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**Narrative of Mary and Maryam as An Alternative Solution for  
Intolerance in Indonesia**

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## **Acknowledgement**

It never occurred to me that the universe would actually take me to Germany to continue my theological education to a master level. I was clueless. It is true that since I was a child I often shared my dream of studying in Germany, even though if I was asked at that time how would I get to Germany, I would not give any answers. The fact that I come from an ordinary family, financially, this dream seemed even more impossible to me then. However, thanks to the help of many noble people around me this dream has finally come true and I left for Germany in October 2018. I confidently can claim it was one of the happiest moments I have ever had. This happiness was beyond description. I was so amazed that I had difficulty accepting this dream really come true. Even until a few months living in Germany, I was still often pensive and had difficulty believing that I was actually sitting in a class at Goettingen University, Germany with 22 other students from 16 countries. So fabulous.

For this precious opportunity, I would like to humbly dedicate this thesis to all those who have played their part in helping me achieving many things to date. First, I want to dedicate this thesis to the Lord Jesus Christ who has provided me many things needed to ensure this journey of mind and spiritual come to the reality. Hopefully, through this thesis, Love, which is the core of the teachings of Christ, can be seen more clearly in the midst of the world.

I also want to dedicate this thesis to my family. Papa, Ben Sihotang, Marvell Sihotang, and Grace Sihotang for being so loyal throughout my life and specifically during my study period in Germany for the last 20 months. Hopefully, this thesis would bring us a little joy to our family while adapting a lot of things to new life conditions without Mama. I also want to dedicate this thesis to Binsar Pakpahan and Andar Pasaribu. Both are my mentors and have the biggest role in supporting my education by providing scholarships so that I can only focus on studying without worrying about financial conditions while studying in Germany. Both mentors also succeeded in connecting me with many great and influential people in Indonesia and Germany, which later, made me able to meet some of my scholarship donors who, for privacy reasons, cannot be named. I also want thank the extended family of Sihotang and Sitorus who never hesitated to support me.

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At last, I would like to truly dedicate this thesis to a person behind the selection of the topic of this thesis, Risma Sitorus, my Mother. I did not expect that this thesis would feel so personal in the end. Even though, Mama left without ever being able to see the final version of this thesis, let all the readers of this thesis be able to feel the the spark of kindness she taught to her family and her colleagues throughout her life. Hopefully, this thesis will find a way to inspire people to pay extra appreciation to person like her. Not because she and all the mothers out there want(s) it, but because all of them deserve it.

*To celebrate the life of **Risma Sitorus** (1964-2019), my mother and my very first love.*

## **MA Programme Intercultural Theology Declaration**

I, Mikhael Sihotang hereby declare that this this, entitled “Narrative of Mary and Maryam as An Alternative Solution for Intolerance in Indonesia”, submitted as partial requirement for the M.A. Programme Intercultural Theology, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the Bibliography or List of References.

Jakarta, August 24, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mikhael Sihotang

## **Introduction**

In the last five years (2014-2019) Indonesia's identity as a pluralistic nation began to be threatened by the increasingly widespread acts of violence carried out by various parties and in the name of religion to justify their actions. For example, in 2016 Indonesia was shocked by a terrorist act committed by a young man in Medan, North Sumatra. This young man tried to detonate himself when he was in the Catholic Church of Saint Joseph, which at that time was holding a mass. Even though the bomb had exploded before the young man managed to find the priest who was going to preach and had little explosive power, this young man's actions really disturbed the religious community in Indonesia because of his actions that could kill many people. Further investigation resulted in several unique findings. One of them was the finding of the ISIS extremist group logo along with the youth's identity card. From this finding, the police then concluded that the young man was one of ISIS' supporters. At the same time, it carried out some other fact that Indonesia also still has problems related to the existence of discriminatory local regulations. For example, in Aceh there are six Sharia laws that have been made into formal law. Each of these regional regulations has further explanation regarding the technical implementation. The problem is the law which is based on only one religion, in this case Islam, in its application also applies to another religious believers.

To help clearing the problem of intolerance that is increasingly prevalent in Indonesia, findings from The Wahid Institute (hereinafter abbreviated as TWI) will also be used. This organization routinely issues reports on freedom of religion and belief (hereinafter abbreviated as FRB) in Indonesia. The name Wahid Institute itself is taken from the name of Indonesia's 4th President, Abdurrahman Wahid, who is known as a figure who upholds the values of diversity and tolerance among religious believers because Wahid was the president of Indonesia who decided to make the Chinese New Year a national holiday when still served as president in 2000 by revoking Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 which contained a prohibition for Chinese ethnic communities in Indonesia to celebrate their traditional or religious feasts prominently. Wahid decided to do this so as not to betray the history which written that the Chinese ethnic community also played a role in freeing Indonesia from colonialism. That is why, all groups in society must receive equal treatment and recognition from the state. So, if Islam,

Christianity, Catholicism, and other religions have religious holidays in Indonesia, then Chinese people must also have their own religious holidays. This spirit of tolerance is brought by TWI which is proven by their eager to continue seeking justice for every religious group in Indonesia.

The Wahid Institute first made their annual report in 2008 and the final report presented as per today is the FRB report for 2017. And on this thesis, the annual report that will be used are the 2015-2017 reports. Because, in 2014, which reported on 2015 report, there was one big event that affected the relation between religious people in Indonesia. The event was Presidential Election. This event has successfully put the politics and religion into the same arena. Which often putting people in several boxes. This event has also continued on giving some turbulence in society in the next two years after being held.

Broadly speaking, this report is prepared to help the central and regional governments evaluate the regulations and laws related to freedom of religion and belief that apply. This report is also expected to help non-government parties such as civil society, religious organizations, non-government organizations, and academics who have special attention on issues of freedom of religion and belief in seeing reality in Indonesia and in certain regions.

The Wahid Institute collects and compiles data in a number of steps. First, TWI monitors national and local news media in Indonesia, print or electronic media including online media. Second, TWI collects data and information from institutions or individuals who work together and have the same attention as TWI. Third, TWI collects data through SMS-based community complaint channels created by TWI called Mobile Monitor KBB. Then the data collected is analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, by comparing the same data from the previous year or by giving special attention to cases that stand out and are the subject of discussion in the year of the report.<sup>1</sup>

From the report presented by TWI, it is known that in 2015 there were 190 events with 249 actions. This finding has increased by 20% from 2014 which recorded 158 events and 187 actions.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, in 2016 there were 204 events and 315 actions were

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<sup>1</sup> Wahid Institute, "Yearly Report of Wahid Institute on Religious Freedom in Indonesia" (Wahid Foundation, 2015), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Institute, 32.

recorded. This number is up about 7% from the previous year. In 2017 there were 213 events and 265 actions. On closer inspection, the number of events in 2017 has increased from the previous year but has decreased in the number of actions.<sup>3</sup>

Please note that this annual report is based on findings in almost all provinces in Indonesia. For example, in 2015 observations were made in 25 provinces, in 2016 conducted in 30 provinces, and in 2017 conducted in 27 provinces. Indonesia alone has 34 provinces. This is the reason why this annual report from TWI can be used as a reference to see the condition of Indonesia as a whole. And therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that currently Indonesia is not in a very good condition because violations of the aspects of freedom of religion and belief occur in almost all regions in Indonesia.

Another important thing that makes us able to say that Indonesia is in a little chaotic condition is because the majority of perpetrators of violations are elements of government. From FRB reports, new fact is found that in the period of three years (2015-2017) the police are the party that most often violates freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia. Interesting right? The party that should uphold the law and provide security for all people in Indonesia is actually the main actor.

Besides intolerance, the phenomenon that is happening in Indonesia is that more common issues about women are being discussed in the public sphere and the opinions of women are much more often to be heard. This is why lately more women are appearing in public. According to daily newspaper, *Kompas* on November 11, 2019, the number of women sitting in the House of Representatives also continues to increase by 30% as mandated by the 1945 Constitution, adding this number continues to grow every time we have general election. To get a clearer picture, in 2014 the number of women elected was 131 and in 2019 there was an increase of 20.9% in the House of Representatives and 36% in the Regional Representative Council. In total, the number of women elected to govern in House of Representative is 162 people.<sup>4</sup> Even though the number has not reached the minimum percentage described in our 1945 Constitution, women now, we can claim,

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<sup>3</sup> Wahid Institute, "Yearly Report of Wahid Institute on Religious Freedom in Indonesia" (Wahid Foundation, 2017), 15.

