Religious violence in Indonesia
The role of state and civil society

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Abstract

Religious violence in Indonesia remains a serious problem today. The main players are the state, which performs politicization of religion, and religious groups that insist on hegemony. In particular, Islamic politics demand special treatments under the pretext of being a majority religion. Such pressures include discriminatively defining religion, which fits only with Indonesian official religions, and producing regulations that are discriminative towards animistic religions and other minority religions. This article will focus on religious violence in Indonesia, which is carried out by the state and various religious groups, and will propose solutions from a Christian perspective.[2]

Keywords   Religious freedom, religion-state relationship, inter-religious relationship, discriminative laws, state hegemony, religious hegemony, religionization of politics, politicization of religion, definition of religion, religious violence.

1. Introduction

With almost 20,000 islands[3] reaching over more than 9,800,000 sq. km,[4] Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country (250 million), is the largest ar-

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2   Part of this article was presented at Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington DC, on 29 March 2011.

3   Some of them (6,044 islands) have been named and the rest remain nameless. Only 931 islands (less than seven%) are inhabited. *Statistical yearbook of Indonesia 1992.* Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik, 1992, 3.

4   Four-fifths of Indonesia, however, is water. The land area covers only 1,900.000 sq. km.

chipelago in the world. Indonesia is arguably one of the most ethnically and cultu rally heterogeneous nations. There are over 300 different ethnic groups with more than 250 distinct spoken languages.[5] With regard to the religious life, all major and important world religions are represented, along with a wide range of folk and animistic beliefs. Among these faiths, Islam embodies approximately 87% of the population, making it the largest religious group in Indonesia.[6]

Although the Muslim population is the largest in Indonesia, an Islamic state is not a viable option with regard to Indonesian nationalism. It is true that religion in Indonesia, especially Islam, played a very crucial role in promoting Indonesian nationalism in the beginning of the twentieth century. Islam was one of the most im portant contributing factors to the growth of Indonesian nationalism by promoting national unity against Dutch colonialism. "The Mohammedan religion," as George McTurnan Kahin put it, "was not just a common bond; it was, indeed, a sort of in-group symbol against an alien intruder and oppressor of a different religion."[7] Islam was then, Deliar Noer wrote, "synonymous with nationality."[8]

It is important to note, however, that since 1927 Indonesian nationalism has no longer been identified with Islam. M.C. Ricklefs describes this as "the dominant ideological position." He explains:

> [I]n the interest of maximum unity among Indonesia's cultural, religious and ideo-
> logical streams, this nationalist idea rejected the Pan-Islamic and reformist instinct
> of the urban Islamic leadership, adopting a position which is conventionally called
> "secular" but which in practice was often seen as anti-Islamic by Muslim leaders;
> Islam was thus pushed into the isolated political position which, with rare excep-
> tions, it has occupied ever since.[9]

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[5] Hildred Geertz, 1963. Indonesian cultures and communities, in *Indonesia*, edited by T. McVey. New Haven: HRAF Press, 24. The number of different ethnic groups very much depends on how they are categorized. Unlike Raymon Kennedy's classification, which gave only 54 ethnic groups, M.A. Jaspan distinguished over 360 ethnic groups. Many of those listed by Kennedy, however, should be further broken into ten or more distinct ethnic groups. See M.A. Jaspan. 1958*. Daftar sementara dari suku bangsa-bangsa di Indonesia [Temporary lists of tribes in Indonesia]* Jogjakarta: Panitia Social Re-search, Gadjah Mada University. Raymond Kennedy. 1942. *The ageless Indies*. New York: The John Day Company.

[6] The 2010 Indonesian census recorded 87.18% Muslims, 6.96% Protestants, 2.91% Catholics, 1.69% Hindus, 0.72% Buddhists, 0.05 Confucians, and 0.13% as "Others." Badan Pusat Statistik, *Sensus Indonesia* 2010 www.sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=0 [Access 13 August 2012].

[7] George McTurnan Kahin 1952. *Nationalism and revolution in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 38.

[8] Deliar Noer 1973. *The modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia 1900*-1942. Kuala Lumpur: OUP, 7.

[9] M.C. Ricklefs 1993. *A history of modern Indonesia since C.1300*, Second ed. Stanford: Stanford Uni-versity Press, 181.

