



## Mission Studies in Nusantara: A Testimony of Local Philosophy Approach on Bali Island

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### Abstract

*Archipelagic communities in Indonesia, today are pluralistic societies, and almost all citizens embrace religion because according to the first value of Pancasila, the Indonesian people are people who recognize the existence of God. In the community, there are intersections even the adoption of philosophy and theology simultaneously, which is manifested in daily worship practices. The philosophy that lives in the land of Nusantara (archipelago) is certainly part of eastern philosophy, and both western and eastern philosophies, there are have same philosophical view about humans and God. This research is qualitative, using case studies, in the form of steps (1) determining the symptoms being examined, (2) finding unit of analysis, (3) determining research questions, (4) gathering information or data, (5) linking criteria to interpret the findings obtained, (6) determine criteria for interpreting findings, (7) link findings. The findings of the study, that as part of a diverse Nusantara society, the community of believers needs an approach to carry out a mission in pluralism. Understanding of local philosophy in the context of theology and philosophy meeting issues. Likewise the fellowship of believers on the island of Bali, an island that has long been known for its culture of society, local wisdom and natural beauty. People in Bali, who are not Christians, when they receive an understandable understanding, are ready to receive salvation and live as disciples of God.*

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### Introduction

Being part of a pluralistic nation is a gift. As a church and community of believers, God's mandate through missionary work must be done, because the mission is part of the nature of the existence of the church. Preaching the word of God and witnessing to the world is very important for every Christian. At the same time, it is necessary to do so following the principles of the gospel, which are done with respect and love for all humans.

Nusantara, or the Archipelago society in Indonesia, today is a pluralistic society, and almost all of its citizens embrace religion, following the first value of the Pancasila, the

Indonesian people are the people who acknowledge the existence of God. Indonesian people cannot be separated from their religion and culture, so if we talk about the relationship between theology and culture is a relationship of values. Among the cultures that live in the Nusantara society there are intersections and even adopted from philosophy and theology simultaneously which are manifested in daily worship practices.

We call it philosophy too, and because of the geographical position of the Nusantara in the eastern part of the earth, it is not wrong, if we call it a philosophy that lives in Nusantara is part of eastern philosophy. Since the 'discovery' of eastern philosophy by western explorers and scholars in the 18th and 19th centuries CE, there has been an arbitrary division maintained, especially in colleges and universities, between 'western philosophy' and 'eastern philosophy' as though these two systems present radically different views of the world. There is no division between eastern or western philosophy when it comes to the most basic questions of what it means to be a human being. The fundamental purpose of philosophy is to find meaning in one's life and purpose to one's path, and there is no major difference between eastern and western philosophy according to that understanding.<sup>1</sup>

Where the function of theology is to foster a human personality to be more creative and productive to know God and be able to create culture. Asyarie, Musa, et al <sup>2</sup> explained that culture has a large function for humans and society, various kinds of forces must be faced such as the forces of nature and other forces. Besides that humans and society need satisfaction both spiritually and materially. Humans are cultured beings, through human reasoning can develop culture. Similarly, humans live and depend on culture as a result of their creation.

The fellowship of believers in the Nusantara is required to witness their faith in Christ, both through words and deeds, through ways that have an impact following the needs of the community<sup>3</sup>

## Methods

This research is qualitative, more details this research is case study research, and according to Andreas Subagyo, case study research is researchers investigate something that exists or symptoms (cases), which are bound by time and activities (events, processes,

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Mark. *Similarities between Eastern & Western Philosophy*. (Internet, 17 January 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Asy'arie, Musa. *Agama, Kebudayaan dan Pembangunan* (Yogyakarta, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Suryosumunar PW. *Headquarters of the Communion of Churches and Evangelical Institutions of Indonesia*. (Jakarta: PGLII Handnote, 2018).

programs, institutions, groups) by exposing cases descriptively, analyzing the case, and give interpretations to it.<sup>4</sup>

According to Stake Denzin and Lincoln as quoted by Andreas Subagyo, the steps in conducting a qualitative case study are, (1) determining the symptoms being examined, (2) finding the unit of analysis, (3) determining research questions, (4) collecting information or data, (5) linking the criteria for interpreting the findings obtained, (6) determining the criteria for interpreting the findings, (7) linking the findings.<sup>5</sup>

## Philosophy

The word "philosophy" comes from Greek, *Philosophia*: *Philein* means love, *Philos*, lovers, and *Sophia* is wisdom. So philosophy means "love of wisdom". Love means desire flaming or earnest. Wisdom means true truth. Philosophy means desire or desire for true truth. Thus philosophical meaning at first. Philosophy, "Science of nature". This is where we understand the fundamental differences between "philosophy" and "science (special)" or "science".

