

Nurturing Indigenous Spirituality: Building Peace in Papua, Indonesia

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MELANESIAN VALUES

- Melanesian territory includes Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and West Papua.
- Melanesians are egalitarian.
- Melanesians share four fundamental values, such as: Life in abundance, community, right relationships, and reciprocity

ABUNDANT LIFE

- It is not simply a biological life
- It has nothing to do with life after death
- It is a life in abundance in this world. One experiences a life in abundance in many forms: healthy, physically strong, plenty of harvest, many children (half of them are girls, others are boys), plenty of domesticated pigs, success in trading, success in fishing, success in hunting, etc.

- Abundant life is celebrated by community.
- One example of the cultural expression of salvation being experienced is : WA WA WA
WA WA

COMMUNITY

- One experiences an abundant life/salvation only within a community. Outside the community, there is no salvation. Because outside community, one is a stranger.
- A community has always a defined territory.
- Melanesian Community: the living, the dead, the ancestors, mountain, river, stone, snake, wild animals, forest, etc. within the community's territory.
- It is in the community that the members are welcome, defended, supported, and protected.

RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

- A community is maintained and nurtured through right relationships. There must be rights relationships among the members of community.
- Community also initiates and maintains rights relationships with the neighboring communities.
- Right relationship creates friendship, fellowship, networking, security, mutual recognition, and mutual respect.

- Once a relationship breaks down, community face a disaster, such as many people get sick or die, less harvest, less children, no children, etc. It weakens community from within. Therefore the living members of a community will gather together and discuss to find out which relationship was broken, resulted in a disaster.
- A relationship damaged is and should be restored through the act of reconciliation.

- If the right relationship is absent, then there must be exploitation, manipulation, oppression, and the violation of human rights. As a result, there must be disaster. No salvation in the community.

RECIPROCITY

- Right relationships is expressed and nurtured through the practice of take and give. One should neither giving only nor taking only. One should give something and then take something.
- If one party is only taking from others and never give something back to them, then it is injustice. A conflict happens when one feels exploited.

Violent conflict Indonesia Vs Papua

- The violent conflict between the Government of Indonesia Vs the indigenous Papuans, begins since 1963. Until now, it is not settled yet.
- Both parties see other as enemy. The Papuans are considered as being separatists, the state enemy. Indonesia is seen as colonial power. The relationships between them is characterized by enmity, suspicion, and mistrust. Right relationship is absent.

- Many Papuans died at the hands of the military. Many people have been victims of human rights violations. Many members of Indonesian military and police were also killed by the Papuan resistance groups.
- Both parties justify their act of violence. For Indonesia, violence is committed to maintain territorial integrity of Indonesia and to eradicate Papuan separatism. For the Papuans, violence is committed to decolonize the people and their ancestral land.
- Whatever their reason is, violence destroys right relationships. As a result, there is no salvation in community.

The need for dialogue

- The Gol and the Papuans used to talk about each other, but never talk to each other.
- The broken relationship between the Gol and the Papuans must be restored.
- The wall of suspicion and mistrust must be broken down.
- Many meetings between the both parties are needed for confidence building and the restoration of the relationship between them.

- As in the culture, the conflicting parties gather at the house of traditional elder. The elder facilitates meeting until both parties able to identify the problems and determine solutions. Both are involved in the process of reconciliation.
- Inspired by this cultural practice, a dialogue between the Gol and the Papuans is necessary.

- Dialogue enables the GoI and the Papuans to meet as partners and jointly discuss on how to settle the conflict between them peacefully.
- In the dialogue, they could jointly identify problems that have been triggering the conflict and determine solution accepted by both parties.
- This dialogue will lead to reconciliation between the two conflicting parties.

Promotion of dialogue

- Since 2010, the Papua Peace Network (PPN) promotes dialogue as means to settle conflicts not only between the Gol Vs the Papuans, but also among the civilians.
- Due to the work for dialogue, the PPN members are suspected, threatened, by some elements of the Gol and the Papuans.

- Despite the challenges, the PPN plays its role as facilitator.
- the PPN has facilitated many meetings either among the Papuans (West Papua and in diaspora), and between the Papuans and the government officials.
- All these meetings aim at breaking down the wall of suspicion and mistrust, and slowly build up trust among them.

Support for dialogue

- The proposal of dialogue on Papua is now supported by many parties in Papua: religious leaders, Church leaders, tribal leaders, women, local scholars, local parliaments, local government, and the leaders of Papuan resistance movement.
- Many parties in Jakarta also support dialogue as means to settle the conflict.

- Indonesian bishops' conference has officially supported the proposal of dialogue to settle the Papua conflict.
- Responding the call for dialogue, President Jokowi has appointed three persons, including my self, to organize series of dialogue.

2018, Papuan year of dialogue

- Violence divides, but dialogue unites
- A dialogue between the Gol and the Papuan Resistance groups is necessary and should be prepared.
- The informal talks between both parties must be facilitated as to prepare the formal dialogue.
- I do hope that the Gol and the Papuans will begin their journey towards reconciliation through dialogue by 2018.