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FAITH FORMATION IN PLURALISTIC INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Faith formation is an integral part of evangelization, since it provides the foundation for a Christian's faith. The mission of the Church is to build the Kingdom of God in our society, and relevant faith formation supports and helps in the realization of this mission. Indonesia is marked by a diversity of religions, faiths and cultures, as well as mass poverty. For this reason, the church needs to develop a variety of faith formation strategies suitable for such a pluralistic situation. Faith formation should be ecumenical, dialogical and inculturated. It should be social, through cultivating an attitude of solidarity towards the poor, and it should also be responsive to ecological problems. In following these ways, faith formation can have the transformative power to realize the Kingdom of God anywhere in society.

Introduction

The Church needs to pay attention to faith formation, because it is so important in providing the foundation for faith. In this study, I explore the dynamics of faith formation in the pluralistic society of Indonesia. Before explaining faith formation in the Indonesian context, I clarify the meaning and importance of faith formation through the lens of the documents of the Catholic Church. I provide background on the situation in Indonesia and explore the views of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, before finally proposing some models of faith formation for Indonesia.

Faith Formation

Faith formation in the Catholic Church is known as "catechesis," which is derived from the Greek word κατήχησις, meaning "instruction by word of mouth." The word was later used by Christians as a special term in the field of evangelization. In Scripture, catechesis is understood as teaching, deepening and educating in faith so that people will become more mature in their faith (see Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; Acts 21:21; Rom. 2:18; 1 Cor. 14:19; and Gal. 6:6). All the efforts of proclaiming the Gospel and Church teaching are called catechesis (Rukiyanto 2012, 59).

In his 1979 Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, Pope John Paul II defines catechesis as "an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life" (John Paul II 1979, 18).

Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Catholic Church has paid more attention to faith formation (Rukiyanto 2012, 57-58) and has produced several documents on the subject.

First is the *General Catechetical Directory,* prepared by the Congregation for the Clergy, approved by Pope Paul VI on March 18, 1971, and promulgated on April 11, 1971 (Congregation for the Clergy 1971). This document is the response of Paul VI to the mandate of the Second Vatican Council in *Christus Dominus* (the Decree on the Bishops) to develop practical guidelines for faith formation, in terms of both the content and the method used when witnessing to the Catholic faith.

Then, in 1975, Pope Paul VI promulgated the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which is a *magna carta* for evangelization. Regarding faith formation, Paul VI notes that through "catechetical instruction" people learn "the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history. No one will deny that this instruction must be given to form patterns of Christian living and not to remain only notional" (Paul VI 1975, 44).

In 1979, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae,* in which he develops Paul VI's teaching on faith formation, acknowledging faith formation as a "stage" of evangelization. The aim of faith formation is "the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know His 'mystery,' the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him" (John Paul II 1979, 20).

One important contribution of *Catechesi Tradendae* is its recommendation that faith formation be joined with the Church's work for ecumenical unity. The document urges that faith formation give "a correct and fair presentation of the other churches and ecclesial communities that the Spirit of Christ does not refrain from using as means of salvation" (John Paul II 1979, 32). More significantly, it suggests that in situations of religious plurality, it is necessary to have certain @ rt5texperiences of collaboration in the field of faith formation between Catholics and other Christians, complementing the normal faith formation that must in any case be given to Catholics (John Paul II 1979, 33).

In 1985, the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops called for the issuing of a general catechism. In response to this call, Pope John Paul II published the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992. It is the lasting legacy of his pontificate that John Paul II urges the Church's pastors and the Christian faithful to "receive this catechism assiduously in fulfilling their mission of proclaiming the faith and calling people to the Gospel life" (Catholic Church 1993).

To revise the *General Catechetical Directory,* the Congregation for the Clergy issued the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) on August 15, 1997, as a guide and means for the Church to fulfill the basic responsibility of teaching the faith. GDC is intended for the bishops, the Conference of Bishops, and all those involved in the work of faith formation. The *General Directory* is also useful for priests and catechists (Congregation for the Clergy 1998, 11). The instructions within provide directions on how to teach the faith and how to understand the truth and virtues as matters of teaching the faith. Finally, the GDC can help prepare catechisms and catechetical instructions at the level of particular churches (Conference of Bishops).

The present Pope Francis also pays attention to faith formation. First of all, the Pope recognizes the importance of faith. *Lumen Fidei*—the "Light of Faith" is the first encyclical signed by Pope Francis in 2013. Pope Francis explains that this encyclical supplements Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's encyclicals on charity and hope (Francis 2013b, 7). Pope Francis adds "few contributions" to the "first draft" of the encyclical on faith, which was written by Benedict XVI (Francis 2013b, 7). Pope Francis issued *Lumen Fidei* during the Year of Faith (2013) in order to inform people of an urgent need to understand the value and importance of faith in today's world.

Faith has the characteristic of light, and is able to illuminate human existence and assist us in distinguishing good from evil. This is especially true in this modern age, in which belief is opposed to searching, and faith is regarded as an illusion impeding human freedom. In the Year of Faith,

fifty years after the Second Vatican Council, which was a "Council on faith," we need to broaden the horizons of faith, so that it might be confessed in unity and with integrity.

