

REMOVE THE STUMBLING BLOCKS AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF ONENESS OF GOD IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM AS A CHALLENGE AND A WAY FOR INTERRELIGIOUS RELATION BETWEEN THE TWO RELIGIONS

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Abstract

Javanese Catholic people live in Javanese culture with its still preserved traditions. Out of these traditions, the Javanese people still keep the ruwatan ceremony. Javanese Catholics often question whether or not ruwatan is permissible according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. In this particular topic, the theological question arises regarding whether it is still necessary to seek salvation through rituals, while salvation has been fully accomplished through Jesus Christ and received in the Sacrament of Baptism. In answering this theological problem, the writer uses the pastoral circle method from the theory of Joe Holland & Peter Henriot. Meanwhile, to analyze the ruwatan ritual, the writer uses Victor Turner's theory regarding the three stages of the rite of passage.

Keywords:

Baptism, Ruwatan, Salvation, Pastoral Circle, Javanese Culture

INTRODUCTION

Confession of faith is one of the most important part of religion. In Christianity's confession of faith it is clear that there are mentioned what so called as Trinity in which Christians proclaim their belief to God the father, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit. On the other hand, Islam have confession of faith in which they proclaim the oneness of God which is known as *Tauhid*. However, in the context of inter-religious relation between Islam and Christianity, their confession of faith often open a discussion even debate. As discusses by Budyanto in his dissertation that churches in Indonesia live in the midst of an Indonesian nation based on Pancasila, which the first principle is the Belief in God.¹ On the other hand it is clear that the majority of Indonesian people are Muslim, in which their faith only recognizes the oneness of God, '*There is no God but Allah*'. Therefore, the Christian belief in a triune God and the deity of the Prophet Jesus are a serious "stumbling block" in dealing with Indonesian people in general and Islamic societies in particular.² Concerning Islam, another question that immediately arises is, whether there is any interpretation which able to broke the 'stumbling block' which mentioned by Budyanto? This kind of question is very important because I argue that the effort to remove these 'stumbling block' and built more harmonius inter-religious relation between Islam and Christianity is both side duty.

Whether term Trinity does not exist in the Bible, it is clear that the confession of faith in Christianity founded in the certain Biblical text and absolutely the concept *Tauhid* in Islam are founded in certain Qur'anic text. Moreover, those text are used, interpreted and formed as faith confessions through certain historical context. This paper aim to explore that context and try to do theological study toward any interpretation which can remove the "stumbling block" and building more harmonious interreligious discourse and relation between Islam and Christianity. From Christian side this paper will study Genesis 1:1-2; Matthew 3:16-17 and Acts 2:1-4 with *pneumatological* perspective from Amos Yong which hopefully give wider perspective in understanding

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_pfleEbul in this video, President Soekarno delivered a speech about Pancasila as ideology of Indonesia in front of the member of United States of America's congress on 17 Mei 1956. President Soekarno translated the first sila of Pancasila 'Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa' as Belief in God.

² Budyanto, *Mempertimbangkan Ulang Ajaran Tentang Trinitas*. Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen, 2021, 1

oneness of God in Christianity and its attitude toward religious diversity. From Islam side, this paper will study interpretation toward QS 112:1-4 especially from tafsir Al-Misbah written by M. Quraish Shihab. Finally, without intending to doubt the previous thesis that the ‘stumbling block’ must be removed by this discourse in order to make more harmonious interreligious relation especially between Christianity and Islam, there is one question left, what if the stumbling block actually cannot be removed totally because it is a part of core doctrine of both religions? Then in the last part this paper will propose approach from Marianne Moyaert especially from her book ‘*Fragile Identity*’³

METHODOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

Before going further, to the exploration of historicity and treasury of interpretation of both concept trinity and Tauhid, it is important to explain the methodological matter in doing so in this paper, whether the explanation will be short enough. It is clear that interreligious hermeneutic is complex term and may be there is other term which also popular which is intertextuality. In general sense intertextuality simply refers to the interconnections among text. These connection can be as general and indirect as shared language, or sound as specific and direct the footnoted quotation of one text in another.⁴ However, this paper examine complex issue, which mean that is not only examine text but also development of theological thought through history, especially related to concept Trinity. This discourse become more complex because it should be understood that “Theology” indicates a mode of inquiry that engages a wide range of issues with full intellectual force, but ordinarily does so within the constraints of a commitment to a religious community, respect for its scriptures, traditions, and practices, and a willingness to affirm the truths and values of that tradition. More deeply, and to echo more simply an ancient characterization of theology, it is faith seeking understanding, a practice in which all three words the faith, the search and the intellectual goal have their full force and remain in fruitful tension with one another.⁵

³ Marianne Moyaert, *Fragile Identity: Toward a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2011.

