachings of Islam post 9/11 focus more on studies to prove whether or not Islam teaches violence (terror) without focusing on the importance of exploring the teachings of Islam about peace.<sup>2</sup>

Focusing on the studies of Islam and peace will make better and clear contribution, also show efforts to shift the topic of discussion and debate about violence in Islam. Hence, it will show clearer intention that Islam has peace resources and Islam is able to collaborate

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<sup>2</sup> Albert B. Randall, *Theologies of War and Peace among Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), p. 25

with other religions to build peace.<sup>3</sup> The idea of peace building in Islam is the idea of creating non-violent life conditions. An attempt to actualize peace building in Islam have been carried out by many scholars and practitioners. However, on a global scale, this is still hampered by the assumptions built by the western media stating Islam is a religion of violence, full of conflicts, and non-democracy. Western media often report violence is associated with Islam.<sup>4</sup>

The focal points which usually be concentrated on the studies of wars and conflicts must be shifted into exploring religious values, peace values, and conflict resolution. These aspects will create a new discourse for scholars in pursuing peace studies.

## **IN SEARCH OF THE ROOT OF PEACE BUILDING IN ISLAM**

An attempt to study the sources of values embodied in Islam as a religion which was born after Judaism and Christianity is indeed a challenging endeavor, especially when trying to explore the concept of peace building in both the holy text of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. In the classical Islam tradition, the concept of peace has been practiced by the Prophet according to the context of his time at that time. Ibrahim's religious tradition has undergone a periodization of history which has created such typical way of thinking. Although Islam highly respects tradition, Moses, and Prophet Isa, this tradition is now considered as deviant from monotheism.<sup>5</sup>

The holy Qur'an is a rich source of values, beliefs, and strategies that promote peace and nonviolent resolutions. An understanding about the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the prophet in the early period is highly necessary to understand Islam since the Qur'an and Sunnah must continue to provide a new paradigm for Muslims and Islamic movements in every period in history.<sup>6</sup> Such texts narrate how the

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<sup>3</sup> Robert C. Johansen, "Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, No. 1 (1997), p. 67

<sup>4</sup> Azizah al-Hibri, *Islamic and American Constitutional Law: Borrowing Possibilities or a History of Borrowing?*, 1999, pp. 493–497.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Qoward and Gordon S Smith, *Religion and Peace Building*, State University of New York Press, p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> John L Esposito, *The Islamic Threat* (N.Y.: Oxford U. Press 1992), p. 25.

attempt and struggles of the prophet Muhammad in materializing peace state in both Mecca period and Medina period.<sup>7</sup>

Efforts to realize the urge of creating peace building in the period of the Prophet Muhammad should be enacted by ulama and scholars who endlessly take part in creating peace building. So it can create synergy with social condition today started from reconsidering interpretation (deconstruction of historical reality) and understanding about classical Islam also its application in past historical period <sup>8</sup> if we want to promote nonviolence and peace building. Using the lenses of nonviolence<sup>9</sup> and peace in every effort to interpret the teachings of Islam is very significant in order to have been understanding of the true meaning of Islam as a religion of love and peace.<sup>10</sup>

There are still many Muslim scholars who, as emphasized by Abu-Nimer, are struggling in the area of Islam and conflict. Their abilities are not comprehensive and relevant to the non-violent transformation of conflict through peace. It is worsened by orientalist studies devoted to research and interpretation of war, violence, power, political systems or legal arrangements, the approach of Islamic traditions and teachings from this perspective. These aspects will only perpetuate negative images and perceptions, especially by Western society. <sup>11</sup>

Building the concept of peace in the past period of Islamic history implemented by Abu-Nimer was still influenced by whether or not the conflicts involved relatives, family members, race, ethnicity and religion with non-Muslims as well as the internal ties of a society.<sup>12</sup> If not, there was not universal bond that was able to work together in creating peace after the conflict.

The results of the reading and study by Abu-Nimer about the basic concepts in peace building in Islam become fundamental aspects for creating sustainability peace. As stated in the Qur'an

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<sup>7</sup> look Harodl Qoward and Godron S Smith, *Religion and Peace Building ...*, pp.131–134.

<sup>8</sup> Farid Esack, *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (Oxford: Oneworld 1999), p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Nonviolence is defined as an attitude, point of view, and actions aimed at inviting others to change their opinions, views, and actions.

