

AUSTRIAN-INDONESIAN DIALOGUE SYMPOSIUM

**STATE, LAW AND RELIGION
IN
AUSTRIA AND INDONESIA**



**Organized by the
Department of Foreign Affairs
and University of Vienna**

VIENNA, 27-29 MAY 2009

PANCASILA AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: HOW MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN INDONESIA LEARNED TO ACCEPT EACH OTHER

**by
Franz Magnis-Suseno SJ**

INTRODUCTION

Since Indonesia's Declaration of Independence in 1945 Religions in this extremely plural country have, overall, lived peacefully with each other. Since the beginning freedom of belief and worship were guaranteed in the constitution. There have, of course, always been suspicions, prejudices, sometimes hatred among the different religions, and, as I shall enter below, after the "Reformation" (after the fall of Suharto) civil war between Christians and Muslims erupted in two places in Eastern Indonesia. But in general, the different religions have lived peacefully, even easily with each other. Religious freedom is a fact and practically all groups accept the existence of other religions in their midst.

In this paper I confine myself to Christian – Muslim rela-

tions. Not that Hinduism and the other smaller religions are not important, but because it is generally agreed in Indonesia that when Christians and Muslims can live a work together, the other religions too will have no problems. First, I trace 63 years of Christian – Muslim relations in Indonesia. In a second part I want to show how culture and political ideals helped to bring the different religions together.

I. 63 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN MUSLIM RELATIONS

1. A fundamental pluralist consensus

On August 17, 1945, Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's independence under the nose of the Japanese occupiers (that had just surrendered to the allied forces). A day later its provisional constitutional assembly (PPKI) adopted a constitution (the "Constitution of 1945") where Indonesia declared herself to be based on five fundamental principles (known as *Pancasila* since Sukarno first formulated them on June 1, 1945) of which the first was "Belief in One God" (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*¹) and where § 29 proclaimed liberty of religion and worship. Besides firmly confirming religious freedom, these fundamental decisions meant that in Indonesia there was to be no discrimination on religious grounds.

¹ The other four are: (2) Just and civilized humanism, (3) unity of Indonesia, (4) (Leadership by) the people lead by the power of wisdom thru common consultation/representation, (5) social justice for all the people.

How remarkable and extraordinary this philosophical and constitutional base was and is for Indonesia will be obvious if we look at the religious map of the country. More than 85% of all Indonesians are (Sunni) Muslim. Almost 10% are Christians, 2/3 of them belonging to Protestant Churches, 1/3 being Catholics. 1,5% are Hindu, most of them being the original inhabitants of Bali. The others belong to indigenous religions, Confucianism, the Buddhist community and some smaller communities. This means nothing else than that Indonesia was then, and still is, the nation with the biggest number of Muslims on earth. But at the beginning of the existence of the free Republic of Indonesia, her representatives unanimously decided to build a nation without religious discrimination and without giving Islam, the religion of the vast majority, any special constitutional or legal status. This decision was made with full awareness of its implications since it was preceded by intensive deliberations and bargaining about whether, first, Indonesia should become an "Islamic state" or not (the decision was "not"), and, second, whether, at least, the Islamic *shariah* should be declared binding on Muslims (this stipulation was unanimously dropped on August 18, 1945). I believe only the willingness of the Islamist representatives not to insist on any special status for Islam made possible the continuance of Indonesia as a single state up to this day.

Since then, religious freedom and non-discrimination, despite many frictions, petty discrimination and serious conflicts during the last 13 years – which I shall come back to presently - have been a reality.² Christianity developed exceptionally well after Indonesian independence. The fact is that the religious life of most of the Christian communities on Java, Sumatra, South Sulawesi and in other Muslim regions of Indonesia goes on as usual without any hindrance. There is freedom of worship, freedom of religious instruction, freedom to baptize and to become a Christian (or a Muslim). Church bells are ringing out at liturgical hours every day in churches on Java. Although being a Christian has since long not been an advantage if one wants to make a career in government or as a state employee, Christians are not systematically discriminated against and can be found in all professions and at all levels of Indonesian society. Even radical Muslim groups have not challenged the principle that non-Muslims have, in Indonesia, the same legal and civil status as the Muslims and are citizens in the full sense of the word.

² Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians (the latter only since 2004; because of anti-Chinese racist prejudice everything smacking of being "Chinese" was outlawed under Suharto and Confucians had been forced to register as Buddhists, making Confucian marriages impossible, for example. This was changed under President Abdurrahman Wahid although its after-effects still linger). A grave ongoing violation of a human right is that, because of an extremely one-sided marriage law [since 1973] people belonging to traditional tribal religions cannot legally marry. Mixed marriages, too, must be concluded according to the rites of one of the six now officially recognized religions.

2. Worrying developments

This situation took a decisive turn to the worst from about 1990. This was the time when Suharto took his famous turn to Islam. Many Muslim leaders regarded the change of attitude as long overdue. For them the 20-year long shunning of political Islam by Suharto's "New Order" was an extraordinary discrimination against the majority religion. They also suspected Christian influences behind Suharto's negative attitude. Thus, they regarded Suharto's late "conversion" as a question of finally giving justice to the Islamic community.

Christians, on the other hand, saw themselves increasingly excluded from public positions, they now felt discriminated and a threatened minority. But what frightened Christians was a growing number of violent attacks on churches. More than 600 churches have been destroyed or violently closed during the last 14 years, not counting churches destroyed in connection with the civil wars in Eastern Indonesia. Really traumatic for Indonesian Christians were a number of attacks in 1996 to 1997 in which churches in cities on Java were destroyed, mostly burned to the ground, by masses, without provocation by the Christians.³ Especially

³ In the whole there were six such pogroms (Surabaya, Situbondo, Tasikmalaya [1996], Rengasdengklok [1997], Jakarta/Ketapang [1998; this was followed two weeks later by Christian riots in Kupang that led to the expulsion of Muslim Bugis people] and on the island of Lombok [2000], the worst being in Situbondo,

worrying for Christians was the fact that not a single perpetrator has, to my knowledge, ever been brought to court. Christians were increasingly asking themselves whether their constitutionally guaranteed right of worship, even their right of openly existing as Christians in majority Muslim regions, could be violated with impunity.

Although there have been no more large-scale devastations of churches since 2000, attacks on single churches on Java are continuing at the rate of at least once a week. Thus, as Christians complain, it is still extremely difficult to build churches in Java and in other Muslim regions even when there clearly does exist a Christian community needing a church. When the community, then, holds its services in a school or a similar building, this will often be banned by the local administration with the argument that the place has no permit as a building of worship. Often the argument is that a church should not be built during a Muslim community

Eastern Java, were all 25 Christian churches in and around the city were systematically burned to the ground. Since these, for Indonesian Christian traumatic events are a crucial point in Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia, they should not be politely glossed over as so often in "inter-religious dialogues"; on the contrary, they should be faced squarely, but unemotionally and realistically, even if a completely satisfying solution may be some time away. A list by the Forum Komunikasi Kristiani names 938 churches (up to June 1. 2004) that were closed by violent attacks, many of them destroyed or burned down, since 1945: 2 churches during the presidency of Sukarno, 456 under Suharto, most of them after 1990, the rest under the following three presidents; even not counting the approximately 250 churches that were destroyed during the civil wars in Sulawesi and the Molukkas (where also mosques were destroyed), you still get 688 churches that have been attacked during that period.

which, of course would mean the end of religious tolerance since a minority lives among most of another religion. It is, as I have heard, also difficult for Balinese Hindus to get building permits for their *pura* or for Chinese to build a *klenteng* among the Muslims. I have no data on whether similar complaints are voiced by Muslim communities in Christian regions.⁴

3. Civil wars in Eastern Indonesia

The climax of inter-religious conflicts were two civil wars that for almost four years devastated parts of the Molukkas and Central Sulawesi. These wars ranged from 1999 to 2002 (in Poso, intermitted, until 2007) and resulted in about 8,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees, many of whom have not yet been able to return to their homes due to the uncertain security situation. But it is clear that in both regions the reasons behind the violence were highly complex, some of them reaching back into history or even into local culture (people in the Molukkas have traditionally been warriors and fights between villages were quite common⁵),

⁴ Mention must be made here of an especially terrifying event, namely the bombings during Christmas night in the year of 2000 where 50 bombs were placed around Christian churches from North Sumatra to the island of Lombok, 30 of them exploding, resulting in 17 deaths and more than 100 wounded. The police made no serious effort to apprehend the perpetrators. Only after the Kuta bombings (the terrorist attacks on Bali on October 12, 2002, where 202 people were killed) were caught did it transpire that these terrorists were also involved in the Christmas bombings two years earlier.