Faith in Jesus and love for others in Him gives us a new vision of the world. *Lumen Fidei* shows how faith should become the foundation of our societies, marriages and families. Faith also provides strength in suffering. Faith does not answer every question, but it provides a lamp to help us navigate through the darkness, in the presence of God who is personally with us in our suffering. Finally, faith is not a condition to be taken for granted, but rather is a gift from God, to be nurtured and reinforced (Francis 2013b, 6). Faith formation is thus very important as a means of nurturing and reinforcing faith.

The first teaching document, mainly authored by Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, is a reminder to Catholics about their task of mission. Pope Francis begins this 2013 apostolic exhortation with a challenge to all Christians, saying, "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come" (Francis 2013a).

Pope Francis criticizes the "spiritual worldliness" of his fellow Catholics, and emphasizes the need for reform in the Church. He invites people to engage in mission and embark on a journey of transformation and reform. He calls for renewal and a rethinking of the way every person and every institution lives their faith. Pope Francis sees the Christian life as based on knowing and experiencing God's love, mercy and salvation, offered to all through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Evangelization programs and faith formation must therefore be designed to help people return to that basic knowledge and experience and also help them to understand Church teaching in light of God revealing Himself as loving and merciful.

Pope Francis reminds us that the foundation of Christianity is the love of Christ. He writes, "Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you" (Francis 2013a, 164). In every program, every inspirational conference, in politics or in personal matters, we do what we do because Jesus Christ loves us, because he gave his life to save us. This is a reality that happens every day: Jesus is living at our side every day—made present mysteriously through the sacraments and made personal through our prayer (O'Shea 2015). There may be struggle, and there will be personal transformation in our lives, for Christ stands by us to enlighten, strengthen and free us. This is a call that we should live our faith out ourselves and give witness to others. Faith formation therefore consists of entering more deeply into the *kerygma*. The centrality of the *kerygma* is what we need today:

> It has to express God's saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical. All this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental (Francis 2013a, 165).

Pope Francis also pays attention to the moral component of faith formation, which "promotes growth in fidelity to the Gospel way of life…the attractiveness and the ideal of a life of wisdom, self-fulfillment and enrichment" (Francis 2013a, 168). The one who follows Christ needs to change his or her behavior. This is the motive for rejecting the evils and sins that endanger our life with Christ, as the Gospel of John says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15) (O'Shea 2015).

Pope Francis affirms that in proclaiming Christ, we are not only concerned with what is right and good, but also with the beautiful. He notes that "every expression of true beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus" (Francis 2013a, 167). Expressions of beauty are a means by which catechists can attract the attention of their students, by appealing to their senses with visual images, works of art, signs and symbols. Students who cannot be reached by words can often be touched by beautiful images or art works. Pope Francis therefore advises that a journey along the *via pulchritudinis* (the way of beauty) ought to be part of faith formation.

Finally, Pope Francis offers a methodology for faith formation, which he calls mystagogical renewal. "This basically has to do with two things: a progressive experience of formation involving the entire community, and a renewed appreciation of the liturgical signs of Christian initiation" (Francis 2013a, 166). Mystagogical renewal aims to emphasize the link between the Scriptures and the liturgy: to understand the Word of God, we need to appreciate and experience the essential meaning and value of the liturgy (O'Shea 2015).

In 2015. Pope Francis issued an encyclical on the environment, entitled *Laudato Si*, or more formally, "On Care for Our Common Home." *Laudato Si* means "Praise be to you" which is the first line of a canticle by St. Francis of Assisi that praises God with all of his creation. In this document, Pope Francis addresses his message, not only to the bishops of the Church or the lay faithful, as with other papal documents, but to all people: "In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home" (Francis 2015b, 3). The reason is clear—environmental challenges affect all people: "I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all" (Francis 2015b, 14).

In this document, Pope Francis calls all people to conversion, including those in the Church:

> The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion", whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience (Francis 2015b, 217).

Pope Francis sees that responsibility within creation and duty towards nature and the Creator, are essential aspects of the faith. Pope Francis recalls that from the beginning, "other Churches and Christian communities—and other religions as well—have also expressed deep concern and offered valuable reflections" on the theme of ecology (Francis 2015b, 7). This encyclical provides a foundation of faith and morals that can be brought into action to save the environment for the sake of humanity's future. Pope Francis reminds us to stop treating the earth as an inheritance that can be exploited for the sake of the moment, and instead bequeath the earth to the next generation. Pope Francis refers to the message of the Scriptures that we need to take care of the earth (Gn. 2:15). We are not only responsible for tending the earth for the sake of our own generation, but also maintaining it for the next generation. Faith formation thus also needs to address our responsibility within creation and our duty towards nature.

Pope Francis set the year 2016 as the Year of Mercy, by issuing the Bull *Misericordiae Vultus* (Francis. 2015a). Notwithstanding experiences of suffering such as the Shoah and Hiroshima; mass starvation while the rich want for nothing; and wars, terrorism and all manner of other horrors, Pope Francis nevertheless invites us to look to the "wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace" that is God's mercy, not just as individuals but as a Church.

In the Holy Year of 2016, Pope Francis invited us to open our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: those who live in uncertain and painful situations; those who are wounded; and those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich. Pope Francis called the Church to heal these wounds during the Jubilee, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. We were called to open our eyes and to see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and to recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help (The Divine Mercy 2015).