It seems that Ricklefs' thesis was correct. Sukarno, for example, one of many younger Western-educated intellectuals, was not enthusiastic about Syariat Islam (SI) due to the organization's schism. Sukarno, who founded Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party) in 1927, created a different ideological and political point of view. Like SI, his PNI was clearly political, with independence for the Indonesian archipelago as its goal. Unlike SI, however, for the sake of unity of all Indonesians, PNI chose "'secular' nationalism" (*kebangsaan*) rather than Islam as its ideology.[10] As a Muslim, Sukarno "frequently stressed that the party could not have an Islamic basis." [11] For him, Indonesia *Merdeka* "was as much the objective of Indonesian Christians as of Mohammedans."[12]

For this reason, it was not correct for several Islamic thinkers in the late 1930s to continue arguing for the strong political position of Islam by ignoring this fundamental change. Muhammad Natsir, for example, in the late 1930s still maintained that the *kebangsaan* (nationalist) movement should be based on Islam. He said, as Noer put it:

> [I]t would be more justifiable to make use of the bond which already tied about 85 percent of the populations. [Natsir] asked why this bond should be abandoned in order to seek the support of the minority of non-Muslims. He further asked whether the *kebangsaan* group would not be more justified in making use of this bond since the majority of them were also Muslims, instead of calling for the abandonment of the Islamic ideology.[13]

Realizing that Natsir's argument did not consider the overall situation in Indonesia, which had been changed fundamentally at that time, Noer wrote:

> [Natsir] seemed to neglect the fact that by that time Islam was not considered as a national identity anymore, and *bumiputera* [native] was not a term which referred exclusively to Muslims – a phenomenon different from the situation at the turn of the century, and partly a result of the activities of the religiously neutral nationalists in championing "Indonesian" rather than "Islam" as a national identity.[14]

In short, Indonesian nationalism could not be identified with Islam regardless of the importance of the Islamic contribution.

It has been agreed by Indonesian founding fathers that Indonesian nationalism is based on Pancasila, Indonesia's national ideology.[15] The Pancasila-based state of

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[10] Ibid., 183.

[11] Kahin, *Nationalism and revolution in Indonesia*, 90.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Noer, *The modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia* 1900-1942, 276-277. Quoting Muhammad Natsir, *Pandji Islam* [*The Banner of Islam*], no. 6 (6 February 1939).

[14] Ibid., 324.

[15] Pancasila which derives from the words "Panca" (five) and "Sila" (guideline) meaning "five guidelines" consists of five principles – Lordship, human rights, nationalism, democracy, and social justice. See J.

Indonesia deals with religious pluralism and promotes the idea of religious freedom in Indonesian society. Pancasila does not favor the majority of religious communities at the expense of the minorities. Indonesia's national motto in the spirit of Pancasila is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika,* which means "diversity but one," or unity in diversity. Within this national motto, there is neither majority nor minority. All are treated equally in terms of rights and obligations.[16] In other words, Pancasila maintains and preserves the autonomy of religion. Franz Magnis-Suseno wrote:

> …Pancasila guarantees that Muslims can really live according to their religion as a Muslim, Christians stays as a Christian…etc. No one needs to sacrifice their integrity, no rights violated, no one feels like a stranger in their own country.[17]

All groups are given the opportunity not only to maintain their identities, but also to contribute to the whole nation according to their particular beliefs. All this certainly would create benefits not only for Islam, but also for Christianity and other religions.

In reality, however, religious freedom in Indonesia has become a problem with no easy solution. Indonesia once was known for having a spirit of high tolerance among religions. But for some reason, this tolerance has diminished, and inter-religious relations have turned into a very sensitive issue. Conflicts arise and cost huge numbers of deaths and material loss. The religious tension resulting in many human rights issues in Indonesia was highlighted in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council under the United Nations on 23 May 2012.

This paper will explore the violation of religious freedom in Indonesia, which is not only done by the state but also by different religious groups. It is even done internally between people of the same religion. It will primarily focus on the state's failure to protect religious freedom, and it will propose some solutions for religious freedom in Indonesia from a Christian perspective.

2. Violation of religious freedom

Violation of religious freedom has become not only intense and profound, but it has also caused a great deal of violence. From 1995 to 1997 the successive "ethnoreligious" riots, which broke out in Java, caused hundreds of Christian churches and hundreds of Chinese stores to be burned and destroyed. These "ethno-religious" riots culminated on the night of 14 and 15 May 1998, causing 1,198 people to be killed and

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Verkuyl 1978. *Contemporary missiology: An introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 383.