Science limits its territory as far as nature can be experienced, can be sensed, or empirical. Science faces the problem with the question "how" and "why". Philosophy includes questions about meaning, truth, and logical relationship between basic ideas (beliefs, assumptions, and concepts) that cannot be solved by empirical science. Philosophy: Inquiry into the nature of things based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods<sup>6</sup> (Philosophy looks at the "what is", "from where" and "Where".

People do not seek knowledge of cause and effect from a problem, as investigated by science, but people find out about what's actually on the item or the problem, from where it happened and where it went. So, if philosophers asked, "Why does A belief in God", they will not answer, "Because people has been conditioned by the education at school for belief in God, "or" Because people happens to be anxious, and the idea of a father figure makes him comfortable." In this case, philosophers do not deal with causes, but with basics that support or deny opinions about the existence of God. The task of philosophy according to Socrates (470-399 S.M.) is not to answer questions that arise in life, but rather question the answers given.

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<sup>4</sup> Andreas Subagyo, *Pengantar Riset Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif, Termasuk Riset Teologi dan Keagamaan* (Bandung: Kalam Hidup, 2004). 115.

<sup>5</sup> Andreas Subagyo, *Pengantar Riset Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif, Termasuk Riset Teologi dan Keagamaan* (Bandung: Kalam Hidup, 2004) 117.

<sup>6</sup> The Grolier., *The Grolier International Dictionary*, (Danbury: Grolier Incorporated, 1992).

## Theology

The origin of the word Theology (Greek: "*Theos*": God and "*Logos*": Science, reason, words, and reasoning. So theology is science learn about the person and work of God to the universe, including humans, nature, etc., as stated Bible. The term theology itself implies a science about God. the word "logi" indicates the reason, thought which has its system, where each system contains methodology in which there are scientific assumptions themselves.

In the late Scholastic era of philosophy declared as Queen of science whereas previously theology was said to be the queen of science, because the scope of knowledge based on the Bible covers all in this world (general revelation and special revelation). Theology trying to reflect on the human life around it based on revelation and centered on the work and person of Christ save. In general the relationship of philosophy with theology very close, Philosophy is a reflection framework for theology, this matter possible because both of them are integral sciences.

## Mission

The term Mission comes from the Latin "*missio*" which is built from the basic word "*mittere*" related to the word "*missum*", which means "to send", "act of sending", being sent or delegated by authority/person sent. The equivalent of this word in Greek is "*apostello*".

The word "*apostello*" does not mean sending/sending (*pempo*) in general. This term means more to send with authority. In English, a "mission" is explained as "the action of sending"<sup>7</sup> From the meaning of the word "mission" then the word "*Missio Dei*" appears which means theologically used to interpret the will of God<sup>8</sup>. God's mission and will are to save fallen humans.

Furthermore, another term used to describe the word mission is "*apostolate*" which emphasizes the "*apostolic martyria*" (witness) with the task "*didakhe*" (teaching), and "*kerygma*" (preaching) about Jesus Christ. In this connection, Dr. Donald A. Mc. Cavran quoted by Tomatala in his book, interpreting "mission" as the God program for human, which emphasizes all theological aspects of the mission<sup>9</sup>.

Regarding "missions", Tomatala quotes Dr. Charles van Engen's explanation which emphasizes the praxis aspects and values of the mission.<sup>10</sup> Thus, based on the description above,

<sup>7</sup> Clerent L. Barnhart, Robert K. Barnhart, *the World Book Dictionary, Vol. 2*, (Illionois: Doudleday & Company, inc, 1978), 1330.

<sup>8</sup> Arie de Kuiper, *Kekristenan dan Nasionalisme*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia.1996)

<sup>9</sup> Donald A.McGavran, (in) Yakob Tomatala, *Teologi Misi* (Jakarta: YT Leadership Foundation) page. 18.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

it can be concluded that mission is the mission of God while missions are the duty of God's mission, which is entrusted by God to His people.