The Church is always called to make herself a servant of this love and mediate it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of self. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy. Mercy should be part of our existence as Christians. Pope Francis raised mercy up during the Holy year of 2016, in order to remind us of the centrality of mercy to the Gospel message of Jesus, and the need that it also be central to our lives as Christians (Reese 2015). This is how Pope Francis invites us to live out our faith according to the Gospel.

Faith formation is thus found in acts of mercy. Having explored the meaning of faith formation in the Catholic tradition in some depth, I now turn to the situation in Indonesia, the context where this faith formation is to take place.

The Situation in Indonesia

With a population of more than 260 million (2016 estimation), Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous nation after China, India and the United States. More than 63 percent of the population is concentrated on the islands of Java and Madura. Approximately 87 percent are Muslim, about 9 percent are Christian (6.42 percent Protestant and 2.58 percent Roman Catholic), while approximately 2 percent are Hindu, 1 percent Buddhist, and the final percent is made up of indigenous religions (Rukiyanto 2007a, 109-110).

It is important to note that in Indonesia, Islam has several distinct branches and sects. In this regard, it differs significantly from Arab nations in the Middle East. Based on demographic statistics, 99 percent of Indonesian Muslims mainly follow the Shafi'i school of Sunni jurisprudence, although when asked, 56 percent say they do not adhere to any specific denomination. There are around one million Shias (0.5 percent), concentrated around Jakarta, and about 400,000 Ahmadi Muslims (0.2 percent). The remaining 0.3 percent are adherents of other branches, including Wahhabism/Salafism. In general, Muslims in Indonesia can be categorized in terms of two orientations: "modernists," who closely adhere to orthodox theology while embracing modern learning (Muhamadiyah), and "traditionalists," who tend to follow the interpretations of local religious leaders and religious teachers at Islamic boarding schools (Nahdlatul Ulama) (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. s.v. "Islam in Indonesia.").

Claiming approximately forty million followers, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is the country's largest organization, and perhaps the world's largest Islamic group. Founded in 1926, NU has a nationwide presence. but remains strongest in rural Java. It follows the ideology of Ahle Sunnahwal Jamaah, with the Sufism of Imam Ghazali and Junaid Bagdadi. Many NU followers defer greatly to the views, interpretations, and instructions of senior NU religious figures, alternately called "Kyais" or "Ulama." The organization has long advocated religious moderation and communal harmony.

Muhammadiyah has branches throughout the country and approximately twenty-nine million followers. Founded in 1912, Muhammadiyah runs mosques, prayer houses, clinics, orphanages, poorhouses, schools, public libraries, and universities.

Indonesia thrives on its cultural diversity, which is systematically preserved through a policy of multiculturalism. This commitment to multiculturalism is expressed in Indonesia's national motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which means "Unity in Diversity." (Rukiyanto 2007a, 110)

The state ideology is known as *Pancasila* (pronounced as *Panchaseelah*) and includes five inseparable and mutually qualifying fundamental principles: belief in (1) one supreme God; (2) a just and civilized humanity; (3) the unity of Indonesia; (4) democracy through deliberation and consensus among representatives; and (5) social justice for all people of Indonesia. *Pancasila* is thus the foundation for social life.

Since 2001, a stable government has enabled GDP per capita growth to increase to $1300 in 2004/05 from just $650 in 1998. On an international scale, Indonesia remains a poor country, however. Much of the country's infrastructure is still inferior compared to the developed world and is in need of major improvement. The country also suffers from wide regional disparities, with great divergences in gross regional domestic product per person and in other welfare measures, such as health and education (Hadi Soesastro 1997, 7; Hill 1996, 214-216). Lacking political power, the poor are sometimes treated unjustly, such as in the relocation of urban squatters, or the eviction of tenant farmers from their land (Hill 1996, 198). The incidence of malnutrition, both mild and severe, is widespread, especially in poor rural communities and in some regions outside Java (Hill 1996, 200). In June 2005, all media in Indonesia (*Kompas*, June 9-10, 14-16, 2005; *The Jakarta Post*, June 20, 2005) reported the widespread incidence of cases of acute malnutrition in West Nusa Tenggara, east of Bali. As of May 31,487 children under five in the province were recorded as suffering from acute malnutrition, with 41 already dead. This breaking news was followed by news of similar cases in other provinces: Central Java, Lampung, Jakarta, South and West Sumatra, South Sulawesi, and Riau. In East Nusa Tenggara, of the 6,502 health centers in the province, only 40 percent are still functioning—60 percent have long been inactive. The still-active health centers in the wider Nusa Tenggara region recorded 66,833 children under five as suffering from malnutrition in various degrees. Including the probable 50-60 percent of children with no access to health centers, the number was estimated to be at least double that. Even in Jakarta, the Jakarta City Health Agency reports that 8,455 children under five are suffering from malnutrition. The hundreds of children suffering from chronic malnutrition in those provinces should be considered just the tip of the iceberg. There are many other children in remote rural areas or in urban slums in Indonesia who are likely to be ill with symptoms of malnutrition that go unreported, because their parents lack access to adequate treatment and prevention programs. Sri Palupi of the Jakarta-based Institute for Eco-social Rights, who has long documented malnutrition cases, noted that as early as 1988 there were 1.2 million children under four in Indonesia suffering from malnutrition. The utilization of health services is also low by international standards: Indonesia has only 0.6 hospital beds per 1,000 people (Hill 1996, 213).