[16] See Benyamin Intan. 2006. Pancasila persemaian agama-agama [Pancasila, the seedling of religions]. *Suara Pembaruan*, 15 December.

[17] Magnis-Suseno 2000. Beberapa dilema etis antara agama dan negara [Several ethical dilemmas between religion and state], in *Kuasa dan Moral*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 111.

more than 150 Chinese-Indonesian women to be raped in their stores, offices, and homes.[18] These riots are suspected to have led to the fall of the Soeharto regime.

The country has also had to deal with the inter-religious conflict in the Moluccas Islands. From 1999 to 2002, this Muslim-Christian conflict has caused 10,000 people to be killed thus far in the region. The number of closings and burnings and destruction of church buildings are increasing from year to year. From only two during Sukarno's presidency (17 August 1945 – 7 March 1967) (average/month = 0.008), the demolition reached 456 during Soeharto's rule (7 March 1967 – 21 May 1998) (average/month = 1.19); from 156 during Habibie's administration (21 May 1998 – 20 October 1999) (average/month = 9.18) to 232 during Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency (20 October 1999 – 23 July 2001) (average/month = 11.048).[19] The number of churches being demolished is the largest during Wahid's presidential term due to efforts by others to discredit his vision of a tolerant Islam.

Report from Setara Institute on 26 July 2010 found increasing violations of religious freedom. In particular, attacks on houses of worship escalated from 17 cases in 2008 and 17 in 2009 to 28 cases in 2010. In 2011, Setara Institute noted 244 cases of violations of religious freedom. Within these cases, there were 299 different violations, and 105 acts among them implicated state officers. From these 105 violations, 95 of them reflected crime by commission. These include provocative statements from government officials condoning the violations. Government institutions implicated in these violations include the police force (40 acts), the army (22 acts), regents or city mayors (18 acts), the Department of Religions (9 acts) and other institutions (less than 6 acts). The victims of violations of religious freedom in 2011 included the Ahmadiyah congregation (114 incidents), the Christian congregation (54 incidents), and other religious groups (38 incidents). Such violation conducted by various community groups is increasing year by year.[20]

2.1 State

Religious freedom demands the active involvement of the state. The state can be involved through regulations that ensure religious freedom and an anti-discriminative application of such laws to all religious groups.

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[18] Bilveer Singh 2000. *Succession politics in Indonesia: The 1998 presidential elections and the fall of Soeharto*. New York: St. Martin Press, 212.

[19] Paul Tahalele and Thomas Santoso. 2002. *The church and human rights in Indonesia: Supplement,* (Surabaya: Surabaya - Indonesian Christian Communication Forum, SCCF - ICCF), 1.

[20] Ismail Hasani and Bonar Tigor Naipospos, (eds.) 2012. *Politik diskriminasi rezim Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono: Kondisi kebebasan beragama/berkeyakinan di Indonesia 2011 [Politics of discrimination under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's regime: Conditions of religious/belief freedom in Indonesia in 2011]. Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara,* 20-24.

A survey conducted by major national newspaper, *Kompas*, on 22 February 2010 found that minority religious groups received discriminative treatments and violence as their teachings were considered unorthodox. Their houses of worship were attacked and burned. These cases kept occurring since state officials acted half-heartedly in preventing violence. More than half of the survey respondents (56.5%) agreed that the government did not enthusiastically protect minority religious groups from acts of violence.

The state has committed a crime by omission by failing to protect the religious freedom of minority groups. Consequently, minority religions with unorthodox beliefs were deemed a threat to public life, while in the past they had not disturbed the community. Unconsciously, crime by omission has escalated unorthodox belief to *politicized belief*, where the state is politicizing religion in order to win the favor of majority groups and thus extend its power in the nation.[21]

The violation of religious freedom by the Indonesian state is more than just the state's inconsistency in being neutral towards religions. As a majority religion, Islam demands privileges, and when the state consents, it causes discrimination against other religions. The implementation of exclusive, discriminative regulations denies the spirit of Pancasila, Indonesia's national ideology. Such implementation is closely related with the conspiracy of a religion, which demands dominion over others and a state which wants to maintain its power. Because of these vested interests, the Indonesian state has produced religious regulations which do not take into account the protection of religious freedom.