<sup>4</sup> FX Laksana Agung Saputra, "Partisipasi Politik Perempuan Naik," November 11, 2019, sec. Politic and Law, <https://kompas.id/baca/utama/2019/11/11/partisipasi-politik-perempuan-naik/>.



have strategic places in making decisions. And the best part happened in 2019 general election was Indonesia now officially has the first female parliamentary chief in history. This phenomenon has become even more interesting because it has managed to inspire many to see problems that occur today from the perspective of women while looking for the right solution for those. Starting from problems related to domestic violence, increasing regional income and intolerance issues that are happening in Indonesia. This phenomenon makes many parties realize that women need to be involved even further.

Surely, it is no exaggeration to say that women can participate in suppressing the problem of intolerance in Indonesia because for a long-time woman in several religions have taken on an important role except that the presence of these female figures has often been ignored. In Islam for example, the role of Maryam is quite significant because she is the mother of the Prophet Isa who later becomes an important figure in the narrative of doomsday in Islam. In line with that, in Christianity, Mary also has a very big role in keeping the Divine narrative of Jesus intact and to help Jesus entering this world. From these two female figures, of course there are many values that can be drawn to help solving the problem of intolerance in Indonesia yet it is very saddened to know that this has not been done often and brought to the public sphere so people can learn from these divine ladies when it comes to dealing with intolerance.

The problem of intolerance in Indonesia is now very crucial because it has a great potential to divide Indonesia. Some parties may think that this problem is not a huge deal at all so it does not deserve any serious attention from anyone. However, that is precisely why this problem must be solved immediately so that it does not become too large and difficult to handle. And after knowing the fact that perspectives of women can be used to solve big problems as such, then the same perspective will be used as well to degrade intolerance in Indonesia while at the same time accommodating the spirit of gender equality currently being echoed in the Indonesian public sphere.

The reasons I choose this topic are first, to appreciate the role of mothers in the lives of humanity. I personally want to dedicate this thesis to my mother who died in mid-November 2019. The second reason, as an Indonesian, it is my burden to help Indonesia to solve its internal problems so that there will not be divisions in the future by proposing a new perspective from something has been familiar to the society. And the last reason, is to give a new colour in the issue of peace-making between religious

believers by raising the essence of Pancasila and giving women the main role holders to accommodate the current phenomenon in Indonesia, feminism.

This thesis itself will be divided into four chapter and each chapter will have their very own uniqueness in term of approach being used. The first chapter which contains an explanation of Pancasila, which is nothing but the basis of Indonesian ideology, and the Indonesian context. Simply stated, this section will discuss the ideal conditions of Indonesia from the basis of the country's ideology, Pancasila. What values are upheld in Indonesia and what constitutes those values. One of the most crucial findings in this section is the history of the formation of the foundation of the Pancasila, and the determinants of the Pancasila can continue from the beginning of Indonesian independence to the present day. This section was written with the aim of forming the basis argument that Indonesia needs to respond the intolerance that is theoretically against the values upheld in Pancasila. In order not to become too broad, the discussion of Pancasila in this section will only focus on the first principle because it is the only principle that explicitly alluding the existence of God. Why only the first precept? because the interpretation of this principle will determine the value of goodness which is held by Indonesia specifically when we want to discuss the lives of religious people in Indonesia and will be used as the main reason why intolerance is against Pancasila which also means intolerance is against Indonesia as a nation. The main book to be used in this section are *Pancasila and Identity* by Eka Dharmaputera<sup>5</sup> and *Religion, Law and Intolerance in Indonesia* edited by Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker.<sup>6</sup>

In the second and third chapters, the discussion of Mary from the perspective of Christianity and Mariam from an Islamic perspective will begin. In general, these two chapters will describe what values are taught in the narratives of the two female figures. Initially, the method to be used to dissect this section was the hermeneutic of divine books. This method emphasizes how the two holy books of both religions, the Bible and the Quran, describe each character through the existing narrative. Unfortunately, Corona Virus outbreak succeeded ruining the researching agenda at the Vatican in March 2020, so now I have to use existing digital sources. Due to changing conditions on the ground,

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<sup>5</sup> Eka Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society: A Cultural and Ethical Analysis* (Leiden; E.J. Brill, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Lindsey and Helen Pausacker, eds., *Religion, Law, and Intolerance in Indonesia*, Routledge Law in Asia 15 (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

I decided to change my initial plan a little. At this time, I will continue to take up Maria's narration, except that I will not emphasize the narrative in the Bible. Instead, I will raise a narrative about how the character Maria was glorified from the very beginning of her appearance in the narrative of early Christianity to the present. I will find out what values are emulated from Maria and this finding will emanate from how people glorify her throughout century. In this section, I will also conduct a case study in the country of Mexico which to this day has made a place for Our Lady in the lives of her people. The initial question that I will try to answer in this case study is what are the implications of serving Maria's character in social life in Mexico? The main literature to be used in this section is *the Mother of God; A History of the Virgin Mary* by Miri Rubin.<sup>7</sup>

I will also apply a similar approach on the third chapter which discusses Maryam in Islam. However, if in the second chapter the method of writing is historical-critical, then in this third chapter the method to be used is the interpretation of the Surah Maryam in the Quran. Why is that? Because in Islam, Maryam has her own letter while in Christianity, Mary is only explained very briefly in several passages in the Bible. That is why it seems difficult to use the Bible as the sole primary source when wanting to bring up the narration of Mary. In this chapter the books that will be frequently used is *Mary The Chosen Woman; The Mother of Jesus in the Quran* by Ahmad Zaki Hammad.<sup>8</sup> In short, in these two chapters I will look for the same thing from two different sources.

The fourth chapter will contain my theological conclusions and reflections as the writer. The theory of Benedict Anderson about *Imagined Communities*<sup>9</sup> will be used concluding and providing suggestions that can be used to help solving the problems of Indonesia. To give us a glimpse on Anderson's work, the theory is about an imaginative identity called nationalism which is owned by a number of people who are in one particular area. Although this imaginative identity can never be seen or measured, in fact this imaginative identity has succeeded in uniting a number of people in that region. Later, the concept of this theory will help in forming a new identity that can help Indonesians to see intolerance as a common enemy.

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<sup>7</sup> Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of The Virgin Mary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Aḥmad Zakī Maṣṣūr Ḥammād, *Mary: The Chosen Woman - the Mother of Jesus in The Quran: An Interlinear Commentary on Sûrat Maryam* (Bridgeview, Ill.: Quranic Literary Institute, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed (London; New York: Verso, 2006).



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# Chapter 1

## Indonesia, Pancasila, and Tolerance

### A. Indonesia's Context

If a question is asked to 100 Indonesians about what words or phrases can best describe Indonesia as a country, perhaps the most widely answer used is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which means different but still one. This phrase is a fragment of Mpu Tantular's work which was originally written in Old Javanese. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* itself is considered to be very relevant to Indonesia, which in fact, varies in terms of ethnicity, race, language and religion.

This view is also supported by Eka Darmaputera, who in his work wrote that the most appropriate way to describe the socio-cultural conditions of Indonesia is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, various but one. Two concepts that are theoretically very conflicting but brought together. Darmaputera said that *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* proved that the threat of disintegration was very real in the body of Indonesia as a country. However, aside from indicating a real problem, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is also a hope for full integration which also something realistic.<sup>10</sup>

To help readers get a clearer picture of Indonesia's demographic map, here are some facts about Indonesia. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, Indonesia has about 270 million inhabitants by 2020 and this figure will increase by 2035 to 305 million.<sup>11</sup> And from the population census conducted in 2010 it is known that Indonesia has around 1,300 tribes and 2,500 regional languages. The last numbers mentioned were obtained by the Central Bureau of Statistics from the results of verification conducted from 1991 to 2017.<sup>12</sup> Then, Indonesia also recognized six religions in Indonesia, with details of around 87% of Indonesia's population being Muslim, 6% being Christian, 2% being Catholic, and the rest being a combination of followers of Hinduism, Buddhism

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<sup>10</sup> Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity*, 117.