The monetary and economic crisis that has plagued Indonesia since July 1997 has caused many more problems, not only economic, but also social, cultural, and political, including human rights abuses. Thus, since the fall of Soeharto, Indonesia has inherited a multi-dimensional crisis from thirty years of military dictatorship under Soeharto's government (Magnis-Suseno 2004, 41, 86-87, 97-102). Economically, the Indonesian currency of the *Rupiah* has lost 75 percent of its value. When it comes to politics, democracy in Indonesia remains fragile. The military is also still searching for its form in a democratic era. Military personnel continue involvement in criminal and human rights abuses, especially in Aceh and West Papua. Corruption remains widespread at all levels of society. There is no certainty in law. In big cities, violence and crime continue to increase.

The situation in Aceh is better now. After being hit by the December 2004 tsunami, there was a peace agreement between the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), mediated by former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on August 15, 2005. The peace has held in Aceh since December 2006. On February 8, 2007, Irwandi Yusuf, the former GAM leader, became the first governor of Aceh in the first direct election (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. s.v. "Aceh.").

The greatest challenge for Indonesia is communal conflicts, which happen everywhere— clashes between rival villages, clashes between ethnic groups, and clashes between religious groups (especially between Christians and Muslims)— known as SARA (*Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Antar-golongan*, ethnic groups, religions, race, and classes). During the religious conflicts in 1998, many churches were burned or closed (Tahalele 1998, 1). Since November of that year, many more houses, churches, mosques, and schools were burned during clashes between Christians and Muslims in Jakarta, Kupang, Ujungpandang, Poso, and Bekasi (*Asiaweek*, December 18, 1998). According to the Indonesian Christian Communication Forum (FKKI), under Soekarno's government there were only two churches destroyed, while during Soeharto's regime there were 456 churches destroyed or burned, and during the one year of Habibie's government, 153 churches were destroyed or burned. These tragedies continued under Presidents Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati.

The most tragic incident was the clash between Christians and Muslims in Ambon and other parts of the Maluku archipelago, where previously the people had lived peacefully for a long time, making the area a symbol of peace and harmony between the two religious groups. More than 700 people were reported killed during clashes during the holy season for both Christians (Christmas) and Muslims (Ramadhan) between the end of December 1999 and January 2000. It was the latest communal bloodshed in a conflict that rocked the Maluku for more than a year, killing more than 2,000 people. These incidents prompted Muslim protest movements in many parts of the country. In Mataram, the capital of the West Nusa Tenggara island of Lombok, this movement led to twelve churches being burned and vandalized, and many houses and shops looted and burned. Thousands of Christian residents fled their homes to seek refuge in Bali or at the local military and naval bases (*Kompas*, January 19, 2000; *The Jakarta Post*, January 23, 2000).

Terrorism is thus still a fatal threat in Indonesia. Almost every year since 2000 there have been bomb attacks: at eleven churches across the country on Christmas Eve (December 25, 2000); in Bali (October 12, 2002); in front of the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta (August 5, 2003); outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta (September 9, 2004); in Tentena, Central Sulawesi (May 28, 2005); in Bali again (October 1, 2005); suicide bombings in the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in Jakarta (July 17, 2009); a suicide bomb in the Full Gospel Bethel Church in Kepunton, Solo, Central Java (September 25, 2011); and bombs near a Starbucks cafe in central Jakarta (January 14, 2016). The attacks have been blamed on *Jemaah Islamiyah*, a regional *al Qaeda*-linked terror group (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. s.v. "List of Terrorist Incidents in Indonesia").

Related to this conflict is another most fundamental challenge to restoring the rule of law (Ricklefs 2001, 421). The police and legal institutions were corrupted during the Soekarno and Suharto years. Almost the entire legal system needs rebuilding. Corruption, military excesses, mob violence, vigilante law, communal conflict, and general insecurity of persons and property will not be alleviated without thorough-going reforms to restore the rule of law. The barriers to such change are great however, including tainted judges and police, and large amounts of money in the hands of corruptors.

Social and political conflicts sometimes have religious overtones and turn into bloody inter-religious violence (Ricklefs 2001, 415-420). Riots in Jakarta in November 1998 caused the destruction of a mosque, eleven churches, two Christian schools, vehicles and other property, and the burning of more than a dozen Christians (mainly Ambonese). From early 1999 there was major Christian–Muslim conflict in Ambon and surrounding areas. By March 1999, large-scale demonstrations in Jakarta were calling for a *jihad* (holy war) to defend the Muslims in Ambon against Christian attacks. One of Islam's more radical bodies, KISDI (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam* or the Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Islamic World), decreed in August 1999 that the conflict in Ambon was already a true holy war for Muslims. An organization called *Laskar Jihad* (Holy War Soldiers) sprang up in 2000 to implement that war.