⁵ The situation in the Molukkas in the 16th and 17th century is described by A. Heu-

others being connected with ethnographic and economic change and, as many Indonesians believe, with politics, both local and in Jakarta. But to say, as some do, that these conflicts were, in fact, not religious in character, is wishful thinking. The fact is that, for more than three years, for many people the answer to the question "are you a Muslim or a Christian?" decided over life or death. Although these conflicts were of another nature than that of the anti-minority violence in Java mentioned above, the reasons for their outbreaks being more political, economic and communal, the disturbing fact is that these conflicts tend to boil down to simple confrontations between Christians and Muslims. Therefore, religious hatred can grow and develop its own momentum. The whole atmosphere between the involved communities gets poisoned. Add longstanding suspicions and prejudices and new outbreaks of conflict can be easily provoked by politically or otherwise interested parties.

Nevertheless, although these conflicts *are* conflicts between communities defined by their respective religion, they have not much to do with the teachings or other specific traits of Islam or Christianity. They should be characterized as communal conflicts. By this I mean that emotions, hatred and prejudices relate to the collective identity of a primordial group, united by language, local culture, locality, reli-

ken, *Be my Witness to the Ends of the Earth. The Catholic Church in Indonesia Before the 19th Century*, Jakarta: Cipta Loka Caraka 2002.

gion, tribalism and so on. If a member of such a community infringes against a member of another one, his or her community will react collectively against the community of the perpetrator.

In fact, the Ambon and Poso conflicts are only part of a general climate of violence and brutality that obtains in Indonesian society today. Small frictions, misunderstandings or confrontations easily evoke violent reactions and physical fighting, using weapons. Very often they quickly involve whole communities which then fight against each other. If, for instance, there is a fight between an extortionist and a taxi driver and the one is a Muslim and the other a Christian (as happened in Ambon), there is always the chance that it may become a war between their respective villages or *kampungs*. Indeed, it may widen, especially if *kampungs* are tribally or religiously homogenous, to become a war between ethnic groups (as happened on Kalimantan) or between religious communities.⁶ Thus these conflicts are first expres-

⁶ One can only speculate about the deeper reasons for this climate of communal violence. Under President Suharto people were not allowed to voice their grievances, they often felt themselves to be "victims of development", for example because they were driven from their land in favor of a government project with insufficient compensation, which in turn often evaporated before reaching their rightful receivers. Complaining would have exposed them to being accused of being communists which was, since 1965, the same as being threatened with death. Thus, they had to accept and keep silent. Communal conflicts too were silenced and thus could not be resolved. Thus, feelings of being the victims of injustice steadily accumulated. People got disappointed, felt isolated and abused,

sions of general social disintegrative tendencies in Indonesian society.

4. Positive developments

These developments have left their scars in religious communities. Many Christians have asked themselves about their future in Indonesia. The existence of hardline groups that sometimes resort to violence (especially against "sinful places" like gambling-dens or even coffee-shops, but in some instances also against Christian institutions that they say are engaging in "Christianization") added to this atmosphere of apprehension. Hard-line Islamic publications openly voiced, and still voice, extremely sectarian views, often directly alluding to Christians. There has been, in my view, an unfortunate tendency to religious segregation. A *fatwa* promulgated already 30 years ago by MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*) but only effectively promulgated after the fall of Suharto, commands that Muslims should refrain from expressing Christmas greetings. Since then, a whole tradition of grass roots level inter-religious contacts has dried up. I heard Muslim

and their anger grew. After the democratic opening after the fall of President Suharto their anger burst unto the surface. At the same time, all the injustices of over more than 30 years were now remembered. Besides, rapid modernization with its breaking down of traditional social structures makes a plural society unstable. In other words, we have just begun to realize how big a task it is to unite such a number of different social components within the boundaries of a national state, in such a way that they all feel at home, evolve a positive commitment to each other as members of the same nation, and feel reconfirmed in their respective social identities.