2.2 The definition of religion and false teachings *(bidat)*

The great advantage that Islam has gained by conspiring with the state jeopardizes other Indonesian official religions. The state's conspiracy with Indonesian official state religions (Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian) is apparent in the definition of religion issued by the Department of Religion. The Muslim-sounding definition of religion gives Islam a great advantage, but at the same time, it also gives other official religions a special place. The definition contains requirements for a certain religion to be acknowledged legally, including having a Holy Book, having prophets, believing in the one and only personal God, being recognized internationally, and having a comprehensive religious law system. These requirements automatically exclude various mysticisms. The diverse tribal religions and mysticisms have reluctantly become a mission or propagation field for official religions. In essence, the state's definition of religion has violated the right of minority religions such as tribal religions and mysticisms.

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[21] For a detailed discussion of Kompas' survey, see Benyamin Intan. 2012. Pluralisme agama dan negara berkeadilan [Religious pluralism and a just state] *Seputar Indonesia* 25 August.

Niels Mulder observes that not a single criterion of the requirements can be fulfilled by the religious sects and mysticisms. This proves that they are the main target of those who set the criteria.[22] Initially, the involvement of the *santri* (devoted) Islam in the definition of religion was intended to gain control over the *abangan* (nominal) Islam and to coerce them to submit to Islam as a religion. Unfortunately, many of the *abangan* Islam chose Christianity instead.[23] The religionization of politics has more negative impact on religion rather than gaining advantage from it. People may choose a certain religion based on the practical benefits offered by that religion rather than based on faith to the deity. Therefore, in order to eliminate discrimination against religious beliefs, a reexamination of the Religion Department's criteria for defining religion is absolutely necessary. However, it is not the main problem. The crux of the matter is whether the state is justified in defining what religion is, and whether it has the authority to decide what can or cannot be called a religion.

Furthermore, the state's intervention involves unorthodox teachings *(bidat)*. It is ironic that over and over again the Indonesian government receives support from official religions. The Jehovah Witnesses, for example, are prohibited on recommendation of the Christians and Muslims. Religious leaders are also tempted to use violence to maintain their positions. The violence is not only perpetrated openly by the government, but also by individuals and existing religious groups. Religious hegemony has reached the public sphere. The state not only allows it to happen, but it has also become the main actor in encouraging it.

2.3 Discriminative laws

Discriminative laws such as the Joint Decision *(Surat Keputusan Bersama,* or SKB) of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs No.01/BER/MDM-MAG/1969 regarding the building of houses of worship are the result of a conspiracy between Islam and the state. This SKB has become an excuse for closing, even destroying and burning minority religions' houses of worship. Since the existence of the SKB from 1969 to 2006, almost 1,000 churches have been closed, demolished, or burned down.

The SKB is now renewed under the Unified Regulation (*Peraturan Bersama*, or PERBER) of Two Ministers (2006). However, the core of the PERBER is not any different from the SKB. It has paragraphs containing restrictions of religious freedom, especially concerning the building of worship places. It demands at least 60 signa-

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[22] Niels Mulder 1978. *Mysticism and everyday life in contemporary Java: Cultural persistence and change.* Singapore: Singapore University Press, 4-6.

[23] Benyamin Intan 2006. "*Public religion*" and the *Pancasila-based state of Indonesia: An ethical and sociological analysis.* New York: Peter Lang, 44-45, 50-51.

tures from adults living in the proximity of the proposed worship place. In addition, in order to build a church, at least 90 adult members of this church must sign.

Since the implementation of PERBER, the closing, burning, and destruction of minority's places of worship has continued. The Jakarta Christian Communication Forum observed that 67 churches became victims from 21 March 2006 to 17 August 2007. Astonishingly, the controversial and unproductive decision letter has never been withdrawn.[24]

On top of discriminative regulations that limit the development of certain religions, the state also issued laws that provide privileges to certain religions. Such laws give special facilities mainly to official religions and neglect the need of unofficial religions such as religious sects and mysticisms. The 2011 Law No. 23 regarding the management of *zakat* (Islamic offerings), a revision from the 1999 Law No. 38, is an example of such a law. This law was rectified to fulfill the need of some Muslim congregations who want to regulate the demand of *zakat* in Islamic faith, since they argue that only the state has the right to regulate implementation of *zakat*.[25] This law obviously shows state intervention in giving special treatment to certain religions. *Zakat* ought to be a private issue of Islamic principles, and ought not to be a public regulation. It becomes controversial as the funding of national *zakat* institutions use the state funding. This is an obvious partial dispensation from the state to certain religions in order to gain favors from them.