Yakob Tomatala explains the definition of the mission by saying. "*The important pressure of God's mission is to talk about God as a sender, where he is the source, initiator, dynamist, executor, and fulfillment of his mission. As a source of the mission, the foundation of God's eternal plan departs from the heart of God, and God himself has the initiative to carry out His mission, supported by His dynamics (power) to carry out and respond to that mission*".<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, At first the Protestants did not use the word "mission" for preaching the gospel (outside of Europe). This word was used by the Roman Catholic Church in its missionary mission to other countries, while the Protestants used the word *Zending*.<sup>12</sup> But the word "mission" was later accepted and used by Protestants because the meaning of the word which is in the Bible, describes the essence of "*Missio Dei*". Kuiper briefly said that the mission was "the message of the gospel"<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, on the other hand, Wagner emphasized that the mission included *the mandate of evangelism and cultural mandates*<sup>14</sup>.

If we seen etymologically, as explained above, the mission comes from the Latin word: mission, and the Greek from the basic word Evangelion, or also commonly called the gospel which means the Good News. Then from the word Evangelion the verb appears, namely, *evanglizo* which means to preach the Good News or the Gospel.

## Discussion and Result

### Mission means witnessing

As a mission of God, we must have faith and believed, that Bible is divine revelation, so some of the reason and biblical verses to do the mission are:

1. For Christians in Nusantara, it is a privilege and joy to give expression to the hope that is in them and do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).
2. Jesus Christ is the highest witness (John 18:37). A Christian witness always shares in his testimony, which takes part in the proclamation of the kingdom, serves others and gives himself fully even if his actions bring him to the cross. Just as the Father sent the Holy Son into the power of the Holy Spirit, believers are sent on a mission to witness in the words and deeds of the love of the Triune God.

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<sup>11</sup> Yakob Tomatala, *Teologi Misi*, (Jakarta: YT Leadership Foundation) page. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Arie de Kuiper, *Kekristenan dan Nasionalisme*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1996), page. 18

<sup>13</sup> Arie de Kuiper, *Missiologia*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1998), page. 11

<sup>14</sup> Wagner C. Peter, *Church Growth*, (State of the Art, Tyndale House Publisher, Wheaton. 1989) page. 58

3. The example and teaching of Jesus Christ and the early church must be a guide to the Christian mission. For two thousand years, Christians sought to follow the path of Christ by sharing the good news about the kingdom of God (John 4: 16-20).
4. being a witness to Christianity in a pluralistic world means being involved in dialogue with people of various religions and cultures (Acts 17: 22-28).
5. In some contexts, living and proclaiming the gospel is very difficult, experiencing obstacles or even prohibited, but Christians are assigned by Christ to continue to be faithful in solidarity with one another in their testimony to Him (Matthew 28: 19-20; Mark 16: 14-18; Luke 24: 44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1: 8).
6. If Christians use improper methods to carry out missions by resorting to deception and coercion, they betray the gospel and can cause suffering to others. Like leaving the call for repentance and reminding us of the continuing need for God's grace (Romans 3:23).
7. Christians believe that although it is their responsibility to testify of Christ, repentance is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 7-9; Acts 10: 44-47). They realize that the Spirit works where the Spirit wants in ways that humans do not have (John 3: 8).

### **Principles of Mission in Nusantara**

Moreover, Christians are called to obey the following principles as they strive to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ in an appropriate manner, especially in the interfaith context. Nusantara, must be seen as a mission field, that missed by God.

1. Acting in God's love. Christians believe that God is the source of love and, therefore, in their testimonies they are called to live life in love and to love your neighbor as themselves (Matthew 22: 34-40; John 14:15).
2. Exemplary Jesus Christ. In all aspects of life, and especially in their testimonies, Christians are called to follow the example and teaching of Jesus Christ, share His love, give glory and respect to God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20: 21-23).
3. The virtues of Christians. Christians are called to have behaviors that have integrity, caring, compassion and humility, and to overcome all arrogance, pride, and humiliation (Galatians 5:22).
4. Service and justice actions. Christians are called to act justly and to love meekness (Micah 6: 8). They are then called to serve others and thus can know Christ at least from their sisters and brothers (Matthew 25:45). Services, such as providing education, health care, assistance services, and justice and advocacy are integral parts of the gospel witness. The exploitation of situations of poverty and necessity has no place in Christian outreach.

Christians must avoid and refrain from all forms of attractive offers, including income and rewards, in their service.