⁴ Patricia K. Tull, ‘Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality’ in Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes. *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction Biblical Criticism and Their Application*. Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999, 165

⁵ Francis X Clooney SJ, ‘Comparative Theology and Inter-Religious Dialogue’ in Catherine

Honestly it should be acknowledged that this paper will tend to use “comparative theology” approach. Comparative and theological beginning to end marks act of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions.⁶ This learning is sought for the sake of fresh theological insights that are indebted to the newly encountered tradition/s as well as the home tradition. The main goal of this kind of discourse is to do interreligious dialogue points to actual conversations, sometimes formal and academic, sometimes simply interpersonal conversations among person of different religious traditions willing to listen to one another and share their stories of faith and values. “Dialogical” or “interreligious” theology grows out of interreligious dialogue, as reflection aimed at clarifying dialogues presuppositions, learning from its actual practice, and communicating what is learned in dialogue for a wider audience. As actual, living interaction among people of different faith traditions that enhances mutual understanding, personal encounters in dialogue should remind us that religions flourish in the lives, beliefs and activities of real people living out their faith day by day. Dialogue also reminds us that we must be accountable to other communities when we speak about their religion, even as we must give an account of ourselves to our own community. However, if the interreligious hermeneutic which is expected to do is to read and understand other religion text or dogmatic concept in more appropriate and friendly way, again in order to build more harmonious interreligious dialogue, therefore this paper also will do so. Especially from Islamic perspective toward concept of Trinity.

COMPLEXITY OF HISTORY OF DOGMA TRINITY

It is interesting that the term Trinity actually does not exist in the Bible. However the history of formulation of concept or dogma Trinity is very complex and take a very long time. Therefore in this part, some part of that complexity will be described by explaining some of theological concept from theologians and philosophers and also the dynamic in the Church in its council in order to formulate the dogma about Trinity.

Cornille (ed). *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*. West Sussex UK: John Wiley & Sons. Ltd, 2013, 52-53.

⁶ Francis X Clooney SJ, ‘Comparative Theology and Inter-Religious Dialogue’, 53

CORE OF THE DILEMMA

It is clear that since the first century of the Church existence, new problems have arisen in connection with two claims, which were: (a) Confessions taken over from Jewish teachings that God is One, and (b) Church Confessions that Jesus Christ is Lord. Both of these statements raise a simple question but are not easy to answer, do Christians worship one or more?⁷ This kind of question brings the Church into a big dilemma, if the Church tries to put more emphasis on the oneness of God, then the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be seen as only attributes of God, that is, the nature of the One God. Conversely, if the Church places more emphasis on the concept of the Trinity, the Church will face the risk that the three persons stand alone and are no longer one.⁸ This dilemma even already emerged in the time of apostle Paul, as mentioned by John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching and Todd Lewis in their book entitled 'World Religion Today'

In the first four centuries after the time of Jesus, as gentile Christianity separated itself from Judaism, Christians struggled to formulate an authoritative understanding (dogma) of who Jesus is and what his significance is. The essential problem that faced the early followers of Jesus who, like the apostle Paul, believed that they had a special mission to convert the gentiles, was how to translate an essentially Jewish message about a coming "messiah" into terms non-Jewish could understand. These missionaries did not want pagans to confuse Christian claims about Jesus being Son of God with pagan myths in which divine beings come down to earth in humanlike bodies. The challenge was to speak correctly and clearly about the being and meaning of Jesus of Nazareth without claiming either too little (that Jesus was just a good man) or too much (that Jesus was not really human but rather a supernatural being like the gods of pagan mythology). For about three hundred years, Christians debated the various possible ways of thinking and speaking about Jesus and held several church councils. By the time the argument was settled, both extremes had been deemed heresy.⁹

⁷ Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2010, 104

⁸ Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen*, 104

⁹ John L. Esposito. Et al. *World Religion Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, 149-150

SOME THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT RELATED TO CONCEPT TRINITY

In this section will be explained some of theological and philosophical thought of Church fathers from East and the West, in order to show the complexity of the history of the dogma Trinity. In the early centuries some of Church fathers had not yet used the term Trinity, but they already tried to answer the dilemmatic question or the core of diemma which already written in the previous part. The effort to answer that question align with the developmet of Christianity and the great need to formulate fundamental dogma in the Church.

St. Justin Martyr (110-165 CE) an Eastern Church father, actually in his writings never discussed about the teachings of the Trinity. He explained a lot about the relationship between God the Father and the Logos (word) which later became flesh in Jesus Christ. On one hand it is said that the Logos is as divine as God, even it is said that He is God (He is the rational mind or consciousness of the Father). On the other hand, Justin explained that when the Logos became flesh, He became different from God because He was not as eternal as God. About the Holy Spirit, Justin did not talk about it in relation to the Trinity. Justin called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Logos or the Spirit of God that inspired the prophets and as the source of spiritual gifts in the church, but at the same time he called it the power of God. Justin had a subordinate thought about the three persons. God the Father occupies the first position, Jesus Christ in the second position and the Holy Spirit in the third position.¹⁰