friends express their dismay at the fact that at school the teacher of religion told their children not to have contacts with non-Muslim and Chinese children. Christians are also worried about a tendency of local authorities enforcing *shariah* regulations in their regions. Hand in hand with local "*shariahization*" goes, in certain districts, often in the name of the newly won "autonomy of the regions", a policy of making religious life for Christian communities increasingly difficult.

These developments could give the impression that things are very bad between religious communities, especially between Christians and Muslims. The astonishing fact is, that relations between Christians and Muslims, while still far from being without problems, are developing well. Undetected by most of the public, the last twelve years have seen some encouraging developments. The fundamental fact is certainly that the *Pancasila* national consensus - that Indonesia belongs to all Indonesians - still stands essentially unchallenged. Political parties favoring making *shariah* law state law for Muslims represented about 17% of the 2004 electorate (while this year no party dared to come out in support of making *shariah* becoming state law). The two biggest political parties, then, Golkar (22%) and PDIP (18%), but also Abdurrachman Wahid's PKB (14%) and Amien Rais'

PAN (6%), did not support introduction of the *shariah*.⁷ Even more significant is the fact that the leadership of the two big Muslim organizations, Nadlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, had clearly stated that making *shariah* into state law does not fit with the social-cultural conditions of Indonesia.

A second, highly significant and often overlooked fact is that the quasi-war between Christians and Muslims in Eastern Indonesia between 1999 and 2002 – where, in fact, both sides regarded themselves as the victims of violence from the other side – has not spilled over to other regions. There have been no revenge attacks on Christian by Muslims on Java and no attacks on Muslims in Christian parts of Indonesia (the one exception where the anti-Christian riots on Lombok in January 2000). More amazingly still, the much-vilified

⁷ The 2009 general elections confirmed a long-standing trend in Indonesia, namely the relative weakness of Islamist political parties. In the first free elections in Indonesia more than 50 years ago (1955) when an Islamic state was the most hotly debated topic Islamic parties got less than 43% of the votes. No free elections happened for the next 44 years. At the national elections 1999, after the fall of the Suharto regime, Islamic oriented parties⁷ only got 37 percent of the popular vote. In the elections 2004 these parties received 40%, while in this year's (2009) general elections these parties received less than 30%. And this although Indonesian Islam has experienced a deepening process since the 70th of last century (meaning that now much more Muslim do their Muslim prayers and other duties). During the campaigns of 2004 and 2009 religion or say Islamic topics or requests were almost completely absent. Political parties (including parties from an Islamic background) and presidential candidates try to present themselves as inclusive, never alluding to religious or ideological divides. It must be that they instinctively feel that taking a "sectarian" attitude would diminish their electoral appeal. This doesn't mean that many Muslims would not be in favor of introducing some *shariah* rules. But it means that in politics they do not like religion to enter.

political elite in Jakarta, including the political parties, did not use the conflict in the Molukkas and Poso for political gains during their election campaigns. It is also remarkable, that during the campaign preceding the last two parliamentary elections (2004 and 2009) questions of religion were almost completely absent; even explicitly Islamic Parties like PKS did not campaign in the name of Islam, but against corruption and for social justice. No party campaigned for the introduction of *shariah* (although some of them have it on their official agenda). All pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the presidential elections were "mixed" between "Islamists"⁸ and "nationalists" (all the "nationalists", of course, being Muslim too).

A third, in fact most amazing development during the last 14 years has been a significant warming of relations between Christians and the big Muslim organizations Nadlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Only 20 years ago there were almost now relations between Christians and "*santri*-Muslims"⁹, except of formal meetings, usually government spon-

⁸ The expression is misleading; by this are not meant ideologues or fanatics, but those who define their political participation according to Islamic ideas and pursue them through Islam-based parties, according to the Indonesian use of the word "Islam" in a political context.