Similarly, recently there is a proposed law *(Rancangan Undang-Undang, RUU)* on *halal* products or "forbidden consumables." Some religions may have regulation regarding unholy consumables, but this proposed law on *halal* uses Islamic criteria. This RUU was going to be ratified by 2009, but it produces strong polemical debates. Consequently to date this law has not been ratified. Nevertheless, at present certain Islamic groups still demand ratification of this law.[26]

Furthermore, recent ratification on pornography law remains a hot polemical debate, as some militant religious groups demand stronger sanctions and stricter implementation. There are different interpretations of what comprises pornographic material. Despite such controversy, the state was unable to remain neutral and insisted on rectifying the law based on input from a certain group. Hence the content of this law becomes discriminative.

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[24] For a detailed discussion of PERBER, see Benyamin F. Intan. 2012. Peraturan bersama kontraproduktif [Controversy of ministerial unified regulation] Seputar Indonesia 21 September.

[25] Zainal Abidin Bagir, et al. 2012. *Laporan tahunan kehidupan beragama di Indonesia 2011 [Annual report of religious life in Indonesia in 2011]*. Yogyakarta: Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 13.

[26] Ibid., 17.

A draft on RUU of Religious Harmony dated 1 August 2011 surfaced in public recently and caused another hot polemical debate.[27] This RUU has not been discussed by the Indonesian Parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, DPR), but it has gained strong reaction from the public. The RUU contains eight areas, including: construction of worshipping places, spreading of religion, overseas funding, inter-religious marriage, religious holidays, religious desecration, unorthodoxy activities, and other related non-religious issues. These areas have surfaced in the past as part of ministerial laws, and have triggered controversy due to their discriminative nature. Ironically, the ministerial law is to be upgraded as national law, ratified by the Indonesian Parliament. If ratified, this law may trigger further widespread conflicts, which may end with violence.[28]

2.4 Regional religious regulations

Islam's wish to have a privileged position is obvious from the existence of Muslim-sounding regional regulations, known as the *Peraturan Daerah (Perda) Syariat* (Shari'ah Regional Law). The implementation of the *Perda Syariat* in various districts in Indonesia increases especially since the Aceh Province implements the Shari'ah Islam, after obtaining special autonomy through national regulations. This religious *Perda* has been implemented in at least 13 provinces and 40 cities.[29] Turning up in various regions, *Perda Syariat* justifies itself by claiming that it is in harmony with the democratic principle.

Perda Syariat has become a polemic and tough problem because it encourages other religions to follow in its footsteps. In Manokwari, for instance, where the majority religion is Christian, a *Perda Injil* (Gospel Regional Law) has been implemented.[30] The religiously tinted *Perda* is contradictory to Pancasila and the spirit of the Indonesian constitution (UUD 1945). Other religions naturally resent its presence. Moreover, the *Perda* reflects a strong sense of religious zeal by positioning religion as the single solution to all problems faced by this diverse nation. As a result, religious freedom has become a serious problem, not only in areas where Islam is a majority, but also in areas where Christian and other non-Muslim religions are the majority.

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[27] Ibid., 22.

[28] For a detailed discussion of Indonesian discriminative laws, see Benyamin Intan. 2007. Efek berbahaya kriminalisasi agama [Dangerous effect of religion criminalization] *Sinar Harapan*, 24 April.

[29] Arskal Salim. 2008. Perda berbasis agama dan perlindungan konstitusional penegakan HAM [Islamic regional regulations and constitutional protection of human rights] *Jurnal Perempuan* 60 (September): 11-13.

[30] For a detailed discussion on Perda Injil, see Binsar A. Hutabarat 2008. Perda agama (injil) dalam perspektif Kristiani [Gospel regional law from Christian perspective] Jurnal Perempuan 60 (September): 45-58. See also Benyamin Intan. 1997. Hegemoni agama. [Religious hegemony] *Suara Pambaruan*, 16 June.