<sup>11</sup> Statistic Indonesia, "Population Projection by Province, 2010-2035" (Statistics Indonesia, February 18, 2014), <https://www.bps.go.id/statictable/2014/02/18/1274/proyeksi-penduduk-menurut-provinsi-2010---2035.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Akhsan Na'im and Hendry Syaputra, "Kewarganegaraan, Suku Bangsa, Agama, dan Bahasa Sehari-hari Penduduk Indonesia; Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2010" (Badan Pusat Statistik, n.d.), 5.

and Kong Hu Cu.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the Central Bureau of Statistics did not mention how many local / tribal religions are owned by Indonesia, although it has become common knowledge that before the six religions mentioned previously entered Indonesia, local residents in various regions had already embraced their respective ethnic religions. This statistical presentation certainly makes us more aware of how diverse Indonesia is and therefore becomes very vulnerable to be divided.

To anticipate the potential divisions that might occur in Indonesia, it is no exaggeration if, then, coherent social integration is proposed as a reasonable solution to be fought for. What I mean by social integration is the situation where each member in the community succeeds in living in peace and side by side with other members regardless of their socio-cultural background. Unfortunately, achieving this requires more than just "rules of the game." Because consciously or not, to ensure that community life can work well, a lifestyle and not just a collection of rules is needed so that what is present will not only be order but also harmony. Why is this kind of lifestyle needed by the community? Because in every human action there will always be some kind of instinct to look for meaning and distinguish which one is really true and deserves our attention and obedience. And this fact turns out to be also applicable when applied in the context of social life. Therefore, social life not only requires the integration of rules, but also requires the integration of values/concepts that can be held by the community for helping each member to understand how to live their lives rightly so there will be no intention to rebel because according to their instinct this is the correct way to live. These values are contained in Pancasila. Values that can be used as a guide by all Indonesian citizens to be able to live in harmony with other Indonesian citizens.

In the next section, we will elaborate further what Pancasila is and the meaning of the first principle which specifically mentions the position of God in the order of social life in Indonesia.

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<sup>13</sup> Na'im and Syaputra, 10.

## B. A Brief History of Pancasila

After Indonesia's independence on August 17, 1945, the conditions of its government were still very unstable. Many groups turned out to have contributed to helping Indonesia expel the Dutch East Indies from Indonesian territory and needed to be involved in formulating an ideal governance model for Indonesia.<sup>14</sup> Ideal in this case is to be able to accommodate all group's interests.

Interestingly, during the journey as an independent country, Indonesia has gone through many events that significantly helped shaping the political system and government firstly proposed, Pancasila. At least, Indonesia ever had a system that was more or less like a liberal government, to a government with a guided democratic style - a kind of authoritarian government system; Indonesia also once had a government that was majority led by lay people, to a government that was majority led by people with a military background; Indonesia also once had a multi-party government, to a government with only one party; Once through the "old order" era led by Indonesia's first president, Sukarno to the "new order" era led by Soeharto, Indonesia's second president. Each of these phases gave a quite serious impact on Pancasila as Indonesia's ideology. And each of the phases mentioned earlier, interestingly, actually used Pancasila as a justification or basis to revise the former style which also used Pancasila to strengthen its position when it was wanted to revise the other previous one.<sup>15</sup> So, can we say that Pancasila is an obscure ideology because it keeps on changing and accommodating change? This question will be answered in the explanation below.

Eka Darmaputera offers an interesting approach to see Pancasila by using the Indonesian understanding of Pancasila as a starting point because only this way we will be able to understand Pancasila well and then be able to evaluate it wisely. To make the process of studying the Pancasila go well, it is worthwhile to know in advance the historical background of the formulation of the Pancasila itself.

It should be stressed again that Pancasila was born when Indonesia was still struggling as a newly independent country and a country that was trying to escape from

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<sup>14</sup> Colin Brown, *A Short History of Indonesia: The Unlikely Nation?*, Short History of Asia Series (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 159.

<sup>15</sup> Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity*, 284.



the domination of the western nations, including in the effort to form a new model of government. Even though in fact for a moment when Indonesia declared its independency, it was undeniable that at that time there was still residual dominance of the western nation on the Indonesian mainland through the existence of loyalist groups in various regions in Indonesia.

During the initial formulation of the basic ideology to be used, Indonesia's first president Sukarno, through one of his speeches, proposed that Indonesia not become a secular or Islamic state, but instead become a Pancasila state. The country that according to Sukarno's belief was between the two. Pancasila which translated into Indonesian means five pillars, consisting of:

- (a) Indonesia Nationhood/Indonesian Nationalism
- (b) Humanitarianism/Internationalism
- (c) Unanimous consensus/Democracy
- (d) Social Welfare
- (e) The One Lordship.

This speech received a positive response from the listeners because it was felt to be the answer to the impasse that occurred in the process of formulating Indonesia's ideology at that time. Moreover, the ideology formulation committee was indeed running out of time to concoct the ideology to be used.<sup>16</sup> Not long after Sukarno's proposal was accepted, a new team was formed to reformulate Pancasila as the country's foundation. This new team was then called the Small Committee or Ad-Hoc Committee. The results of the work of the Little Committee would later be called *Piagam Jakarta* or the Jakarta Charter. When compared with the arrangement offered by Sukarno in the speech mentioned earlier, the Jakarta Charter version of the Pancasila was unique because in its first principle it changed to "(the principle of) One Lordship, with the obligation to carry out the Islamic sharia for its adherents."<sup>17</sup>

The shifting of the point of divinity to the first principle would certainly have a significant impact because overall it succeeded in changing the meaning of the Pancasila

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<sup>16</sup> Darmaputera, 293.

<sup>17</sup> Darmaputera, 295.

itself. The Committee of Five, which was formed in 1975 and served as a team that presented an interpretation of the Pancasila so that it could be implemented in many aspects of national life, underlined that the act of shifting the precepts of God, which was originally in the last place to be first, was the right decision. because thus the Indonesians now have a national spirit based on the values of goodness, justice and truth as taught by God to His people.

Unfortunately, there was an allegation that the rearrangement of the Pancasila order was only to satisfy the majority group. The majority group in this case was the Islamic group. This assumption was very apparent from the use of the word "Allah" in the phrase "with the blessings (and) mercy of God the Almighty" as an opening for Pancasila. The word "Allah" in this phrase refers to the God of Muslims. The second evidence could be found in the first article of Pancasila. There was a phrase "... with the obligation to carry out the Islamic sharia 'for its adherents." This sentence indicated that ensuring all Indonesian Muslims must be able to implement Islamic law was the duty of the state. This was considered strange because Indonesia itself is not a religious state. Of course, the initial formulation of the Pancasila could not be separated from the context at the time which forced Pancasila to be able to satisfy two parties, those who wanted Indonesia to become a religious state and those who wanted Indonesia to become a secular state. That is why the initial formulation of the Pancasila was in a very crucial position and then must have been formulated on a neutral basis. Based on this neutrality consideration, the first chapter finally contains "One Lordship" and removes various phrases that are considered to refer to one particular religion.<sup>18</sup>

In the end, Pancasila has the last form, which is to this day used and consists of 5 principles:

1. (The Principle of) One Lordship.
2. (A) Just and Civilized Humanity.
3. (The) Unity of Indonesia.
4. (The Principle of) Peoplehood which is Guarded by the Spirit of Wisdom in Deliberation/Representation.
5. Social Justice

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<sup>18</sup> Darmaputera, 298.

The fact that only the first principle has been deliberately violated by intolerant crimes in Indonesia is the main reason why only this principle will be discussed on this part. Later, this will be the basis to safely claim that acts of intolerance are actions against the state. Further explanation about this principle and why intolerance is against the state as an institution will be discussed in the next section.

### **C. The Meaning of the First Principle of Pancasila and Its Implications**

In this section, there are views of the two figures that will be used, Ngadino Surip and Ismatu Ropi. From the two, we will look at the history of the development of the interpretation of the first principle of Pancasila and see some of the implications of this interpretation in Indonesia's society, especially how the state should respond to the diversity of groups that exist in the Indonesian context.