Islamic radicalism emerged after the fall of Suharto, because of the government's failure to enforce the law and resolve social ills such as ethno-religious conflicts, increased crime, rampant corruption (including the police), widespread drug abuse, and the decline of central government authority. Many are new groups. Some observers assert that these groups have been sponsored, or at least helped by, certain circles of the Indonesian military. They are led by people of Arab, particularly Yemeni origin, such as Habib Rizq Shihab, leader of the FPI (Islamic Defense Group); Jafar Umar Thalib, leader of Laskar Jihad; Abu Bakar Baasir of the MMI (Indonesian Council of Jihad Fighters); and HabibHusen al-Habsyi, leader of the JAMI (Jamaah al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin Indonesia). These groups share a literal interpretation of Islam and claim that Muslims should embrace only *pure* Islam as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, or Salaf. They can thus be included among the Salafi activist movements that attack discotheques and brothels. They also take a militant view of *jihad* as holy war against perceived enemies of Islam, rather than the mainstream view of *jihad* as "exerting oneself to the utmost" in Muslim activities, with war as a last resort. The minority groups, like Ahmadis, Protestants, Catholics and Chinese, have become the target of the extremists or the fundamentalists.

Environmental Challenges

Another challenge for Indonesia is the frequent occurrence of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, flood and volcanic eruptions, which can happen at any time. This situation is worsening, because people are unable to protect the environment, which in turn can lead to human-induced disasters. As a consequence, Indonesia has become a land of tragedy. For example, in 2010, just after the tragedy of flooding in Wasior, West Papua, an earthquake-triggered tsunami hit Mentawai Islands, West Sumatra. While we were still shocked by those disasters, Mount Merapi in Yogyakarta erupted. Hundreds of people have been killed in these calamities. Natural disasters have become a great challenge for Indonesians. Environmentalists insist that the fatal flash floods were caused by environmental degradation in the area (*The Jakarta Post*, October 15, 2010).

In December 2014, floods in Indonesia's Aceh province in the northern tip of Sumatra Island displaced more than 120,966 people. The waters submerged land by up to 400 cm in the districts of North Aceh and East Aceh. The floods mainly affected the provincial capital of Banda Aceh, the districts of Aceh Tamiang, South Aceh, Pidie, and Lhoksemawe (Recent Natural Disasters 2014).

In June 2016, parts of Indonesia were plagued by successive earthquakes with a 6.5 magnitude earthquake shaking the region of West Sumatra and Bengkulu on June 2, 2016. Then on June 8, 2016, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit North Maluku and Manado. The third earthquake, with a magnitude of 6.0, occurred on June 9, 2016 in the Indian Ocean, crashing outside the subduction zone of south Lombok and with tremors felt in Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa and part of East Java. As a result of these calamities, dozens of houses were damaged and a number of people injured (Muhammad Ali 2016).

Natural catastrophes damage property and halt economic activity, which results in significant financial loss for the people. Furthermore, these series of natural disasters create burdens for the national budget in terms of financing post-disaster rehabilitation. On a macro scale, the increase in natural disasters in this country directly affects the number of people living in poverty. If deforestation is the cause, it is understandable that the government should be criticized for its incompetence in preventing deforestation through activities such as illegal logging. Yet when natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions occur, the government frequently reacts by arguing that there is nothing that can be done to prevent the disasters. This may not be completely inaccurate; nevertheless, there may well be a lack of preparedness in dealing with such crises before they occur.

What happened in Mentawai reveals a real lack of disaster management. The tsunami warning was canceled, ostensibly because there was no report of a potential tsunami in Mentawai Islands.

In fact, the problem was that tsunami early detection warning systems had not been established in Mentawai, one of the islands most vulnerable to tsunamis. Consequently, hundreds of people were killed by the high waves that swept villages. We need to question the government's commitment to providing disaster evacuation procedures and infrastructure (*The Jakarta Post*, November 2, 2010).

In light of the foregoing, the Indonesian Church needs to develop an open and multicultural faith formation program to educate young people in openness and inclusiveness towards diversity and pluralism. The church needs to develop a faith formation model that is based in such attitudes, as well as being rooted in faith. This kind of faith formation will help each Indonesian citizen develop the sort of openness and inclusiveness that can facilitate people living together in harmony and peace, and working together to build the Indonesian nation. Before explaining how such faith formation in Indonesia should be developed, I explore the view of faith formation found in documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents on Faith Formation

In this section I refer to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) because of their important role in the Asian Church. The Federation is a "voluntary association of episcopal conferences in South, Southeast, East and Central Asia…[aiming] to foster among its members solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of Church and society in Asia, and to promote and defend whatever is for the greater good" (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences 2004, art. 1A). At present, there are fourteen full member conferences: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos-Cambodia, Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam; and eleven associate members that are not full episcopal conferences: Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macau, Mongolia, Nepal, Siberia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and East Timor (Chia 2003, 155). As an association, the FABC is characterized by flexibility and dynamism (Quatra 2000, 10-11). Its decisions therefore do not assume a "juridical binding force," but their acceptance is an "expression of collegial responsibility" (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences 2004, art. 1B). The autonomy of each bishop is safeguarded and respected (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences 2004, art. 3). The first goal of the FABC is to develop and strengthen the sense of collegiality among the bishops for the benefit of both intra-ecclesial relationships in Asia and societal relationships at large. The Asian bishops have uniquely developed their collegiality as both *diffusive* and *open* (Quatra 2000, 11). It is *diffusive*, because it includes all the components of the people of God in making decisions (participatory style of intra-ecclesial) and goes beyond the borders of the continent, as stated in Final Reflections of the Seventh Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA VII) no. 21 (Rosales and Arevalo 1992, 233). It is also *open* to ecumenical and interreligious dimensions. Ecumenical efforts have been developing since 1987, when the FABC and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) organized the Sixth Bishops' Institute for Inter-Religious Affairs (BIRA IV/6) (Rosales and Arevalo 1992, 303-305). In 1993, the Asian Ecumenical Committee was created at a joint meeting of the FABC and CCA to coordinate ecumenical cooperation. This collegiality is always at the service of human development and justice.