⁹ "*Santri*" is the name for pupils of an Islamic boarding-school (*pesantren*), but the word is also used in a more general way for people living consciously and culturally as Muslims, in distinction to "abangan-Muslims" whose Islamic practices are incomplete; see Clifford Geertz 11960, *The Religion of Java*, N.Y.: The Free Press of Glencoe.

sored, between the leaders of the religious communities.¹⁰ But which Catholic priest would have known a *kiai* or ever seen a *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding school) from the inside? Change began slowly, especially through the influence of the towering figure of Abdurrachman Wahid (NU leader and later President of Indonesia) who embodied a completely modern openness and commitment to religious freedom, drawing on the Islamic tradition exemplified by the Mogul rulers of India of protecting all minorities and feeling responsible for their well being. Strangely enough, relations between Christians and Nadlatul Ulama became cordial after the attacks on the churches of Situbondo.¹¹ But also the relations with, especially the leadership of, Muhammadiyah are now much better than they ever were. Here should be mentioned the fact that the Islamic State Universities (IAIN, UIN)

¹⁰ Especially between Masyumi and the two Christian parties who were united by their commitment to democracy and their distrust of the communists; the same holds for the Muslims student organization HMI and the Catholic Student organization PMKRI.

¹¹ In this for Christians most traumatic incident all 25 Christian churches in and around the East Javanese city of Situbondo were ransacked and burnt down in October 1996 (see note nr. 3). Situbondo is "NU country". Abdurrachman Wahid, then head of NU, immediately condemned the riots and asked for forgiveness. What then came reads like a good story. The young Catholic Javanese parish priest Benny Susetyo, instead of immediately trying to build up his burnt down church, and after receiving the blessing of Abdurrachman Wahid, visited the surrounding *pesantrens*. There, the *kiais* expressed to him their horror at what had happened and promised help in building up the churches again. Since then, relations between Christians and NU got more cordial all over Indonesia. Thus, f. i., many Christian churches are now guarded at Christmas night by *Banser*, the militias of NU.

have, in general, since the 70's, taught an open and dialogue minded Islam.

These tendencies got a big boost by the growing terrorist threat now hanging over Indonesia. The real watershed was the Bali bombings on October 12, 2002. They shocked Indonesians out of their somehow complacent attitude towards the reality of religiously motivated terror.¹² On the one hand, extremist groups that had used the new democratic openness after the fall of the Suharto government to come out into the open, now retreated into more low-profile positions. On the other hand, liberal Muslim groups, but also the popular leaders of the big Muslim organizations, began to present Islam more forcefully as an inclusive religion which, as the majority religion, felt responsible for the peace and prosperity of the whole of Indonesian society. Muslim groups-initiated prayer meetings among different religions for the victims of the Kuta killings. Leaders of the big Islamic organizations Nadlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah

¹² Religiously motivated terror had been about in Indonesia almost since her very beginning, but really got into shape since 1999. The it was played down and never seriously investigated by the authorities. The first bomb exploded in April 1999 at the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta; the people hired to place the bombs were easily caught, but, strangely enough, those that gave them the bombs and paid them never came to light – although the media reported that the house, in Western Jakarta, where the transactions were made, was quickly identified. The first climax of religiously motivated terrorism was, of course, the Christmas bombings of 2000 which, as I mentioned, were not investigated seriously. Only Bali – and President Bush? – changed all this.

founded a National Moral Council consisting of the leaders of all Indonesia religions.

II. CULTURE, NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

1. Culture

There were and are two factors which, in Indonesia, work for acceptance of each other of the religions: culture and nationalism. Both regard unity and good neighborly relations as central value. Political ethics, or the question on what constitutional structure Indonesia should be based, were a third important factor.

Indonesian cultures are extremely pluriform, but they have things together. Nevertheless, it is true that the Javanese culture, the culture of the Javanese, the biggest ethnic group in Indonesia (about 85 Million members, 40% of the Indonesian population) which gives special stress to unity has also had a special influence on religious (and cultural) developments in Indonesia.

