

KETIKA AGAMA BAWA DAMAI, BUKAN PERANG

Belajar dari “Imam dan Pastor”



Judul Buku	: <i>Ketika Agama Bawa Damai, Bukan Perang: Belajar dari “Imam dan Pastor”</i>
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Introduction

Nigeria, a well-known religious and political violence country for nearly 50 years in Africa. According to *Peace Insight*, Nigeria suffers a range of complicated political problems including inequality, corruption, oil disputes, national disunity, and the rise of Boko Haram in 2002 (Sodipo, 2015; Withnall, 2015). Nonetheless, the rise of peace-works and peace-building in this country has attracted the attention of the world. Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and Pastor James Movel Wuye are the notable peace-workers who both led opposing religious groups between 1987-1992 that spread faith-based hatred that further inspired violent attacks and retaliations. But after a conflict in 1992 that left them with deep personal injuries- through encouragement they received from others around them- they found inner healing to forgive each other. Hence, they have been about preaching religious tolerance, promote peace-

building and helping religiously-divided communities live peacefully in the country. Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye have received the Breme Peace Award in 2005, the Prize for Conflict Prevention awarded by the Foundation Chirac in 2009. (“Muhammad Ashafa Ashafa,” 2021). Today the two men are allies. And they’re offering Americans strategies to combat religious prejudice and hate.

This book, *Ketika Agama Bawa Damai, Bukan Perang: Belajar dari “Imam dan Pastor”*, was prepared to welcome Imam Ashafa and Pastor James to Indonesia in October 2017. Indeed, the Christian-Muslim relationship is not only belongs to Nigerian issue nor Indonesia or Malaysia issue, but it is a global issue today. Meanwhile, Indonesia, a country with the most Muslims in Southeast Asia and even the whole world, the visitation of these two iconic peace workers must be a great significance to Indonesia’s peace-building on a certain extent. Therefore, this review paper fall into two categories of analysis and evaluation. Firstly is to analysis the points that are considered important in this book. The life stories and contemporary roles of Imam Ashafa and Pastor James will be explain. Also, some examples regarding the role of clergy in peace-building efforts in the Indonesia will be introduce. Second is to evaluate this book under review in terms of their advantages and/or disadvantages.

Analysis

The book is divided into four parts. First, the prologue by the editor, Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, when religion brings peace, not war: learn from priests and pastors. He begin with his sad explanation on religious figures have a number of reasons to feel let down. He also felt disappointed on religious leaders who are often absent from the reporting model of peace-works. Nevertheless, he also recognized and accepted the facts that the relationship between religion and violence is a relationship characterized by ambiguity. To illustrate, circles certain religionists may claim that orientation to peace is intrinsic to the traditions of religions. However, on the other hand, it can also be justified if it is said that religion it can intrinsically provoke conflict and violence. As well as that, religion unites certain people into certain groups, and therefore also discriminate people from one group to another. This distinction creates dynamics psychological between “us” and “them” groups, which will strengthen and hardens in the midst of the situation and dynamics of any conflict. Definitely, he noted two key elements of Scott Appleby’s argument in his book, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (2000), that the first is militancy, and the second is perception of the injustice on which religious actors are based to commit violence in the name of religion. However, he strongly suggests that religious tools can also functionally be used for peaceful purposes. For instance, the importance of fundamentalists secular to be more humble, be prepared to listen other voices, including religious voices. We have to realize that

desire for some kind of inner calm, security, and group identity, in the middle of a world that for some people often inexplicable, is something that cannot be underestimated. Not only for that, namely the perception of encouraging justice acts of peace in the name of religion instead of injustice acts of violence in the name of religion. Giving an example on this point, he citing the speech of Pope Paul VI on celebrating the Day of Peace at 01/01/1972, "If you want peace, work for justice!" This statement made a famous statement regarding to the peace studies. Indeed, nonviolence must be more diligent in sharing ideas and experiences, besides working together with other actors who are the same longing for peace.