The FABC and its statements have deeply influenced Catholicism in Asia, in terms of both theological reflection and praxis (Chia 2003, 162-163). The FABC's activities have motivated the Churches in Asia towards "a new way of being Church, a Church that is committed to becoming a community of communities and a credible sign of salvation and liberation" (Final Statement of the Sixth FABC Plenary Assembly, art. 3) (Eilers 1997, 3). The FABC statements have a compelling power for transforming the Church as well as Asian society. Their focus is mainly pastoral, not doctrinal, and deals with missionary themes and concerns (Putranta 1992, 268). These pronouncements help churches live out the message of the Gospel in Asian contexts and realities.

Their message and orientation undoubtedly have value and inspirational power, which comes from below, from experiences and learning processes, and is never imposed from above. Therefore, even though the FABC statements and decisions have no juridical binding force, over the years most episcopal conferences throughout Asia have affirmed FABC teachings and messages, and have put them into practice in their local churches. Bishop Oswald Gomis (Sri Lanka), who was elected secretary general of the FABC at the 2000 FABC VII Plenary Assembly, confirms that over thirty years the FABC has attempted to respond to "specific regional socio-pastoral and spiritual needs as Asian Church," and has made progress in helping local churches become rooted in their local cultures, by continuing to provide "the effective interpretation of Jesus' message and the Church's teaching in response to the problems and realities of Asia" (UCA News 2000).

For the Asian Church, the *missio Dei* is carried out in the form of dialogue: the dialogue of life lived together, of common action, of shared religious experience, and of theological exchange. This fourfold dialogue is performed in three areas: dialogue with Asian peoples, especially the poor (liberation); with Asian religions (interreligious dialogue); and with Asian cultures (inculturation) (Phan 2003, 10).

The FABC affirms that the primary task of evangelization in Asia is to build a truly local church, to make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of the people (Rosales and Arevalo 1992, 14). Its aim is to transform the churches *in* Asia into the churches *of* Asia. Inculturation is the way to achieve this goal of churches becoming local churches.

Inculturation is an integral and constitutive dimension of the Church's evangelizing mission (Phan 2003, 5-10). Inculturation is a double process comprising (a) the insertion of the Gospel into a particular culture, and (b) the introduction of that culture into the Gospel. The result of inculturation is both the transformation of the culture from within the Gospel, and the enrichment of the Gospel by the culture leading to new ways of understanding and living the Christian faith. The result is something new that goes beyond the current culture and the previous ways of understanding and living the Gospel.

Since the Gospel is always enfleshed in a particular culture, inculturation is *necessary* and must abide by the laws and dynamics of *intercultural dialogue*. The task of inculturation is therefore to discern the Gospel apart from the cultural forms in which it is clothed and to relate to or express it in new cultural forms. Since religion is a constitutive dimension of culture, inculturation necessarily involves *interreligious dialogue*. It must therefore deal with some theological issues, such as the universality and uniqueness of Christ as the savior; the status of non-Christian religions as ways of salvation; the inspired character of their sacred scriptures; and the salvific values of their rituals and religious practices. Inculturation must also include *liberation*, because often it is the culture of poor, colonized, and marginalized people that has been suppressed and needs to be retrieved and promoted.

The principal agent of inculturation is the local church, and not the experts and the central authorities. By *local church* I mean both the diocesan community and the parish community. To the extent that inculturation involves the whole people of God, it must be an expression of the community's life (Schineller 1990, 50-51). Furthermore, as noted by Pope John Paul II in his discourse to the bishops of Zaire on April 12, 1983, inculturation must be carried out in all areas of Church life: in language, in faith formation, in theological reflection, in prayer, in liturgy, in art, and in the institutions.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) affirms the societal realities affecting the catechetical ministry in Asia, on Scriptures, youth and adult catechesis (Cajilig 1996, 283). Christian faith formation therefore needs to be open to the situation of the particular society.

Each particular church in Asia needs to have its own local catechism. The history of catechisms written both in and for Asia is rich as well as varied. Those who have developed local catechisms are Francis Xavier, Roberto de Nobili, Alessandro Valignano, Michele Ruggieri, Matteo Ricci, and Alexandre de Rhodes. It is our task now to have local catechisms which are suited to the particular local situation today.

Models of Faith Formation in Indonesia

The Bishops of Asia affirm that the Church in Asia needs to enhance a triple dialogue: dialogue with other cultures, dialogue with other religions and beliefs, and dialogue with the poor. Dialogue is the way the Church evangelizes Asia. The goal of triple dialogue is the creation of harmony, justice, and peace in the society with emphasis on sister-brotherhood and solidarity with one another (Rukiyanto 2007b, 170-172).