Javanese culture has three core values: Living peacefully, without signs of conflict, together (*rukun*), the acknowledgment that one becomes a mentally and emotionally grown up person if one can place oneself at the right way in the social structure and a special understanding what religion is all about. For Javanese religion is not just doing the prayers and works what religion prescribes, but real re-

ligion lies in the heart, since the Divine is to be found in the depth of one's heart. All three values are, for Javanese, accessed thru "feeling" (*rasa*). Therefore, deepening and refining one's feeling is the most important task for a Javanese. As for religion, that means that inner feeling, and not outer movements are decisive. The outer command of religion are only instruments. The real thing is felt through this inner awareness. Therefore, Javanese abhor fanaticism and tolerate different religious behavior and adherences if they express what a person "feels", if the person positions herself fittingly and peacefully in the community.

Although almost all Javanese are Muslims, most of them will never become fanatic and they are extremely tolerant towards other religions which, anyhow, are only roads to the unity with the divine. Fanaticism, legalism and sectarianism for Javanese are a sign that the respective person has not yet penetrated to what religion is all about: unity with the Divine.

This cultural background explains why Javanese are open for all genuine expressions of religiosity. It may have been the psychological background why most Javanese up to now do not feel at ease when religion directly enters politics. Politics have something to do with power, force and violence and there should be no violence or pressure in religion. And since Javanese influence on Indonesia was always strong,

these attitudes influenced how the founding fathers conceived of Indonesia.

2. Nationalism

The second element uniting Indonesians of all religions is a strong nationalism. At decisive moments Indonesian identity and pride, the worries about Indonesia's future and the determination to defend the country against perceived enemies from outside as from inside brings Indonesians together.

This shows in Indonesian politics. Although the question of an Islamic state, of introducing the shariah for Muslims and others easily pop up, in the day-to-day consciousness of Indonesian people and politician they do not play a big role. The already mentioned fact that during the last three election campaigns questions of religion played only a minor part, and that political parties with strong Islamic identities tend to play down this identity proves this. Being suspected of being a real fanatic, thus somebody for whom religion would be more important than the nation, would still be a bad stigma which everybody wants to avoid.

3. Democracy, human rights, religious freedom, and pluralism

Of high relevance are the discussions about some central points of post-traditional political ethics that during the pe-

riods of free expression - under Sukarno's guided democracy (1959 - 1966) and Suharto's New Order (1966 - 1998) such discussions were severely restricted - were always lively: democracy, human rights, religious freedom, pluralism and religiously motivated violence.

1. Democracy

Although all Indonesian nationalists wanted an "Indonesia of the people" (as expressed in the fourth principle of the Pancasila ([Leadership by] the people lead by the power of wisdom thru common consultation/representation), there were in fact even from the time before Independence (1945) deep going differences on what kind of democracy was the right one for Indonesia (the twisted language of the fourth principle is witness to this fact). But the interesting thing is that the divide was not on religious, but on cultural lines. Java-based political parties – the “Sukarnoists” – were from the beginning skeptical towards “Western”, “liberal” democracy, while the Sumatra- and Western-Java based strongly Islamic Masyumi and the (small) Socialist Party, together with the small Catholic and Protestant parties, were staunch defenders of “real” democracy. Thus, the widely held discussion whether Islam is compatible with democracy seems strangely out of place in Indonesia. It was under strongly Muslim chairmanship and influence that, after the fall of Suharto, Parliament and the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) changed Indonesia's constitution so that Indonesia

became a real democracy. Now, after 51 years of authoritarian regimes (Sukarno's "guided democracy" and Suharto's "New Order") there is an almost 100% national consensus that Indonesia must be a democracy.¹³ Democratically inspired NGOs where Christians and Muslims worked together were also strong champions of democracy. Thus, democratic ideals, and resistance against the "integralist" ideology of the suharto regime united Christian and Muslims.