Ismatu Ropi believes that the first principle of Pancasila has succeeded in asserting that Indonesia is not a secular state that refuses to involve certain religious elements to form its government. Indonesia is also not a religious country that bases its government on a particular religion. Ropi, then, emphasized that even so, the first principle can be seen as a meeting point between two extreme groups in Indonesia that contradict one another. As already mentioned above, the groups referred to are religious group and secular group. Through the first principle of Pancasila, we can see that the two groups agree that what is recognized is the philosophical recognition of God which later used as the basis for shaping state norms and regulations.<sup>19</sup>

However, there is a critical note from Ropi that we need to underline. Ropi suspects that the first principle was not prepared to embrace all types of religions in the archipelago, which in fact are not only monotheistic. Unfortunately, the first principle speaks explicitly of the *oneness* of God. Thus, Ropi's suspicion must be considered strong that this first principle can be only claimed to be the farthest point tolerated by Islamic groups who want Indonesia to stand as a religious state and also the farthest point

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<sup>19</sup> Lindsey and Pausacker, *Religion, Law, and Intolerance in Indonesia*, 133.

tolerated by secular groups that do not want to mix religious with state affairs, without really taking all type of religions found in Indonesia into account.

Let us look at the official state document on the first principle to see how this principle should be implemented in people's lives. In the 1945 Law prior to the amendment of article 29, it was stated that Indonesia which is based on the first principle means that the state must guarantee the freedom of every citizen to embrace any religion and belief and be given the freedom to practice religious rituals and beliefs. Interestingly, in 1949, this law was amended and there was a deepening of the meaning of the first principle. For example, article 18 now adds the emphasis that every citizen is free to embrace his religion and belief and is free to express it privately or communally in public or private spaces. This article also emphasizes that every citizen is free to teach children according to the beliefs of their parents. Up to this point, the first principle has, in theory, been successful in providing security guarantees for religious communities in Indonesia. It's just that, in this amended law, to be precise in article 41, the second point, it says that the state must supervise all religious groups in Indonesia in order to comply with applicable laws and unwritten laws that apply in their respective regions.<sup>20</sup> Of course this point manages to raise a question, what if then the unwritten law in one area only allows the practice of one particular religion, even if judging from the state law, all religions can express their faith anywhere and this freedom is guaranteed by the constitution?

Sure enough, this first principle was used as a basis for discrediting certain groups in Indonesia. For example, once the Ministry of Religion issued a regulation No. 9 of 1952 which more or less contains the authority of the Ministry of Religion to carry out contact and supervision of local religious groups / belief groups that are not part of Islamic and Christian groups. Because of this regulation, the Ministry of Religion at that time was suspected of having a new agenda, namely the inclusion of local religions in various regions in Indonesia into religions recognized by Indonesia. In fact, the seriousness of the Ministry of Religion in completing this task is proven by the formation of a new division to oversee the movements carried out by local groups which at that time were often considered a threat to the state. After this new regulation appeared, the condition of religion in Indonesia did not immediately improve, in fact what happened was getting worse. In 1967, Indonesia's then president Suharto succeeded in transforming

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<sup>20</sup> Lindsey and Pausacker, 134.

the Ministry of Religion into one of his political instruments. Through this ministry, Soeharto inserted several political agendas. First, Suharto wanted to suppress and control the opposition groups present from the Muslim activist community. Second, Suharto succeeded in transforming the Ministry of Religion from a ministry that represented the political voice of religious communities to an institution that obeyed the president as a whole. Or in short, under Soeharto's leadership, the Ministry of Religion was successfully dictated in such a way that it could be used to smoothen his government in a negative sense. Through this ministry, Soeharto also succeeded in translating various social and economic policies into religious language on the pretext of instilling the values of nationalism in various religious groups in Indonesia, especially Islamic groups.<sup>21</sup>

In line with Ismatu Ropi, Ngadino Surip also has the view that the first principle which contains "(The Principle of) One Lordship" means that Indonesia recognizes the existence of God as the creator of the universe and everything in it. This first principle is not simply a teaching, or dogma, or belief that cannot be proven by reason or is simply an empty guideline. In fact, this principle was born from knowledge that can be studied by scientific methods. Through this first principle, Indonesia also wants to emphasize making religion the meeting point of many things. Starting from moral teachings, interests, beliefs, and intentions to build the nation. Through this same principle, Indonesia also strongly supports each of its citizens to embrace their respective religions and beliefs as long as they do not conflict with the concept of One God. Of course, this is also debatable because it does not accommodate residents who do not wish to be affiliated with one particular religion. But that is not what this first principle wants to emphasize. What he wants to emphasize is that Indonesia is a religious country. It is neither a religion-based country or a secular country.

This explanation of the first principle is based on several points. First, the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution which reads as follows "by the grace of Allah the Almighty ...". The second point is Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution which contains as follows:

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<sup>21</sup> Lindsey and Pausacker, 141.

1. The State is based on the Principle of One Lordship.
2. The State guarantees the independence of every citizen to embrace their respective religions and to worship according to their religion and belief.

The third point on which to explain the first principle is Article 28E of the Basic Law which contains as follows:

1. Everyone is free to embrace a religion and worship according to his religion, choose education and teaching, choose a job, have citizenship, choose a place to live in the territory of the country and leave it, and have the right to return.
2. Everyone has the right to freedom of belief, to express thoughts and attitudes in accordance with their conscience.
3. Everyone has the right to freedom of association, assembly and expression.

In short, this principle aims to remind Indonesians to actualize the values of goodness, truth and peace in the life of the nation and state as taught in religion. In a broader aspect, this principle can be used as a guide in the state so that policies or rules made for society are based on the values of goodness taught in religion.<sup>22</sup>

Even though it has been through many events that affect its order, formulation and meaning, to this day Pancasila is still used by Indonesia as the basis of the state. And since it was first declared on June 1, 1945 to March 22, 1978 alone there have been dozens of books on Pancasila successfully printed and at least there have been about 40 additional attributes attached to Pancasila during the same period.

As I have mentioned several times in the previous section, Pancasila is very unique because it accommodates all types of approaches and interpretations. This may sound very strange to some people, especially for those who do not come from Indonesia. Why is this acceptable to Indonesians? Because in Indonesia, the majority of people believe that common belief is not a necessity because this part is considered a very personal domain. As long as one's belief does not interfere with the common good, then

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<sup>22</sup> Prof. Dr. Ngadino Surip, Dr. Syahril Syarbaini, and Dr. (c) A. Rahman, *Pancasila Dalam Makna dan Aktualisasi* (Yogyakarta: CV. Andi Offset, n.d.), 17–19.

no one will make a fuss. This is why various interpretations of Pancasila are not only permitted but also necessary if the values in Pancasila are to be practiced in everyday life. This does not mean that Indonesia will fall into relativism, but what is expected is that each group can still have its own identity and have their own understanding of Pancasila. If this happens, then it can be ascertained that directly or indirectly there will be dialogue between groups that can occur and will mutually enrich each group, especially in understanding how Pancasila should be applied in the context of a pluralistic society such as in Indonesia. Even if a joint consensus has been reached, this will not stop the process of interpreting Pancasila at the grassroots level because dialogue will continue to occur and Pancasila will continue to be interpreted according to a certain context and time. This is why then a good and proportional interpretation of Pancasila will not remove Pancasila from the condition of society and historical facts about Pancasila itself.

Pancasila should also be seen as a smart choice chosen by Indonesian leaders because Pancasila is considered very broad in scope so that it can embrace all groups in Indonesia. T. B. Simatupang once said, as quoted by Eka Darmaputera, that Pancasila is like a large umbrella. It is so big, everyone can live under it. This is why Pancasila is considered very appropriate and effective in responding to the diversity that exists in Indonesia.<sup>23</sup>

#### **D. Conclusion**

After parsing some of the Pancasila's features, especially the first principles, there are several things that we can agree on together. First, what is emphasized in the first principle is that Indonesia recognizes the existence of God and as a country, Indonesia must be able to embody the universal goodness values taught by God to His people in religion. This means that the government in Indonesia must be able to formulate regulations that are in line with the universal good for the common good. Second, the strength of Pancasila, its uniqueness and openness to all type of thoughts, has succeeded in embracing all groups in Indonesia without exception. Therefore, acts of intolerance – attempt to change Indonesia into one same color thoroughly, can be said to be an action

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<sup>23</sup> Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity*, 344–48.

against the state because they are against the values held by Pancasila. Intolerance is a form of efforts to oppress certain groups under any pretext. Meanwhile, Pancasila fights for the rights of every group in Indonesia. At this point, we can safely say that the state needs to take action to curb the existing intolerance in Indonesia.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Mary and Tolerance in the Indonesian Context**

As a Protestant living in Indonesia, it is very difficult to find the figure of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, discussed in church rooms in both formal and informal settings. In fact, if I try to remember, it feels like Mary's narrative is only picked up once a year. To be precise, when we celebrate the birthday of Jesus in December. Apart from this time, the character Mary was never discussed. Perhaps, if a layman like me wants to deepen his knowledge of the figure of Mary without taking theological education, it is by visiting places with a Catholic element because only then can we get more information about Mary, the mother of Jesus. Maybe it will be a different story if we live in a country where Christianity or Catholicism is the majority religion. However, in Indonesia the two religions are not the most widely practiced.