2.5 Violence among religions

When religious institutions take part in the same crime committed by the government, the problem of religious hegemony in the public sphere becomes complicated. Attempts to control riots carried out in the name of religion are often done half-heartedly. The proliferation of violence is supported by society. During the present Indonesian reformation era, the country ranked top in the number of church burnings. From 1945 to 2009 approximately 1,500 churches have been burnt down, demolished and/or closed. Tragically, *nobody* was even arrested or put to trial – which is strong evidence that the government looks the other way when violence in the name of religion takes place.[31]

The Theological National Consultation of Indonesian Council of Churches in Cipayung, West Java (4 October 2011 to 4 November 2011) concluded that there is an increase in worship prohibition and closure of worshipping places by militant groups. These militant groups typically were part of groups that were pressured in the era of President Soeharto, and now they are forcing their way into public places. Another conclusion is that the influence of these militant groups causes public opinion to shift. Initially, most Indonesians acknowledged plurality and differences, but now they perceive different groups with suspicion. Hence, plurality is no longer enriching the society.

The rise of religious prejudice in Indonesia is confirmed by the increase in religious community clusters. The condition is worsened by weak efforts to integrate different clusters. Inter-religious relationship is declining from a creative pro-existence or enriching relationship, to a "live-and-let-die" existence, or status quo relationship. In some parts of Indonesia the relationship is so bad that it leans toward religious hegemony and religious violence.

2.6 Violence within denominations in a religion

This community-supported violence was not only aimed at burning and destroying churches. The Center for Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS) at Gadjah Mada University published findings which showed that during the year 2008, relations among religions were marked by violence, dominated within the religion itself.[32] Victims of violence within denominations in a religion mostly happened in the Ahmadiyah group. Among mainstream Muslims, Ahmadiyah was deemed as unorthodox. Violence against Ahmadiyah reached its peak on 6 February 2011 in Cikeusik, where three people died. Previous attacks against Ahmadiyah only involved destruc-

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[31] See Benyamin Intan. 2009. Rumah ibadah dan hegemoni negara [House of worship and state's hegemony] *Suara Pembaruan,* 3 Agustus.

[32] *See Laporan tahunan kehidupan beragama di Indonesia tahun 2008 [Annual report of religious life in Indonesia in 2008.]* Yogyakarta: Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

tion of its mosques.[33] Other violence also happened to Lia Eden and her followers. She was imprisoned under the accusation of religious sacrilege because her belief was different from mainstream religions.

One way to avoid violence within religions is to have the official state religion request that the state abolish sects considered unorthodox. However, by asking the state to restrict sects deemed unorthodox, religions have given a powerful legitimacy to the state to govern them. This is a power that can strike back against the religions themselves.

3. Several Christian thoughts on the solution of religious freedom in Indonesia

3.1 Religious interaction and power politics

Although Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia, an Islamic state is not a viable option in the spirit of Pancasila – Bhinneka Tunggal Ika – the unity and the diversity of Indonesia. The strongest objection to adopting an Islamic state, according to Eka Darmaputera, a prominent Christian thinker, lies in the state's inability to protect minority rights. If an Islamic state were to be created in Indonesia, then the problem of minorities would certainly arise. Supomo, an eminent figure of Indonesian founding father, explains:

> To establish an Islamic State in Indonesia means to establish a state whose unity is based on the largest group, namely the Islamic group. If an Islamic State is to be established in Indonesia, some "minority problems" will surely come up, i.e., the problems of small religious groups, the Christian groups, etc. Even though the Islamic State will try its best to guarantee and to protect the well-being of other groups, still those small groups definitely will not be able to conform themselves to the goal of the unified state, which all of us are longing for.[34]

Thus, Indonesia is a multi-religious state. Historically, T.B. Simatupang, another prominent Christian thinker, wrote:

> There has never been an Islamic kingdom which unifies all of Indonesia under its authority. There are areas which have never been reached by Islam, and in some parts of Indonesia the pre-Islamic layer continues to have a great influence. It was

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[33] For an extended discussion of religious violence on Ahmadiyah, cf. Bagir et al. *Laporan tahunan kehidupan beragama*, 32-40. See also Benyamin Intan. 2008. Konsekuensi SKB kompromi [Consequence of compromising ministerial joint decision on Ahmadiyah] *Suara Pembaruan* 18 June.

[34] Quoting Muhammad Yamin. 1959. *Naskah persiapan undang-undang dasa*r 1945 [*Preparatory document of the 1945 constitution]*, vol. 1. Jakarta: Yayasan Prapanca, 117. cf. B.J. Boland. 1971. The struggle of Islam in modern Indonesia. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 20.

when Majapahit was declining and Islam had not been able to reach all of Indonesia, that modern Western influence was introduced. Coinciding with it, Christianity spread and became the religion of the people in the areas which had not yet been reached by the cultural and religious influences of India and Islam.[35]

This quotation maintains that Islam cannot be adopted as the ideological basis of the state without endangering the very identity of Indonesia: its unity and its diversity.