2. Human rights

The discussion about human rights developed on the same lines. A Constitutional Assembly had already, in 1958, before it was dissolved by Sukarno, ratified, unanimously (!), more than 20 human rights in the process of writing a new constitution, about 20 others were still in the process and 16 others were marked for later treatment. But since 1945 the "Javanese" political wing has disparagingly put human rights as "Western individualism" in opposition to Eastern collectivism and the insistence on rights in opposition to social justice. As was the ideology of the Suharto when human rights talk could bring one into prison and only a few dared clearly to come out in favor of them¹⁴. Thus, the opponents of hu-

¹³ The only bigger, but non-political Muslim organization rejecting democracy is Hizbuth Tahrir. Besides them, only former military and old Sukarnoists (including some of the family of the late president Sukarno) still grumble about democracy.

¹⁴ Among them the now rector of Jakarta's Islamic state university Prof. Komaruddin Hidayat, of course Abdurrahman Wahid, but also the now Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda.

man rights in Indonesia were not Muslim voices (it were the military and the Javanese adherents of a so-called integralist state). In 1998, only a few months after the fall of Suharto, when Muslim politicians had their greatest political influence, practically the whole 1948 declaration of the UN was given constitutional status, the only dissenting voices being the mentioned old time (Sukarnoist and Suhartoist) groups. It is noteworthy that the famous Cairo declaration of Human rights is essentially unknown in Indonesia, except for a few experts, and never played any role in the human rights discussion.

3. Freedom of Religion

The only human right which really presented difficulties was freedom of religion. The "constitution of 1945" contained indeed the right to freedom of religious belief and worship, although in a very short formulation. Two times later (1958 and 1968) it was tried to give this human right an explicit formulation on the lines of § 18 of the Declaration of the UN, but it did not receive the necessary 2/3 majority because of Muslim resistance. But after the fall of Suharto - when Islamic oriented politicians were in power – the formulation of religious freedom was considerably broadened and put into the “amended” Constitution.

In fact, there had been repeated, sometimes heated discussions going on, especially under Suharto. While Chris-

tians resolutely rejected pressure by the Government to accept a statement to the effect that missionary activity should not be directed towards people “already having a religion” (meaning belonging to the officially recognized religions), Muslims on the other hand accused Christians of misusing religious freedom for proselytism. Muslims repeatedly demanded a “Law on the Ethics of propagation of Religions”, which demands were always rejected by Christians fearing that such a law would be used to restrict freedom of conversion.

These positions still exist, but there has been significant progress, also because of patient dialogue and discourse among intellectuals. The big Christian Churches (but not some evangelical groups) accept that proselytism is a misuse of religious freedom, while even conservative Muslims would accept that if a person seriously, after deep consideration and not under any pressure, came to the conviction that God calls her into another religion, this should be accepted, although with pain in the heart (in fact, change of religion was never restricted in Indonesia). Thus, the central point of religious freedom is the freedom to convert, and this freedom will be acceptable if no proselytism is involved. In my opinion – which is, maybe not precisely in these words, agreed upon by the Indonesian Catholic Church – a person has a right not to be pestered in her religious convictions and habits. Thus, approaching people, even politely, and asking them

to consider another religion is, in my opinion ethically not acceptable. Mission should be done (and must be done, it belongs to the commands Jesus gave the Church) solely by becoming “witness to the Gospel”, thus by the Christian way of living, communicating, acting in society, doing their job. If then a person comes and wants to know “the reason of your hope” (1 Pe 3, 15), Christians can explain their faith and guide the person should she want it on the way to enter the Church thru baptism.

4. Pluralism

The sharpest controversy raged about pluralism. This is not at all astonishing since pluralism goes to the heart of the identity of the monotheistic religions. It was kindled by some Muslim adherents of pluralism whose position was influenced by (the Muslim thinkers) Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Frithjof Schuon, but also by the positions on pluralism of the like of Paul Knitter and John Hick (some of whose books have been translated into Indonesian).¹⁵ Their position could be summarized as the assertion that no religion should claim

¹⁵ See for instance Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books 1985; H. Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religion: The Rainbow of Faiths*, Westminster: L John, 1995; also: Paul F. Knitter/John Hick, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1987. To Raimundo Pannikar see *Intrareligious Dialogue*, New York, Paulist 1978. For an Islamic pluralism see: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1995 *The Need for a Sacred Science*, London: Routledge; Frithjof Schuon, *Transcendent Unity of Religions*, London, Theosophical Publishing House, 1984.

exclusive truth for itself, that all religions were similarly true since they all were valid expressions of the transcendent religiosity of humans. This “pluralism” is often opposed to “exclusivism” (we have exclusively the whole truth and only who shares our belief can go to heaven) and “inclusivism” (we have the full truth but adherents of other beliefs will also be saved; the less rigid inclusive position – as is held by the Catholic Church – claims the full truth for itself but acknowledges elements of truth in other religions).