I personally have always felt that the rarity of the figure of Mary being discussed in the Protestant church is one way to show a distinguishing characteristic from Catholicism which gives Mary a special place in the narrative of the faith and spirituality of the people. And I can't do much about this. It is just that, the question that always pops up in my head when talking about Mary in a Protestant context is is it fair if we only give Mary a little appreciation while her role in the Christian narrative is so significant that her existence cannot be replaced?

Below, we will discuss how the figure of Mary Mother Jesus is depicted in the four Synoptic Gospels and then how in the realm of praxis this figure is exalted in several countries and what lessons can be learned for Christians in Indonesia to eradicate intolerance.

#### **A. Mary in the Four Synoptic Gospels**

It is common knowledge that the information we will get from the four gospels in the Bible about Mary the Mother of Jesus is very limited. And all the information contained in the four synoptic gospels is based solely on the memories of the followers of Jesus which aims to answer questions about how Jesus became human but at the same

time claimed to be the Savior. Before moving any further, it is worth remembering that in the context in which the Synoptic Gospels and other first sources were written, the Roman empire was still in power and Christianity was still practiced by a minority of people. So that the stories that already exist will indicate a uniqueness of ethnic disobedience but still uphold obedience and respect for the king to some extent.

The first sources about Mary are indeed in Jewish context because at the beginning of Jesus' appearance until He died on the cross, the area of Jesus' ministry was not as wide as the spread of Christians in the world today. And at that time there were Jews who believed that Jesus was the Savior that was prophesied by the previous prophets and Mary was one of the important figures in that narrative. Because of the importance of the two figures for the first-generation Christian-Jewish group at that time, they then adopted a holy lifestyle which became one of the values held by Mary and Jesus throughout their lives. The form of holiness that was commonly practiced at that time was the complete control of the body and mind and one of the communities that practiced this lifestyle was the community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls. This community of believers has continually passed on this holy lifestyle to future generations.

As noted above, the four synoptic gospels do not have much information about Mary the mother of Jesus. In fact, the four of them seemed interested only in the topic of Jesus' dual "sonship" of God and of David and so nothing is mentioned about Maria's early life. The presence of Mary, who is told as a woman who gets the news that she will bear a baby without undergoing a biological fertilization process, in the synoptic gospels is only limited to introducing Jesus and His family lineage.

If we look more specifically, in the Gospel of Mark (65-80 CE) which was written the earliest and the Gospel of John (90-100 CE) nothing is told at all about the birth of Jesus. The most important thing about Jesus is His lineage alone. This is why in Mark's Gospel, Mary only appears in Chapter 6 Verse 3 and in this verse, once again, Mary is deliberately alluded to in order to emphasize the identity of Jesus, her son. Apart from this verse, Maria is not mentioned again. And the most interesting thing about the Gospels of Mark and John is that they only tell the story of Jesus' adult life.

In line with what is found in the Gospels of Mark and John, in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew (80-100 CE) the emphasis is still on the family line of Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' followers are able to provide coherent information about the lineage that successfully linked Jesus through Joseph to King David. But we must underline that this lineage is the paternal one which means it is only drawn from the father's line hence Mary does not really matter here. Whereas in the Gospel of Luke we will find a great source of revelation for Mary and the birth of Jesus and the family relationship that brought Jesus and John the Baptist together. Not unlike those in the four Synoptic Gospels, Paul's works do not provide information about the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus. History records that Paul never told the Christian community who was pioneered by him when he traveled to spread the Word of God.<sup>24</sup>

Although they only provide a fragment of information about Mary, the four Synoptic Gospels cannot deny the fact that Mary is an important figure in the narrative of Christianity. And as a first source, it seems we also need to appreciate the existence of these four Synoptic Gospels.

The source of the life story of Mary in the Bible may be very limited but this does not make Mary's character unappreciated by followers of Jesus in various regions of the world. In fact, in several Latin American countries and several European countries this one figure really gets a special one in the hearts of Jesus' followers. In the next section, we will discuss how the character Maria was exalted in Costa Rica (a country representation from Latin America) and in Finland (as a country representation from Europe).

## **B. Costa Rica and the Figure of Mary**

Perhaps the most crucial, iconic, and controversial thing that Hispanics brought to America was the cult of Mary. This character was considered an appropriate way to make Native Americans more "cultured." This is why the story of Mary was then attempted to be systematically inserted into Native American thinking at that time. These Spanish and Portuguese conquerors saw Maria as a figure who launched the efforts of

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<sup>24</sup> Rubin, *Mother of God*, 3–5.

the colonialists, *La conquistadora*. Although for the colonizers Maria had a good image, for the Native Americans Maria was a symbol of protection for their enemies. Uniquely, this understanding has changed completely and this is the main reason why today many think of Mary as one of the most central and controversial symbols of the American conquest. Today, we can see that this Marian cult was successfully ingrained consciously in American understanding as a substitute for pre-Columbian female gods.

Mary's arrival at that time succeeded in combining the attributes of a pre-Columbian feminine god with a pre-Christian god. This amalgamation that occurred in America was not new because previously this kind of thing had happened in Europe and the Near East. Due to this success, in several places, Maria has become a symbol of nationalism and independence. For example, *José de San Martín* in the south declared the Virgin Carmen to be the general of his army. Moving to Mexico, two Catholic priests, Pastors Hidalgo and Morelos, who started the first independence uprising declared the Virgin of Guadalupe as a protector from the rebellion and protector of Spanish American independence.

The development of the understanding of Mary in Latin America then received more serious attention from people in various regions because it was considered to have succeeded in having an impact on a wider scale and succeeded in proving that this cult was not a copy of the Spanish sect of Maria. Furthermore, Maria has succeeded in becoming the representative and symbol of the *mestizo* culture, the counterpart of Spanish culture. In short, Mary has succeeded in becoming a major symbol of cultural adhesion at that time as well as being a tool to measure the success of the Christianization process in America in the early seventeenth century.

In addition, when viewed on a national scale, in almost all the lands of modern Latin America that wanted to be independent, the Virgin Mary has also become a national and military symbol representing rebellion and the struggle for independency. In the military and political context, Mary's fundamental role as an intermediary between God and mankind takes on a new meaning to become a mediator of direct orders from God. In many battles, Mary was the only woman present - among the Zapatistas in the Mexican Revolution or in the uprisings of the 1990s, guerrilla movements or the highly repressive national forces and military dictatorships of the 1970s.

Culture and history expert, Margarita Zires once stated that the figure of Maria is a controversial figure in its function as a symbol whose presence is dominant in Latin American culture. One of the reasons why Zires said this is because Maria was able to carry multiple meanings that often contradict each other and indirectly lead to meetings between groups with different social backgrounds. and because of this uniqueness, the figure of Mary in some areas of Latin America succeeded in replacing the existence of a pre-Columbian goddess.<sup>25</sup>

An influential understanding of Mary's story, especially a Latin American style, can be clearly seen in liberation theology. There is no need to worry because in this section there will be no detailed discussion of Liberation Theology because the theological analysis of Mary Latin America is much more important today.

In many countries, Mary is the protector in this case the Virgin of Guadalupe, not only in Mexico but throughout America. This became even more evident during the military dictatorship of the 1960s-1980s. In that period Mary was often the protector of the government and soldiers who were often repressive and continued to terrorize all levels of society with human rights violations which often ended with the enforced disappearance of certain people, murder on political grounds, mass transfer of community groups so that refugees appeared in amount that is not small. For example, in mainland Argentina we know the figure of the saint *Nuestra Señora de Luján*, commonly known as the patron of the armed forces. In there, Maria has a title that has a repressive connotation. The title is 'General Mary', the commander of the troops, and this title is considered successful in shifting the initial meaning of the figure of Maria as a symbol of protection for all people and groups in mainland Argentina. And it is common knowledge that the formation of Maria's identity as protector of all people in Argentina was a project of the government at that time to form a homogeneous (Catholic) identity in Argentina.