<sup>10</sup> Mohammed Abu Nimer, *A Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam*, Muis Occasional Papers Series Paper No. 6. Majelis Ulama Islam Singapura, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

and the Sunnah of the prophet (Islamic tradition), Islam creates a set of peace values. If it is applied consistently and systematically, Islam can transcend and solve all types and levels of conflict, values such as justice, kindness, and wisdom which are the core principles in the creation of peace.<sup>13</sup> If the tools are used as conflicts resolution tools, it will be easier to build peace.

Besides Abu-Nimer, there are also some scholars who try to find the concept of peace in Islam through fundamental concept and definition of Islam when looking at conflicts, differences, protection, and peace. First; sources that mention the name of Islam like the word “*muslim*” which means greetings. In Hebrew language, it is “*shalom*” that means peace, prosperity, health”. The greetings in Islam is like Hebrew’s “*shalom aleichem*” which means may peace be upon you. Obedience in Islam is closely related to *salam* (salm, silm) which means peace, it is not merely because there is conflict, but it really expresses health and well-being.<sup>14</sup> Islam also teaches to greet each other by saying “*Assalamu’alaikum*”, that means peace for all humans.<sup>15</sup>

In tradition of Islam, for example, the Prophet Muhammad during the Mecca used a non-violent strategy. It was shown when the Prophet did not perform the use of force in any form, even for self-defense. In fact, he used non-violent resistance with the teachings that existed at that time. While in Mecca for thirteen years, the Prophet had taught non-violent resistance which is patience and fortitude. The Prophet did not advocate violent actions when the Prophet experienced physical and mental violence.<sup>16</sup> In conclusion, there are a lot of values in Islamic tradition that have not been studied and developed for peace building.

## **THE NEW PARADIGM OF PEACE BUILDING IN ISLAM**

The new direction in building a global world order that has made humans connected to each other without boundaries to loosely interact with people and civilizations, cultures, and beliefs makes progressive paradigm of thinking and advancement of the outlook of humanity. Interconnection between humans is not always positive and

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

it often leads to conflict, violence and even war. Conflict is something natural in humans. It can end destructively or constructively.<sup>17</sup>

Abu-Nimer in his research said that the dynamics of contemporary Muslims and its historical background are inevitable. The historical background which always interferes Muslims psychologically as a result of dark history of wars and violence intra and internally. It complicates the change of new paradigm of Islam which contains of peace. Even Assgar Ali Engineer dared to conclude that Islam as a religion of peace and Islam is against violence. On a broader context, he rejects any integral relationship between any religion, including Islam, and violence. Instead, he sees violence as a social phenomenon that occurs as a result of certain negative conditions in which religion can be manipulated as a result of the phenomenon.

More in-depth research related to religion as a source of peace building and non-violence by Prof. Louis Kriesberg tries to offer several approaches. There are three mechanisms through which conflicts can be resolved peacefully and become something constructive: internal group mechanisms, inter-group mechanisms, and external (extra) mechanisms.<sup>18</sup> If placed in the context of religion, then the conflict can be resolved through intra-religious, inter-religious, and extra-religious mechanisms.<sup>19</sup>

It cannot be denied that efforts to build peace are based on non-violence. This is because there are still scholars who argue that violence is still legalized in Islam even though the rules that allow it are very strict. When discussing Islam and nonviolence, Satha-Anand proposes eight theses, as argued by the aforementioned group.

The eight theses are:

1. For Muslims, the issue of violence is an integral part of the moral field of Islam;
2. Violence, if any, which is used by Muslims, must be guarded by the rules specified in the Qur'an and Hadith;
3. If violence cannot distinguish between soldiers and non-soldiers, then it is unacceptable in Islam;
4. Modern eradication technology makes that distinction almost impossible today;
5. In the modern world, Muslims cannot use violence;

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Louis Kriesberg *Konstruktive Conflict...dalam pengantar* (in the Preface of) Mohammed Abu-Nimer's book, *Nirkekerasan dan Bina-Damai Dalam Islam Teori dan Praktik*, 2010, p. xii.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