Second, religion, conflict resolution, peace-building: world experience, lessons for Indonesia, this part is written by several scholars in Indonesia on how they analyse and describe the studies from Nigeria to Indonesia. Mainly is to show an example of how Imam Ashafa and Pastor James work for religious based services in Nigeria. Imam Ashafa and Pastor James are not only living examples of religious ambiguity (as a resource of violence and at the same time a resource of peace), but also examples of personal transformation taking place (Hijrah from violence towards peace-building) and increased religious capacity as peacemakers. Both of them did not stop by just reconciling between the two of them, after previously grudging and fighting each other (with, as the fare, Ashafa lost his teacher and two cousins, being James lost his hand), but carries the values and peace-building initiative to a wider second environment: first in cities, then countries, then continents, then the world. In that order, they are set up an Inter-Faith Mediation Centre in Nigeria, and continue to be willing strengthen themselves by deepening insight and skills, as well widen the network around the world. There are also have some important points that should be underlined here. First, the works in order to prevent the use of religion as a resource violence. This aspect of prevention is important, reflecting its ultimate meaning peacebuilding (bina-damai), not peace-making (after violent conflict occurs) or peacekeeping (keep-peace, after efforts peace-making is carried out after violent conflict). Second, this part also target the youth at the grassroots. It become a strategic is because youths at the grassroots, for many reasons, always have been movers of violence, even if they are intellectual actors or designers those actions weren't them.

Third, religion and peace-building: some cases from Indonesia. The last part of this book begins to present some examples regarding to the role of religion leaders in peace-efforts in Indonesia. For example, the role of interfaith women in peace-building efforts in Maluku, especially Ambon city. Explaining the state of ethnic religious, why many cities and counties did not experience violence by examining city cases experienced violence (Ambon) and those who did not experience violence despite tensions (Manado). Explore and uncover the factors that are underlies the harmonious relationship between Muslims and Christians in Kupang. Lastly, the "Daily Reconciliation" in Maluku.

Finally, from Maluku for Indonesia and the World. This article contains a report and the author's personal, Jacky Manuputty's reflection on the efforts of peace-building when and very informative post-conflict in Maluku in 1999. Surely, the awareness that the narratives of peace and reconciliation from Maluku must be contributed to Indonesia and the world.

Evaluation

First, this book presented a clear structural academic discourse. Surprisingly, from an academic point, the story of Imam Ashafa and Pastor James shows their contributions to the Indonesian in the academic level, even though some debates and the syntheses that have appeared in the discourse cannot be presented here due to page limitations and other reasons. But importantly, readers still can clearly see the construction and essence of peace theories to peace practice. Second, the timeframe of this book presented reasonable as it can be seen clearly that from the time when the conflict was happened in Nigeria around 1990 to the time now in Indonesia. Definitely, this book presented a very recent cases and discussions. Third, in geographically, although Indonesian cases raised are still limited to cases learned from Eastern Indonesia (Ambon, Manado, Kupang), but this book still presented pioneering work of Imam Ashafa and Pastor James, which among others encouraging the publication of this book, should be more than enough to inspire the growth of religious initiatives in Indonesia the same direction.

Conclusion

To conclude, although peace studies is still a very new and fresh discipline in the global since 1960, and the peace discussion in religions aspect is still a minority in peace studies, but Christians-Muslims relationship is a major issue in the global, undoubt it brought serious and worse violence, conflicts to the people in the world. However, this book, the discourse from Imam Ashafa and Pastor James surely bring attention to this global issue. Not only for this, this pioneering work also encouraging and inspiring the religion leaders in South East Asia, which a land that living with mainly Christian and Muslims, to contribute peace efforts in this critical time, not only research, but also in practise. This book tells us that it is essential that in all countries learning about the faith and experience of such others regularly forms part of education, ideally in a way that enables these others to contribute to the process.

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