As we all know, the context of the birth of liberation theology was the chaotic and repressive state of government in the 1970s and is often known as theology that was born from the thoughts of the victims of the government system at that time, the poor. One thing is certain, this theology was born as a form of resistance to the cruel

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<sup>25</sup> Elina Vuola, *The Virgin Mary Across Cultures: Devotion Among Costa Rican Catholic and Finnish Orthodox Women* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 76–79.

government at that time and in this theology the role of the Virgin Mary is very vital because it is interpreted as a *campesina* woman who had bad luck, at least according to the New Testament. therefore, Mary is then considered a figure similar to many poor people at that time, especially women, and is considered a prophetess who is important in the Christian narrative because she took part in announcing the Kingdom of God. And the main source for this section is Magnificat.

In the Magnificat, Maria is presented as a person who describes the church but is often interpreted as a church for the poor and marginalized. Maria said aloud, "He [God] has removed the ruling from their thrones, and exalted the despised ones." We do need to underline certain gender-based interpretations of Mary in liberation theology so as not to prioritize so that there is no imbalance. keep in mind the local cultural aspects that are present in liberation theology so that there will be no romanticism towards certain aspects in the process of interpreting liberation theology. However, the most important role of the Virgin Mary in liberation theology is as the mother of people and the personification of the church - both are her traditional roles, but the two persons who become this personification are understood as the poor and marginalized, not aristocrats, and the church as the church of the poor. In the aspect of piety as a mother in the eyes of many women, the figure of Maria is popularly seen as a mother who mourns the loss of her son who died at the hands of oppressors and rulers. Although these interpretations are new because of their context, they focus on Mary of Nazareth in the Bible rather than later Catholic Mariology. Latin American feminist theologians interpret Mary in the context of a broader liberation theology but often criticize her gender construction which is essential to women. However, they did not create their feminist liberation Mariology in dialogue with Latin American popular devotions.<sup>26</sup>

### **B.1. *La Negrita* of Costa Rica**

In 1824, *La Negrita*, or when translated literally is Little Nan Black, declared the protector of Costa Rica. Her image is often considered motherly and is carrying the baby Jesus in her left arm. This image was engraved on a rock and was first appeared to a

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<sup>26</sup> Vuola, 79–81.

woman named Juana Pereira. The small statue was then taken home but the statue continued to appear in the same place where it was found. That how it was started until the lady and several priests decided to build a church on that very spot to honour the figure. This incident itself occurred on August 2, 1635, and to this day that date is still dedicated to *La Negrita*.

Every year, on that day there will be thousands of pilgrims from all regions of Costa Rica gathering in Cartago. Various ways are taken by pilgrims to arrive at the meeting point. Some were walking, and of course this would take days. According to what was written in one of the local media in 2007, more than two million people participated in Romeria, the name of pilgrimage in Spanish. One of Costa Rica's national myths is that it is 'whiter' and more egalitarian than its neighbours. This is why Costa Ricans of African descent - who mostly live on the Caribbean coast - and natives like bribes still suffer racism and marginalization because of their skin colour.

For those who are marginalized, the egalitarian image of Costa Rica is a nationalist myth created by the ruling elite to form a unified nation which has had a negative impact. The cult of *La Negrita* has elements similar to that of other Marian personifications in Latin America, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe, but specifically has a local meaning. Like *La Negrita* and Guadalupe, in Latin America, Maria often appears as a representation of lower class, racially marginalized people, Indians and slaves, in times of chaos. The Marian apparition has been described both as a motivation to evangelize and control indigenous and black peoples, and as a story of their empowerment and greater social and racial cohesion - in the case of the Virgin of Guadalupe, even as the core of Mexico's mestizo identity.

*La Negrita* is often seen as a strong subject made of rock and not totally the same as it has been in most other apparitions of the Mother of God, in Europe or on other lands. In the basilica dedicated to *La Negrita* itself, the thumbnail is surrounded with the many nationalist symbols of the state of Costa Rica. Like the flag, which reflects its contemporary meaning primarily as a 'creation' symbol of identity being Costa Rican, and being redefined as a local symbol of marginalized, alienated cult of black people, over the centuries. Racial-based oppression, including slavery and the prohibition of

black people traveling from the 'African' Caribbean coast to the 'Hispanic' central valley of Costa Rica until the 1930s. Unfortunately, the meaning of this version is not remembered and told in the interpretation of the current version and the official version of the legend. In contrast, the nationalist myth of a 'whiter' Costa Rica upholding racial and ethnic equality, which is theoretically contradictory, has instead taken a place in the official interpretations issued by the government and used today.

The lower level of the *La Negrita* basilica is where the more popular expressions of devotion are expressed, especially in the form of small ex-votos, devotional objects, locally called *Milagros* or *Promesas*. It was a small metal engraving given as a token of gratitude or request to the Virgin. For many in Costa Rica, *La Negrita* is clearly not the only personification of the Virgin Mary in Costa Rica. Most people see the meaning of this phenomenon more broadly as it is because this passage is not specifically about *La Negrita* but the meaning of the Virgin Mary in general. But many will agree that this *La Negrita* figure is so miraculous since she has been believed protecting the marginalized groups in the society.<sup>27</sup>

To believe in her miraculousness becomes an important aspect of *La Negrita*, as I already mentioned. To prove this strong aspect, we can observe shops around the basilica sold bottles in the shape of *La Negrita* for people to fill at the fountain. And further observation will reveal that in general, people turn to *La Negrita* either in order to participate in the shared national fervour of certain days or at times of great anxiety and special need for miracles. The *promesas* are brought to *La Negrita* either to ask for a favour or thank her for a miracle, sometimes both. They are all gender-related but in order to understand the full meaning of *La Negrita*'s cult, it is also necessary to take class, ethnicity, and economics into account.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Vuola, 81–88.

<sup>28</sup> Vuola, 92.



### C. Finland and the Figure of Mary

In 1923 the Finnish Orthodox Church became autonomous under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This decision was made a few years after Finland earned its independency which made its position changed jurisdictionally and since then acquired the status of a national church, together with Lutheran Church. According to the official data as per today, the Orthodox Church has about 62,000 members or roughly around 1.1 percent of the population of Finland. At least until the Second World War started, mostly the Finnish Orthodox citizens were living in Ladoga Karelia and North Karelia. And during the period when the Grand Duchy of Finland was part of the Russian Empire, the religion of Orthodox Karelians was a fusion of Russian Orthodox and older ethnic traditions, with a lot of pre-Christian features attributed surviving up to the twentieth century.

After the war, Finland lost to the Soviet Union which caused them losing its easternmost territories, including most of Karelia, where most Orthodox lived, and we know this area was really significant to the history of the Finnish Orthodox citizen. In that area lived about 55,000 Orthodox Christians, which statistically was two-thirds of the Finnish Orthodox population then. Another effect of this loss was the Orthodox Church lost about 90 percent of its property. But later on, because they successfully evacuated several monasteries which known as the place where a lot of Karelians studied religion, at least half of the Finnish Orthodox Church members continue having some Karelian ancestry. After this rough period of time, in 1960s to 1970 a lot of Lutherans converted to Orthodox church which changed the religious landscape in Finland.<sup>29</sup>

In the name of Ethnography and Theology field, it is safe to claim that the Orthodox tradition has been less studied from a gender perspective. We might think that is not it a common thing? Because other Christian traditions are facing the same condition as well? Not really studied from gender perspective. Sure, one can say it is a common condition, but even the fact is telling us so, statistically Orthodox is even lesser studied from a gender perspective compare to other traditions. This conduces that there is a lack of recognised feminist theology/theologian in the Orthodox tradition in general. Which brings one unfortunate result that research on Mariology with Orthodox background is

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<sup>29</sup> Vuola, 107–9.

really insufficient compare to Catholic that treats Mary with very special treatment. Special treatment here is including to conduct a serious study on Mary. This also unfortunately means that we can find a wider gap between women's interpretations of their tradition, their self-understanding as Orthodox, and academic theology than in the Catholic and Protestant churches realm. This condition is also worsened by the fact that topics on critical issues such as gender, sexuality, women and as such are often written by the male clergies. Lately, Women's works start to appear to the surface even the writers do not necessarily call their work as feminist and two well-known women in this regard are Elisabeth Behr-Sigel and Valerie A. Karras.