The appeal by the Asian Bishops is also the call of the Indonesian Church, given the situation of Indonesian society, with its diversity of cultures, religions and beliefs, as well as its poverty. The Church is called to participate in solving those problems. The model of the Church which is to be developed is that of a community devoted to the Kingdom of God, with the church Called to bring the values of that Kingdom into society (Komisi Kateketik KWI 1997, 54-55).

In a Church that is Kingdom of God oriented, Jesus Christ becomes the obvious sign of the fullness of the Kingdom, as well as a good example of unity with and reliance on God. Sister-brotherhood and equality among members of the Church can be built. From this point it is expected the individual church will form a communion of communities open to all races, cultures, and beliefs. In a situation of openness, the Church is called to speak the truth in society and defend human values, which are often abused. The involvement of the Church in the problems in society is a manifestation of God's presence in the world. To realize this goal, we need the witness of life and professionalism in the ministry of the Church. The Church must always be open to the guidance of the Spirit, and also to dialogue and cooperation with all people of good will. Such communities are most likely to appear among the basic ecclesial communities (Komisi Kateketik 1997, 55-58).

At its annual meeting in 2011, the Indonesian Bishops Conference also paid attention to faith formation, with the meeting theme of "Proclaiming the Gospel is a grace and a distinctive call of the Church: it is her deepest identity" (Paul VI 1975, 14). In Indonesia, faith formation is implemented in two ways: the parish-based People's Catechesis (PC) and a national curriculum for teaching Catholic religion in schools. Here I will focus on the People's Catechesis or people's faith formation.

The PC, initiated by an inter-diocesan catechetical conference (Pertemuan Kateketik antar Keuskupan se-Indonesia I – PKKI I) in 1977 and developed by PKKI II in 1980, is the basis of all catechesis in Indonesia (Lalu 2007, 9-13). It is meant to be a sharing of faith experiences among people of the same level of faith, in an open situation marked by mutual respect. The people catechize one another and the catechist only guides the process. Geared to helping people grasp the meaning of day-to-day experiences in light of the Gospel, PC faith-sharing should deepen awareness of God's presence. Through the PC, people become more united in Christ, more active as community members, and more committed to carrying out the mission of the Church. They bear witness to Christ in their lives in the midst of society. Above all, the PC is based on the concept of Church as the People of God.

In 1988, PKKI IV evaluated ten years of PC implementation. The evaluation continued with PKKI V in 1992. The PKKI concluded that the PC was too "Church-centered" and lacked development of the social dimension of faith. A more concrete social analysis was added to the PC after 1992.

In order to build a Church that is oriented to the Kingdom of God, open to the guidance of the Spirit, committed to dialogue and cooperation with all people of good will, and realized in the basic ecclesial communities, people's faith formation is very important. Such formation has the transformative power to realize the Kingdom of God anywhere in society.

There are five models of faith formation that we can develop here:

1. Faith formation for maturing the faith
2. Social faith formation
3. Dialogical faith formation

4. Inculturated faith formation
5. Eco-feminist faith formation

I will explain these in turn:

Faith Formation for Maturing the Faith

Thomas Groome suggests the task of faith formation is communicating the faith, and forming and changing persons and Christian communities into disciples of Jesus for the realization of the Kingdom of God in this world (Groome 2002, 7). In faith formation, we educate people in the wisdom of the Christian faith by explaining the Scriptures, the tradition, the Creed, Christian morality and the liturgy. The process of faith formation challenges participants to be active and to think critically in seeking to understand the Christian faith, so that they might internalize and live it out. This process is important in order that participants do not fall into religious fundamentalism or any other narrow form of faith (Rukiyanto 2012, 76-77).

The *General Directory for Catechesis* lists six fundamental tasks of faith formation: (1) promotion of knowledge of the faith, (2) liturgical education, (3) moral formation, (4) instruction in prayer, (5) education for community life, and (6) missionary initiation (Congregation for the Clergy 1998, 85-86). It is important that participants are taught to have relationships with people from other churches (ecumenical dimension) and with other believers. There are therefore two major elements to faith formation, namely the internal tasks relating to the Church (tasks 1-5) and the external task relating to other people (task 6). In other words, the task of faith formation is to develop the Church through proclaiming Christ and educating people to have more faith and to be responsible for the mission of the Church (Telaumbanua 1999, 9-10).

Faith is not just one aspect of the Christian life, but is instead an essential element which provides the foundation to all dimensions of Christian life. Faith formation must therefore be formative, strengthening of Christian commitment, and must make people ready to live as disciples of Christ in the midst of their socio-cultural contexts (Groome 2002, 7-8). The GDC formulates this as an integral development in Christian life (Congregation for the Clergy 1998, 29-30). The process of becoming mature in faith is a process of continuous conversion over a lifetime (Congregation for the Clergy 1998, 56, 69). This conversion process directs people to grow personally in the way of life of Jesus, and socially by helping renew the Church and society and realize the Kingdom of God in this world. Since the conversion process takes place continuously over a lifetime, we also need continuous and ongoing faith formation (Congregation for the Clergy 1998, 51).