6. Islam teaches Muslims to fight for justice with the understanding that human life—which is entirely part of God’s creation—has a purpose and it is sacred;
7. To be loyal to Islam, Muslims must use nonviolence as a new way of fighting;
8. Islam itself is a fertile ground for nonviolence because of its potential for resistance, strong discipline, shared and social responsibility, courage, self-sacrifice, and belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the integrity of mankind.<sup>20</sup>

Although in his second thesis, Satha-Anand allowed limited use of force, in his fifth thesis, he clearly discouraged the use of modern violence. Therefore, Islam does not prohibit violence in certain situations; however, this violence is defensive.<sup>21</sup> In this perspective, Abu-Nimer commented that Islam emphasizes social justice, brotherhood, and human equality, the values of forgiveness and generosity, tolerance, obedience to God, respecting the rights of others as repeatedly emphasized in the scriptures and hadiths. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad broke down all barriers of nation and race, Islam longed for and idealized a just and peaceful social order.<sup>22</sup>

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PEACE BUILDING EFFORT IN ISLAM**

In developing the idea of peace building, there are several basic principles to facilitate the effort to practice the concept of a practical area. The first principle is conflict resolution—the basis for every decision-making and strategic step. The other principles are:

First is justice. In Islam, justice can be understood from the point of view of divine justice, namely justice that comes from revelation and Sunnah. Khadduri explained all law mazhab agreed that divine justice is Islam that is manifested ideally. The belief has several assumptions, namely:

1. Justice is known to people through available evidence (both revelation and reason) but knowing through revelation is a stronger belief;

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

2. Regardless of whether justice is the embodiment of the highest human value or is a direct emanation from God (perfection), justice is an ideal idea that every Muslim should strive for;
3. Those who believe in one and just God are subject of divine justice, and all others are objects of that justice. Divine justice is understood as divine law, eternal, perfect, independent of time and place, as a universal implementation plan for all human beings. Even people who do not believe in God can find refuge in it;
4. The measures of justice, whether determined by revelation or reason, show people the right path and the wrong path, so that all (each is based on this “light”), will seek the right and reject the wrong path in order to achieve each this life and salvation in the next life.<sup>23</sup>

The application of ideal justice here is very problematic because many scholars discuss it from various perspectives and approaches and the effort is for the benefit of humankind. Justice, here, covers all aspects of life, both social, economic and other.<sup>24</sup> The relationship between justice and peace in Islam is fundamental. Justice sees as the essence of peace in Islam. Peace in Islam reaches the limitations of people’s greediness which motivates them to violate rights of their fellow human beings.

Second is social empowerment. Empowerment through good actions or deeds is an important path to justice in the Islamic tradition. The rapid growth of Islam is largely a response to its strong commitment to empowering the weak and Islam remains a kind of social activism. Fighting against everyone, helping the poor, and fighting for equality among people are the main virtues in the Qur’an and Hadith. It should be noted that civil society plays a very important role in the process of social empowerment, value transformation, and paradigm shift of thinking.

Third is humanity. Human dimension is very important in peace building, because only human values that can easily bring together all different people, races, skin colors and beliefs. This is because humanity is universal. Humanity as a pillar of peace building is concerned with the dignity of humans, humans, and the sacredness of life (read: valuable).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

The basic principles that I put forward here are just reading the beginning to see the basic principles of peace building in Islam. There are many other things that are also very important in it.

The Qur'an itself explains in Surah Al Hujurat verse 13 which reads:

O mankind, I have created you from a male and a female, nations and tribes. Verily, the noblest of you is the most pious. Verily Allah is All-Seeing and All-Knowing. (Q.S Al-Hujarat: 13).

Based on aforementioned verse, we can understand that Allah created humans with all forms of different backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, skin colors, and cultures. The purpose is to make humans are able to "know" one another. No one feels superior to others. Therefore, Islam is strongly against discrimination, violence, and racist attitudes which actually opposes the concept of human nature commanded by Allah.

## **CONCLUSION**

The concept of peace building in Islam is an effort to answer that Islam is against any kinds of violence as the world accuses. These efforts need concrete and tangible evidence so that later stigmatization does not appear. The concept of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'alamin* is a basic concept which is verifying that Islam is not closely related to violence.

Islam strongly rejects all forms of violence such as discrimination or racist acts. However, in practice, these actions often occur in various places in the name of Islam and even more horribly as if they label themselves as God's representatives on this earth.

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