One may say that due to the lack of space for women's work in Orthodox tradition, the ethnography dan some interviews may help us to find theological reflection from women's perspective on Orthodox tradition-related topics. Luckily, mostly believers in Finland, including women, are fully aware about what their church's teaching. Although they cannot be ordained or do not have high positions in academic theology, but it seems they really go extra mile to be theologically conscious. This leads us to be aware of a fact that those active believers in the church are capable to critically analyse its church official teachings. Thus, if we want to study Orthodox tradition in Finland, it is important to keep in mind that lay people, including women, always negotiate with those teachings and reflect on their lived experiences in relation to the tradition and the authoritative practices of the church. In this sense, ordinary people are theological agents and subjects whose interpretations, even non-normative ones, are based on intellectual, spiritual and embodied reflection, which should not be considered in a binary opposition to the institution and its teachings.<sup>30</sup>

### **C.1. Mary's Role for Society in Finland**

In Finland, as in most other regions of the world, Mary is often associated with female motherhood because it is clear that on many occasions, Mary has always been described as a great and resilient mother because she succeeded in accompanying Jesus when carrying out His mission in the world even though she had to face many opposition

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<sup>30</sup> Vuola, 109–11.

from the society to which Mary came from. The figure of Maria becomes very personal for most women in Finland and becomes more understandable when a Finnish woman holds the status of a mother in a family. Even though Mary seems to be only close to women with the status of a mother, in general for Finnish women who have not become mothers, or even cannot become mothers for some reasons, the figure of Mary is still very close. The closeness of Finnish women to this figure of Maria can be seen from their devotion. Because they feel very close to Maria, many Finnish women knowingly confess many things when praying to God, through Mary. Especially when the topic that is specifically prayed for is closely related to the motherhood / responsibility of women as mothers, the language and words chosen to be used in the prayers also sound more personal. And the closeness of women to this figure of Mary can also be seen in the devotion of Catholic women.

Apart from devotion, the figure of Maria also teaches Finnish women how to look at their own bodies. Finnish women often discuss the issue of chastity in the church and its relation to the virginity of Mary and its meaning. After examining its theological and practical meanings, Finnish women will then relate it to their experiences as sexual beings. This is what then often brings sharp criticism of the church policies that are enforced. As we all know, in the tradition of the Orthodox church, women are prohibited from attending church services when they have just given birth or are having their menstrual period. It was this policy that the Finnish Orthodox women tried to criticize.

Despite having adequate female resources within the Orthodox church, no tradition has been formally reconstructed using a feminist theological perspective. However, many feel that the liturgy and spirituality that accommodate Mary and her motherhood in the Orthodox church are actually sufficient for now, although there are still many other aspects that can be addressed to make it more accommodating for women in the future. To be sure, we need to see how important the figure of Mary is for the functioning of the Orthodox church as evidenced by the liturgy and spiritual style adopted. This proves that the figure of Mary is not only important for women, but also for men who are often the decision makers in the Orthodox church.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Vuola, 112–39.

## **D. Conclusion**

Although they are different, there is one thing that we can learn from Maria's role in these two countries which are culturally and culturally completely different. What can be learned is Maria's success in uniting Costa Rican people to fight for their political rights proves that when Mary is interpreted in such a way, what happens is a unity in society. Not the other way around. Likewise, when Mary is considered special to the Orthodox church in general and by women in Finland in particular, what happens is the unity of the voices of Finnish women on the importance of mutual strengthening between women and the agreement within the Orthodox church body about the greatness of Mary which is evident in the liturgy of the Orthodox church. In short, the embodiment of values taught by Mary through her life and story can help certain groups, in this case a country, form a peaceful and undivided social condition.

## Chapter 3

### Maryam and Tolerance in Indonesian Context

When I was around 10 years old lived in Surabaya, East Java it was a common sight for me to see many of my friends going to the mosque when they were about to enter the *Maghrib* prayer time, around 18 o'clock. On this occasion, usually my friends will be taught to read and memorize the Quran and get to know various things. important people in it. This kind of activity was not only carried out by children around where I lived at that time but also carried out by Muslim children in many regions in Indonesia. Because of this activity, eventually the figures in the Quran are often well remembered by Muslims in Indonesia, including Siti Maryam.

In general, for Muslims in Indonesia, Maryam is known as a figure who is closely related to obedience because she succeeded in carrying out God's duties properly even though it was hard. Maryam is so special in Islam that she is the only female figure who has her own book in the Quran and is the female figure whose name is most often mentioned. Of course, this is a fact that is contrary to what we find in Christianity in which the story of Mary is not told much, or get a special section like Mary in the Quran.

#### A. Maryam in Quran

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Maryam in Islam has a quite special place. She has her own book in the Quran. She is also mentioned more often than other women in the Quran. Even if we compare it to Mary in the New Testament, Islam's appreciation of Mary is on a better level. In addition, Maryam is the only woman in the Quran who is called according to her real name and not her attributive identity, for example, the mother of Prophet Isa, and there are only three other names that are mentioned most frequently in the entire Quran. They are Moses, Abraham and Noah - these three are male characters.

Maryam is also believed to be one of the four most perfect women in the history of human life and this is why Maryam is called the most respected woman in Islam even though she does not have any special authority to give or lead people to salvation on the

day of judgment. However, Maryam in Islam is still a significant figure because she is the one who will give birth to Prophet Isa, a prophet who has an important role in the narrative of the apocalypse according to Islam. In fact, the end would not have happened if Prophet Isa had not come to earth. Because in the Islamic narrative the Prophet Isa, or in Christianity it is called Jesus, is not God, then the status of Maryam is also not the Mother of God as is pinned on Mary in the narrative of Christian theology. This is why we will not find a discussion about theotokos in Islamic realms.<sup>32</sup>

We can find the story of Maryam's birth and early life in the Quran quite clearly and in detail. In the Quran, it is described that Maryam's parents, Imran and his wife, had difficulty in getting offspring and because of that they were very diligent in praying to be given the opportunity to have children. Just to remind us all, at that time children in the family have an important role because they will become the next generation of the family. In particular, male descendants. Interestingly, after the prayers of Maryam's parents asking God to listen to a child, both of them were surprised because the baby who was later born was actually a girl. Although they did not mention specifically in their prayer, Maryam's parents seemed to want a son because later the child would be offered to serve in the temple because only men were given such opportunity at that time. However, God already knew that this girl would not be an ordinary descendant. There will be a big job that will be carried out in the future even though she is a woman. Having made a promise to God, at a fairly early age Maryam's parents had sent Maryam to the temple to work under the supervision of Zacharia who also worked there. The following is a verse in the Quran that tells of Maryam's early life:

BEHOLD, God raised Adam, and Noah, and the House of Abraham, and the house of 'Imran above all mankind, in one of descent. And God was all-hearing, all-knowing when a woman of [the House of] 'Imran prayed: "O my Sustainer! Behold, unto thee do I vow [the child] that is in, my womb, to be devoted to Thy Service. Accept it, then, from me: verily, Thou alone art all-hearing, all-knowing!" But when she had given birth to the child, she said: "O my Sustainer! Behold, I have given birth to a female!" – the while God had been fully aware of what she would give birth to, and [fully aware] that no male child [she might hoped for] could ever have been like this female" and I have named her Mary. And, verily, I seek Thy protection for her and her offspring against satan, the accursed." And thereupon her Sustainer accepted the girl-child with goodly

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<sup>32</sup> Vuola, 50.

acceptance, and caused her to grow up in goodly growth, and placed her in the care of Zachariah. (Q 19: 33-37a)<sup>33</sup>

From Quran 19:28 we know that Maryam had a brother named Aaron and from the teaching of Prophet Muhammad we also know that John or Yahya was Maryam's nephew which means Yahya was the son of Maryam's sister who's married to Zachariah. In short, we can say that Imran and his wife had one son named Aaron, two daughters named Maryam and Zachariah's wife. And Imran's grandchildren are Isa/Jesus dan Yahya/John. This given treatment really makes Imran's lineage going into another level because the same figure that received this type of treatment was Abraham's family.

When the Quran repeatedly mentions a person's name clearly, even to the point of explaining his family background, then there is an implied meaning behind it. This indicates that the character has important values that can be used as role models and deserves more attention from readers. The use of Maryam's real name in the Quran even though she is a woman becomes even more interesting when we compare her to the fate of other women in the Quran who are mentioned not by their real names but with titles or other attributive identities. For example, Adam's Wife, Noah's Wife, Lot's Wife, Pharaoh's Wife and Imran's Wife. The explanation of the lineage in Maryam's family is also important to counter the wild assumptions circulating in society when they know that Maryam was pregnant without going through a normal biological process of fertilization and to maintain the sacred value that Maryam continued to hold throughout her life.