Within a Pancasila-based state, religion may be near to power politics, but may not be attached to it. Once it is attached, the politicization of religion or the religionization of politics will occur. The politicization of religion means that religion has been used as a tool of politics. The state's politicization of religion in the form of religion's subordination by the state will paralyze religion; religion will no longer hold its prophetic role and retain its apostolic voice. It is the reason why Martin Luther adamantly forced the dissection of politics from the church.[36]

The other side of the coin, the religionization of politics means that the power of politics is being used as a tool to benefit a religion. In attempting to put the state under the subordination of a religion, the religionization of politics neutralizes the state's noble function as its citizens' non-discriminating guardian. It has a negative impact on religion itself as it destroys the long-lasting harmonious relationship between religions in Indonesia. It is also why Machiavelli was insistent in pushing the church out of the state.[37] The elements of politicization of religion and religionization of politics actually become a suicidal move for all related parties. Hence, both contain the concept of criminalization of religion.

In a Pancasila-based state, there is neither a subordination of religion by the state nor a subordination of the state by religion. A Pancasila way of thinking strives

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[35] T.B. Simatupang. Konteks politik Indonesia masa kini [The current context of Indonesian politics]. Paper presented at the Institut Studi Etika Sosial Persetia, Salatiga, 20 July 1981, unpublished, 4. cf. also T.B. Simatupang 1987. Konteks politik Indonesia masa *kini* [The current context of Indonesian politics], in *Dari revolusi ke pembangunan*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 560. Again, in Simatupang's words, "The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to Indonesia after they conquered Malacca in 1511....[They] established Christianity in its Roman Catholic form in Flores and in the Moluccas, which had not been Hinduized or Islamicized....Due to the presence of the Portuguese and later on of the Dutch in Indonesia, there was no opportunity for an Islamic Empire to play a central role in Indonesian history comparable to the role previously played by the Hindu Empire of Majapahit and earlier by the Buddhist Empire of Sriwijaya. For that reason, and also because some parts of Indonesia were never Islamized and because ... the pre-Islamic cultural-religious substrata [in Java] proved to possess a great resilience, the Islamization of Indonesia has remained an unfinished business." (T.B. Simatupang. 1985. Christian presence in war, revolution and development: The Indonesian case, *Ecumenical Review* Vol. 37, No. 1, 78).

[36] Eka Darmaputera 2005. Potensi disintegrasi masyarakat majemuk [Impending disintegration in a pluralistic society], in *Pergulatan kehadiran Kristen di Indonesia: Teks-teks terpilih Eka Darmaputera*, Martin L. Sinaga et al (eds.). Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 149.

[37] Ibid.

for a non-overlapping relation between the state and religion – "a free (religion) in a free state," as Abraham Kuyper says.[38] Without a community of freedom, the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics are inevitable. However, this does not mean that religion and the state have to be segregated. As John Calvin pointed out, they are "separated but not parted."[39] It means that although they are separated from each other, the state and religion have a mutual responsibility towards each other. James Skillen uses the term "sphere responsibility."[40]

The issue is how to fulfill the responsibility of religion toward the state and the state's responsibility toward religion without being trapped in the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics discourse. One of the main responsibilities religion has towards the state is to act as a moral political guardian. Religion, for example, acts out its prophetic voice when it sees a violation against human rights in Aceh (Islam majority region) or in Papua (Christian majority region). One of the responsibilities the state has towards religion is to guarantee the freedom of belief and faith to all religions using positive law.

3.2 State-society distinction

A state which offers a fertile ground for religious freedom is a state which follows what Abraham Kuyper calls the principle of state-society distinction, where the state has to be distinguished from the society. According to this principle, the state is part of the society, but the state is not society itself. The societal community is very broad; it comprises, among others, the family as a community, religion, economics, and the state.[41] Equalizing the state with society will require making the state the sole controlling power over the res publica (public affairs). Both the Old Order and the New Order of the Indonesian government have the tendency to trivialize public religion because of the state's "integrating" concept which denies the principle of state-society distinction. As a result, the state's power spreads out to the private domain of religion.[42]

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[38] Abraham Kuyper 1987. *Lectures on Calvinism (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931; reprint 1987), 99, 106.