5. Attention in recovery services. As an integral part of their testimony of the gospel, Christians carry out the ministry of restoration. They are called to understand that when they carry out this service, they must respect human dignity fully and ensure that one's weaknesses and their needs for recovery are not exploited.
6. Refusing violence. Christians are called to reject all forms of violence, even psychologically or socially, including abuse of authority in their testimonies. They also reject violence, discrimination or unjust oppression by religious or secular authorities, including the violation or destruction of places of worship, symbols or sacred expressions.
7. Freedom of religion and belief. Freedom of religion includes the right to openly express, practice, disseminate and change one's religion which flows from human dignity based on the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Thus, all humans have the same rights and responsibilities. When any religion is used as a tool for political purposes, or if there is religious persecution, Christians are called to be involved in a prophetic witness to denounce these deeds.
8. Mutual respect and solidarity. Christians are called to be committed to working with all people with mutual respect, promoting justice, peace and the common good. Interfaith cooperation is an important dimension of such commitment.
9. Respecting everyone. Christians realize that gospel opposes and enriches culture. Even when the gospel opposes certain aspects of culture, Christians are called to respect all people. Christians are also called to distinguish elements in their own culture which are opposed by the gospel.
10. Refuse false witnesses. Christians must speak sincerely and respectfully; they must listen to learn and understand the beliefs and practices of others, and be encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate what is right and good in it. Every comment or critical approach must be carried out in a spirit of mutual respect, making sure not to give false testimony about other religions.
11. Ensure personal recognition. Christians must recognize that changing one's religion is a decisive step that must be accompanied by sufficient time to get adequate reflection and preparation, through a process that ensures complete personal freedom.
12. Build interfaith relations. Christians must continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of various religions so that they can facilitate mutual understanding, reconciliation, and deeper cooperation for the common good.

### Application Concept

Refer to the report that compiled by Suryosumunar, concerning the Third Consultation organized by the World Church Council and the Holy See, also collaboration with the World Evangelical Alliance and participation of the largest Christian faith family (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecost) especially those working in cross-religious contexts, recommending that:

1. Study the issues that occur in the community and if possible, formulate guidelines for behavior regarding Christian witnesses by their specific context. This should be done ecumenically, and in consultation with representatives of other religions.
2. Building a relationship or respect and trust with people of all religions, especially at the institutional level between the church and other religious communities, engaging in ongoing interfaith dialogue as part of their Christian commitment. In certain contexts, where years of tension and conflict have created suspicion and deep violations of trust between and between communities, interfaith dialogue can provide new opportunities to resolve conflicts, restore justice, recuperate memories, reconcile and build peace.
3. Encourage Christians to strengthen their own religious identities and beliefs while deepening their knowledge and understanding of different religions, and to do so also consider the perspectives of the adherents of these religions. Christians must avoid misinterpreting the beliefs and practices of people of different religions.
4. Work with other religious communities involved in interfaith advocacy towards common justice and goodness and, where possible, stand together in solidarity with people in conflict situations.
5. Asking the government to ensure that religious freedom is respected correctly and comprehensively, recognizing that in many countries, religious institutions and people are inhibited from carrying out their mission.
6. Pray for their neighbors and their welfare, realizing that prayer is an integral part of ourselves and what we do, and the mission of Christ.

### Applied Mission and Testimony in the Bali Island

Quoting Abdul Munir Mulkhan's<sup>15</sup> opinion, local wisdom or local genius is the representation and expression of common people's long experience in managing and overcoming various life problems that are lived every day or even a long day. This local wisdom covers all

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<sup>15</sup> Abdul Munir Mulkhan. *Sosiologi Filsafat; Pendekatan dan Strategi Pembelajaran, Makalah Kuliah Perdana Fakultas Filsafat UGM*, (Yogyakarta 29 Agustus 2005)

aspects of life from economic, social, political, health to a deity. We can learn about local intelligence from humans living in that place. That is how the great philosophers were born with philosophical works such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Derrida, Ibn Rusd, Al-Ghazali to Habermas and Foucault. Some of those who did write their own great works, others are the results of other people's observations.

The one nature of God gave a thousand interpretations, his teachings gave a plurality of rituals with visible outer skin as opposed to. But, not all religions proclaim live heavenly and invite all human inhabitants of the earth God entered it and peacefully survived to end? It is also actually what God wants from all religions.

On the other side, the island of Bali is a world-famous island, not only a tourist destination but has a cultural heritage from past time. In the majority, the religion embraced by its people is Balinese Hinduism, with traditional and customary obligations that only exist in Bali.