Maryam's firm faith in God even before she became pregnant with Isa was indeed amazing and was taken seriously. This made God not hesitate to bestow a lot of goodness on Maryam's life. Throughout her life, at least until she became pregnant with Isa, Maryam continued to live in a cloistered chamber of Sanctuary, and dedicated her life to prayer and contemplation. What an amazing person. Maryam did not need extra fortune

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<sup>33</sup> Carl Chudy, SX, "The Virgin Mary: Bridging Muslims and Catholics," *The Journal of Social Encounters* 4, no. 2 (2020): 35.

but luck kept coming to her. Maryam always did good but she kept claiming it was just that destiny God made for her. All praises must go to God.<sup>34</sup>

Apart from talking about the early phase of Maryam's life, the Quran also discusses the transition that took place in Maryam's life from a young woman to a woman full of miracles. For example, when Maryam was visited by angels who delivered news about the birth of a child that Maryam would conceive in the near future without having a husband to accompany her. And what makes the story of Maryam even more interesting is that later the child will be known as Maryam's child who in theory goes against the Paternal reference tradition at that time. The following is a verse that describes the transitional phase of Maryam's life:

BEHOLD, the angels said, "O Mary, indeed God gives you glad tidings of a word from Him; his is the Messiah, son of Mary, eminent in this world and the Hereafter and he is of those drawn near. And he shall speak to people in the cradle and as a grown man, and he shall be of the righteous." (Q 3:45-46)

The "word" in the verse is later believed to be the exalted Jesus with the addition of the title Messiah. But we need to realize also that Maryam did not just accept the shocking news she heard from the angel who met her. For example, in Q 3:47, it is described that Maryam was actually shocked when she heard the news that she would become pregnant even though she was not married. In the verse it is described that she questioned how this would happen because it sounded absurd. Even though she asked questions that tended to challenge her, Maryam realized that it was already destined by God for her to do.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the brief description of Maryam in the Quran. In the next section we will dive into the various teachings in Islam about Maryam.

In Islam, there is no special branch that studies the figure of Maryam because she has a different status compared to Mary in the Christian narrative. However, this does not mean that in Islam this character is not discussed at all. Again, for emphasis, the reason why Maryam is not discussed formally in Islam is because of her status, which is related to the status of Isa, her son. In Christianity, Jesus is God while in Islam, Jesus is not God but only a prophet. This is why Maryam is then considered not to have given

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<sup>34</sup> Ḥammād, *Mary: The Chosen Woman*, 2–3.

<sup>35</sup> Ḥammād, 7.



birth to "God" so there is no need for theotokos in Islam. Even though they differ in seeing the status of Mary and Maryam, at least there are several places that are used by Muslims and Christians as places to pray to Maryam and one of the most famous places is the House of Mary which is located in Ephesus, Turkey which is believed to be the place where Maryam spent the rest of her life after her son died. And not far from there is a water fountain and a wishing wall which is always packed with pilgrims praying for healing and fertility. And the pilgrims who come to this place are mostly Muslims and Christians. So, even though Mary and Maryam are not in the same position in Islam and Christianity, this female figure is interpreted the same by the people of the two religions. Maryam is interpreted as a carrier of healing and protection.

As the two main sources of Islamic law, the Quran and hadiths, also make Maryam a special role model for women. Her status as an exalted woman and because of her holy character has succeeded in making many women in Islam pray to God through Maryam when they are in suffering. In particular, Maryam was more well known among the Shi'ites in Muslim circles.<sup>36</sup>

Just as we discussed in the previous section, Maryam in Islam has always been lived as a pious woman who is loyal to her Lord and in the daily devotion of the people, Maryam is usually described as a miraculous woman because from birth she has become a symbol of impossibility. Born to parents who almost gave up because they never had children and, in the end,, Maryam also conceived a miracle baby without going through a normal biological fertilization process. Some even believe that Maryam is the first person to be resurrected when the day of judgment comes.

## **B. Conclusion**

Up to this point, we should become more aware that the narrative of Maryam and Mary both set a good example, especially in relation to life together in a tedious context. In this chapter, the perspectives offered are present to help readers become individuals who make a positive contribution to their respective communities. Like

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<sup>36</sup> Vuola, *The Virgin Mary across Cultures*, 47–49.

Maryam, who served in the temple from an early age even until she died, she continues to be an example for the people and a source of healing, especially for women.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion and Personal Theological Reflection

From the explanation that has been given above, it feels right if we can agree that what Pancasila offers, especially in its first principle, is not a value of closedness but openness to the diversity that exists around us, so is the story of Maryam and Mary both in Islam dan Christian perspective. Maybe, the first principle of Pancasila does not seem to embrace everything, but the interpretation that has been described in the previous section can be used as a tool for us to see the spirit behind Pancasila itself so that there are no errors in reading and actualizing Pancasila while competing in full social integration in the society.

To help achieve this, I would like to explain the concept of nationalism in Benedict Anderson's work entitled *Imagined Communities*. According to Anderson, nationalism is really just a construction in the minds of a group of people who are united through their area of residence and / or the language used. Anderson argues this because he studied how a group of people can finally communicate well with each other when print-language is successfully reproduced and unite non-Latin speaking people such as English, French, and Spanish in various regions. This is the starting point for the formation of nationalism, when readers begin to become aware of the existence of other readers and begin to form in their minds a community that unites them (who speak the same language / live in the same area).<sup>37</sup>

The same concept can also be used in the context of eradicating intolerance in Indonesia. The state can begin to install the values of diversity in the minds of the Indonesian people so that when there is an action that tries to destroy these values of diversity, automatically the Indonesian citizens will fight back with the aim of neutralizing the problem. Because there will always be problems at the grassroots level that are not detected by the government's radar, so it will be much more effective if the citizens themselves are empowered. This is why a good understanding at the grassroots level about diversity and tolerance is so crucial a position. In addition, we need to be

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<sup>37</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44.

aware that because Pancasila, Maryam, and Mary have the same end result when practiced in the context of the state, namely to unite, then the narrative about this holy woman also needs to be exalted more loudly so that her example can be imitated by the Indonesian people who do provide space for religion to shape people's mindsets and behaviour. As we have seen in Costa Rica and Finland where religious communities make Mary a meeting point that unites and Maryam in Islam, which is believed to provide healing for believers. If this value of diversity and "healing" could be instilled coherently in the minds of Indonesians, then we can be sure that Indonesia will become a country that is much more peaceful than it is today. Hence, we should start imagining that Pancasila, Maryam, and Mary are parts of our identity that none can take from us. Extra note is also provided for the Police as they are the actor that have been active in ruining the freedom of expressing one's religion and faith. Indonesian Police should start imagining that their existence in Indonesia is to "heal" the messy condition not the other way around. If everyone takes their part in solving this problem, then the future will definitely be bright for every group in Indonesia, no matter how big they are, in term of number of members.

To close this thesis, I would like to recall an incident in 2002 when there was a fire at a girls' school in Mecca. In that incident, 15 students failed to be rescued because when the fire broke out the students did not wear the head covering that is required for women to wear when in public spaces. When the fire broke out, these students did not wear headscarves because in the school environment that only contained women, they were allowed to remove them. However, when panic broke out due to the fire, they no longer had time to put on their hoods and ran to the exit. Unfortunately, there were already officers who detained them from leaving because they didn't wear headscarves. Worse, when the parents of these students came to pick up their children, they were also prohibited from entering because many of the students in the school were not wearing headscarves. In the end, 15 people who could have been saved became victims. After this incident happened, there were several waves of protests going on there but that couldn't change the fact that there were people who could have been saved.

This incident is proof that when religion is not accompanied by logic, what happens is carelessness and often results in loss of life. However, when logic is not accompanied by faith, what happens is a loss of identity / grip like water on taro leaves.

And balancing the two is an arduous task and will take our entire lives. As difficult as it may sound, human civilization must continue in that direction for a more holistic common good.

In the end, we became aware that the lessons we learned from the stories of two important female figures in Islam and Christianity did not conflict with the values held by the foundation of the Indonesian state, Pancasila. In fact, the lessons from Mary and Maryam's narratives will help Indonesian citizens to live Pancasila and their religion better.

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