Social Faith Formation

Because of the poverty and suffering in Indonesia, it is important to make people aware of social issues (Rukiyanto 2012, 78-80). Fostering awareness and concern about social issues is a lengthy process. We need to train people to pay attention to, and show concern for, the problems of others—be it family, friends, or even society at large—right from childhood (Adisusanto 2005, 3-4). Children's faith formation programs and the religious education in schools have an important role in this effort to develop social awareness.

Jesus himself proclaims the Kingdom of God, not only through his teachings, but also through his actions, and his entire person. Jesus calls His followers to continue preaching the Kingdom of God (Matt. 28:19). This means that Jesus' followers in Indonesia also have the task of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to Indonesian people, so that the proclamation has meaning and touches people, especially the little ones, the poor and the marginalized (Adisusanto 2005, 5-7). The direction of faith formation in Indonesia is therefore to prepare people to witness to Christ in their lives and in society. In Denpasar, Bali (1988) PKKI IV affirmed the direction of faith formation as immersion in society.

To live the faith in our societal involvement, we need to apply a method of social analysis to faith formation, in order to create a more complete picture of that social situation through an

exploration of its historical relationships and structures (Holland and Henriot 1980). Through social analysis, people are encouraged to engage with social reality with all its problems. Oppression and impoverishment occur because they are created by a system or rules of a game controlled by powerful people. This system infiltrates all areas of life, especially politics and economics, both at micro and macro levels. Faith formation accompanies people in dealing with those social problems (Lalu 2007, 23-25).

Dialogical Faith Formation

Indonesian society consists of various faiths and religions, as well as different tribes and cultures. In most parts of Indonesia, Christians are in the minority. Harmony among religious believers has not been fully realized. Conflict between religions or ethnicities occurs periodically, even between Protestants and Catholics. Interreligious dialogue and ecumenical dialogue is absolutely necessary in this situation. Besides this issue, religious fundamentalism has emerged, and its proponents often use violence to enforce their ideologies. Several terrorist attacks and suicide bombings have occurred in various places in Indonesia.

In this context, faith formation should build a spirit of dialogue in society. People need to be invited to leave their exclusive attitudes and foster the spirit of dialogue (Rukiyanto 2012, 80-81). We need adequate knowledge about the basic teachings of other religions and faiths so that ecumenical and interreligious dialogue can take place. Once this happens, it can be expected that more and more people will work together with people of other religions and faiths to build environments of sister-brotherhood, and hence a better society (Hardawiryana 1995, 118-119).

Through dialogical faith formation, people are trained in awareness that we are all children of the same God. God is the Father of all people. That is the essence of the Lord's Prayer. Dialogical faith formation can help people become more aware of God's universal plan of salvation (Paul VI 1964, 16). Our God embraces all people, regardless of their religion, faith or ethnicity. Through dialogical faith formation, people accept the reality of religious pluralism and coexistence with people from a variety of religious backgrounds and beliefs.

Inculturated faith formation

Indonesia is made up of various cultures and ethnic groups. The Church needs to promote inculturation of the Christian faith in order that it become rooted in the cultures of the region. In this context, inculturated faith formation can encourage people to appreciate the traditions and cultures of the region. Inculturated faith formation can help people explore the noble values of local cultures and find Christian values in them. People can thus look for possible disclosures of faith in the cultures of the region (Rukiyanto 2012, 82-83).

The foundation of inculturation is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Word, who has become human being, and God's solidarity with humankind. We find God in human beings. In fact the whole of nature and the reality of society also signify the will of God for salvation. Thus faith needs to be lived in the concrete reality of life with all its cultural, socio-economic, political and spiritual-religious elements (Hardawiryana 1981, 38-41).

Eco-feminist Faith Formation

Indonesia faces many environmental challenges. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and volcanic eruptions can happen at any time. Deforestation is occurring in many parts of Indonesia. To face these challenges, we need to form eco-feminist faith (Rukiyanto 2012, 84-85). We need to make people aware of the importance of maintaining the environment. Meanwhile, discrimination against women still happens in Indonesia, and we need to make efforts to promote the dignity of women. Eco-feminist faith formation is thus required to increase awareness of the dependence between living beings, that is, the integral link between human beings and other creatures, and to defend the dignity of women. The diversity of living creatures creates

order and harmony. The natural beauty of creation is a reflection of the infinite beauty of God the Creator. God loves all creatures (Catholic Church 1993, 340-342, 2415-2418). Therefore, every human being needs to love creation. Love of neighbor can be realized through the love of nature, both plants and animals. This kind of love will have further impact, that is, love for future human generations (Binawan 2009, 283-284).

Conclusion

Faith formation is an integral part of evangelization, since it provides the foundation for Christian faith. Meanwhile, the mission of the Church is to build the Kingdom of God in society. Relevant faith formation supports and helps in building this Kingdom. In a pluralistic society such as Indonesia, we need to develop many different faith formation models, bearing in mind that faith formation has the transformative power to realize the Kingdom of God anywhere in society.

Because of the particular situation in Indonesia, faith formation should be ecumenical, dialogical, inculturated, social (solidarity towards the poor), and ecological. Through such faith formation, the Church will steadily carry out the task of the new evangelization, in order to bring about the Kingdom of God in Indonesia. Hopefully, this paper will inspire those who are in charge of faith formation to develop teaching strategies suitable for other countries and contexts which may be experiencing situations similar to those in Indonesia.

Acknowledgements

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