In 2005 the semi-official *Majlis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) issued several fatwas against modernistic tendencies within Islam, one of them condemning pluralism. After harsh criticism from many Muslim intellectuals MUI explained themselves. They did not refer to other religions in Indonesia – against their existence MUI had nothing – but against teachings (by Muslims) that all religions were the same and adherents of all religions could go to heaven. Now the word “pluralism” is usually reserved – as it should – for a social attitude, namely the cheerful acceptance of the fact that among us live people of different faiths, acknowledgment of this fact, together with respect towards these others, readiness to work together with them for the benefit of society; we even might, then, be able to learn something for our own faith from others. There is a broad consensus in Indonesia that such pluralism is essential for the existence of Indonesia (the most plural country of the world). Nevertheless, the

fatwa of MUI gave the word pluralism a bad after taste for normal Muslims which is quite regrettable.¹⁶

5. Religiously motivated violence

Indonesia has had her full share of religiously motivated violence. Now the controversy around Achmadiyah has again brought violence on religious grounds into focus. There is a growing consensus among Indonesian intellectuals that violence on religious ground can under no circumstances be justified and should be rejected on principle. Of course, this is only one instance of the ethical principle that conflicts may not be solved by force or violence. In Indonesia, with her background of immense violence during her more than 60 years of history, this consciousness is growing. But it must be repeated and again, because society - this is a cultural trait - tends to resort to violence when a certain span of tolerance for diversity is felt to be exceeded. Their dialogue on all social levels and in the appropriate form will slowly lead to change, thus to greater tolerance. In Indonesian language

¹⁶ The real problem now under hard and controversy discussion has arisen from the case of Achmadiyah (and other local Islamic sects). Achmadiyah lived since 1928 peacefully in Indonesia, but in 2005 their premises were attacked by mobs incited and lead by vigilante groups of *Fron Pembela Islam* (FBI, "Islamic Defense Front"), their mosques and sometimes also personal property were destroyed and, in some places, they had to leave their villages and now live in camps. Police did only protect the Achmadis against direct bodily violence, the state remaining silent. While progressive, liberal Muslim groups immediately strongly condemned the attacks, moderate mainstream Muslims (which would have spoken out against attacks on Christians) remained mostly silent

- understood by all - we must remind ourselves unceasingly to behave always in a civilized way.

GLOBAL INFLUENCES

While Indonesian people, including religious communities, are firmly rooted in their culture, globalization's impact is felt on every level and in every dimension. Of course, "Indonesian culture" is itself the product of ongoing an ongoing hybridization, of indigenous, original cultures, new cultural streams from the outside, a development of indigenous cultures - up till today. Indonesians are still fully Indonesian, Javanese are Javanese, Minangs are Minangs, but they differ from Indonesians, Javanese, Minangs 100 years ago.

On the one hand, modern economics, technology, political structures, ideals and values have made a deep impact. On the other hand, ideologies from the outside have led to sharp confrontations and bloodshed because their most extreme wings transgressed the capacity of tolerance of the people. Specifically what regards religion, both influence of the new evangelicalism on parts of the Indonesian Protestant community, and the growing intensity of Islamic self-awareness - induced by the Iranian Islamic revolution, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and especially the question of Palestine - make themselves felt. But it seems that Indonesian culture is standing up. Up to now the inroads of radicalized religious ideologies are quite moderate and not only

liberal, but mainstream Muslim (and Christian) groups are standing up against them.

Thus, there is well based hope that Indonesian democracy, with its commitment to human rights, religious liberty will last. Indonesia moves in the direction of a *Rechtsstaat*, a state under the rule of law, and for this, of an enlightened law.