Responding to this, Nyoman Enos<sup>16</sup> cites Chris Wilson's opinion, that we must pay attention in the Mission, in which there is the proclamation of the good news connected with local philosophy approaches:

1. Avoid debates, 2. Have a strong and stable faith, 3. Full of the Holy Spirit, 4. Give the right answer.

So, in the mission on Bali Island, it is necessary to summarize the form of an evangelistic approach that has been practiced in the context of Balinese Hinduism. These approaches are arranged as follows:

1. *Argumentative Positive Aggressive Approach*

The concept of God that Polytheism can talk about with Hindus without much tension by using the Bible view of Genesis chapter 1 is the Theology of Creation. There is one person of God who created this Five *Butha* (wind, fire, earth, water, space). The God creator of the universe was named the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1: 1-4)

2. *Indirect attacks Approach*

An approach that offers the power of Supernatural that can conquer the power of black magic called "leak" in Bali. God gives this power to everyone who receives Him (John 1:12, Mk 16: 15-18)

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<sup>16</sup> Enos, Nyoman. *Evangelism Approach in Bali*, (Bali: Ministry of Religion of Bali Province seminar, 2014), 67.

3. *Active Comparative Approach*

An approach that gives a comparison of the sacrifices of Christ's blood on the cross with blood sacrifices modeled on the Balinese Hindu religion. The superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus' blood is presented in Hebrews 9: 11-15

4. *Persuasive approach*

The point is that Christians are present in their midst community by establishing orphanages or Christian kindergartens or other business ventures that have an impact on improving their welfare

5. *Approach with the Love of Christ*

This approach is called the benevolent Samaritan approach of giving help when in pain

6. *Approach with dialogue*

That is, we ask them to explain their faith and the superiority of their superiority, then we also explain our Christian faith and its superiorities. Next, let them make a decision

7. *Approach to the relevant mindset*

Food and beverage needs are for beings who wear physical bodies, while spiritual beings do not need anymore

8. *Contextualization approach to Christian values.*

This approach is to give a new meaning of local values according to the values of Christianity, for example:

- a. The fruit of the Spirit which consists of 9 divine traits can be called *Padma Buana* (World Flowers). *Padma Buana* is a lotus flower consisting of 9 flowers which is a favored offering by the gods
- b. The cross of Christ can be equated with the value of "*Tapak Dara*" which is the footprint of a dove's foot. The dove's footprint is also in the form of a cross believed to be able to protect danger
- c. The Bible is the Christian Scripture which can be called "*Suaran Wong Pejah*" (The voice of the dead, who has risen again). The Bible is the Word of God that died and rose again

9. *The similar concepts approach*

Hindus believe that there are three gods in power on this earth who must be worshiped by each person namely the god Brahma as the creator, Lord Vishnu as the keeper and Lord Shiva as the restorer. We can provide a single concept in Christianity, namely God the Father: the source of Peace and Grace, God the Son: The Source of All Grace and God the Holy Spirit: The Source of Comfort

#### 10. Value transformation approaches

Newer divine values are offered to replace old, obsolete and burdensome values. Christianity offers transformation values for everyone who believes in Christ.

- a. A new heart has a sincere conscience
- b. The approach to forming a bright future or eschatology
- c. Eternal Preserver
- d. Respect for ancestors
- e. *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy, relation to God, human and environment
- f. *Rwa Bhineda*: honest, loyal, love
- g. Living offering
- h. Manunggal: Unity, Oneness
- i. Family network
- j. Biblical value approach

### Conclusion

As part of a pluralistic Indonesian society, a community of believers requires an approach to carrying out a mission amid pluralism. Understanding of local philosophy in context meeting theology and philosophy. Likewise the fellowship of believers on the island of Bali, an island that has long been known for its culture of society, local wisdom and its natural beauty.

People in Bali, who are not Christian believers, (the majority are a member of one of the largest religious groups in the world), Balinese people ready to hear the guarantee of salvation from the Lord Jesus the Savior of the world. They have been worshiping God for a long time and have done good deeds, but there are still many members of the community who remain nervous and shrouded in mystery that is not answered with certainty.

Through the brief and limited description above, it is hoped that it can increase understanding of the mission, indeed, in the end, it aims to proclaim salvation in the person of Jesus. Approaches that are derived from the practical experience of God's servants serving on the island of Bali can be developed into a foundation and share lessons both in the theology student's mission lessons everywhere.

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