[39] According to Eka Darmaputera, this sentence describes John Calvin's stand on the relation of religion-state. See Eka Darmaputera 1996. Aspek-aspek etis-teologis hubungan gereja-negara dan impli-kasinya dalam negara Pancasila [Theological ethics aspects of church-state relationships and their implications in the Pancasila-based state], in Hubungan gereja dan negara dan hak asasi manusia: Bunga rampai pemikiran, Weinata Sairin and J.M. Pattiasina (eds.). Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 19.

[40] See James Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy, (eds.) 1991. *Political order and the plural structure of society*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 413.

[41] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 90.

[42] Adnan Buyung Nasution 1992. *The aspiration for constitutional government in Indonesia: A socio-legal study of the Indonesian Konstituante* 1956-1959. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 421-2; David Bourchier 1997. Totalitarianism and the "national personality": Recent controversy about the philosophical basis of

In the state-society distinction, each community element such as the state and religion has its own autonomy and independence. Kuyper uses the term "sphere sovereignty."[43] However, sovereignty in every societal community does not justify arbitrariness over other communities that have the same interest in the public sphere. Each community in the public sphere has a certain sovereignty which is limited by the sovereignty of other communities that are also present. So, there are no ranks in the autonomy among communities. A state which respects the idea of state-society distinction will become a fertile ground for the seeds of religious freedom.

3.3 Inter-religious relationships

The state often takes the blame for incidents of religious freedom violations, although in reality the potential conflict had long existed between religions. If the relationship between religions is peaceful and well established, the intensity of state intervention will not change the harmony that exists. On the other hand, if the relationship is not well established, even without any intervention from the state, violence will occur between religions. It is why the relationship between religions must be well established.

For this reason, in their mission for fighting religious freedom in the public sphere, religions should not attempt to dominate, to trivialize, or to eliminate each other (live and let die). The relation between religions should go beyond a mere peaceful coexistence (live and let live). At this level religions communicate with each other but only to the extent of avoiding conflict and leaving each other in peace. There is little awareness of the interdependence between religions in fulfilling their mission in the public sphere.

4. Conclusion

An ideal relation between religions would be a creative pro-existence, in which different religious people realize the need to care for each other because of their mutual dependence. Simatupang plainly affirms that a Pancasila-based state does not merely acknowledge the diversity of religions: "A Pancasila state does not emphasize coexistence, but also cooperation among religions based on mutual responsibility in developing culture, society and the state."[44]

Cooperation between religions has become a necessity, particularly by applying the Golden Rule: "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31),

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the Indonesian state, in *Imagining Indonesia: Cultural politics and political culture*, Jim Schiller and Barbara Martin-Schiller (eds.). Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 157-185.
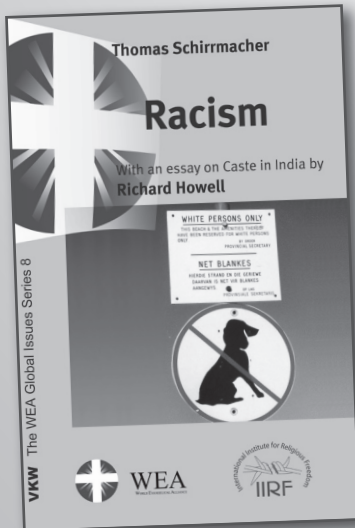
[43] Abraham Kuyper 1991. The antirevolutionary program, in *Political order and the plural structure* of *society*, James W. Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy (eds.). Atlanta: Scholars Press, 242.

[44] T.B. Simatupang 1998. *Iman Kristen dan Pancasila [Christian faith and Pancasila]*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 169.

which can be found in similar versions in other religions.[45] The application of the Golden Rule as the mutual common ground will generate pro-existence as its fruit. In such a condition, "passive religions" such as Hinduism and Buddhism are not left behind. In turn, they will make their contributions. In interdependence among religions, the extinction of a religion will have a negative impact on the genuine civil consensus it is trying to reach. If the awareness of religious interdependence keeps growing, religious freedom will be achievable.

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[45] For the interpretation of the Golden Rule in other non-Christian religions, see John Hick, A pluralist view, in *Four views on salvation in a pluralistic world*, Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips (eds.). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 39-40.