Adamatius Origen (185-254 CE) was an important figure of the church from Alexandria. Origen's teaching about the Trinity emphasizes the oneness of God. Regarding God the Father, Origen said that God is spirit in a sense that is contrary to the body. God the Father is a transcendent God, He is a perfect God, He is God to himself and He was not born. About Jesus Christ, Origen explained that Jesus Christ came out of the Father spiritually, by His will. Everything in God is eternal, so the birth of God's child is also an eternal act of God. However, the child's God did not have a temporal start, meaning there was no time when the child did not exist (*non est quando Filius non Filius fuit*). He is the oldest of all creation, God the Father and God the son has a unity of substance, because it arises from the power of God and is an

¹⁰ Budyanto, *Mempertimbangkan Ulang Ajaran Tentang Trinitas*, 17-18

emanation from God or also called homousios. Jesus Christ is one with the Father because he has the same nature or ousia, but on the other hand, Jesus himself is a separate existence or hypostasis. Then there is hypostasis but one God and one in mind, as well as his will. Jesus Christ became the mediator in the mutual relationship between God the father and the world. Regarding the Holy Spirit, Origen argues that the Holy Spirit is only active in the souls of the saints. Therefore the Holy Spirit is considered to be inferior to the Logos / Jesus Christ. Logos gives rationality and the Holy Spirit gives holiness and charisma that come from God. In short, Origen's teaching about the Trinity is that God is One, God is Spirit and God is transcendent, whereas God the Son or Jesus Christ or Logos is the power and wisdom of God coming out of God and the Holy Spirit is seen as a substance coming out of God.¹¹

Arius of Alexandria (265-336 CE) was an important figure who influenced the outcome of the Council of Nicaea. Concerning the transcendence and oneness of God, Arius said, "We claim to be the only God who is not begotten, the only eternal, the only without beginning, the only true, the only unable to die, the only wise, the only good, the only God, the sole judge of all. This God was not born, was not created, He exists from eternal to eternal, He exists without a source, but He is the source of everything that exists. This God who is the Father is absolutely transcendent and absolutely eternal. Because of this eternity and transcendence, it cannot be shared and communicated to others"

Therefore, according to Arius, the Son must be a creation created from existing, only by the command of God the Father. For Arius, the term birth or gennan worn on children is a figure of speech created or poiein. In this section Arius contradicts Origen, who said that the existence of Jesus Christ was eternal, whereas for Arius the only eternal was God the Father. Regarding the Holy Spirit, according to Arius the Holy Spirit has nothing in common with both God the Father and Jesus Christ, however Arius acknowledged that the hypostasis of the three persons was the third highest.¹²

Athanasius (295-373 CE), in 328 he became bishop in Alexandria. He wrote an important work containing his response to Arius under the title 'Orations against the Arians' due to the strong influence of Arius and his conflict with the results of the Council of Nicaea. Athanasius's teachings

¹¹ Budyanto, *Mempertimbangkan Ulang Ajaran Tentang Trinitas*, 19-26

¹² Budyanto, *Mempertimbangkan Ulang Ajaran Tentang Trinitas*, 26-30

about the Trinity still focus on maintaining the oneness of God, but for him the One God is a triune God, and his oneness does not deny his triune. Athanasius saw God the Father and God the Son were one in nature but they were also different (this difference was not explained further). Athanasius expressed this with the term 'Oneness of Essence'. Regarding the Holy Spirit, Athanasius argues that the Holy Spirit is from God, He is eternal, everywhere, He purifies and glorifies humanity. The Holy Spirit is one with God the Son as God the Son with God the Father. The Holy Spirit is believed and glorified as God the Father and God the son, and the Holy Spirit is always active in the works of God the Father and God the Son. The deity of the Holy Spirit is as full as the deity of the Father and the Son. With such an explanation, Athanasius expilistically maintains the divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with God the Father and God the Son. Athanasius also became the first person in the Eastern Church to develop a more complete Trinity telogy, and this formula would later influence the formulation of the council of Constantinople in 381.¹³

If those five theological thought come from Eastern Church, these three which will be elaborated below come from Western Church which was centered in Rome.

Irenaeus (120-202 CE), his view of God is the same as the views of the figures from the East. Irenaeus stressed the oneness of God, that there is only one God the Father, the Lord who created the heavens and the earth, who formed everything by His Son and by the Holy Spirit who is always with Him. In order to be known, he reveals himself through the process of creation and redemption in God the Son and the Holy Spirit. Regarding God the Son, Irenaeus did not hesitate to declare that Jesus Christ is the Savior, He is God and the Word of God. Jesus Christ is the flesh made and anointed by the Holy Spirit from God the Father. Regarding the Holy Spirit himself, Irenaeus said that He is as eternal as God the Father and God the Son.¹⁴

Tertullianus (145-220 CE) was very influential in the formulation of the concept of the Trinity, because from Tertullianus came the term substance or substance and person or person in the Trinity teaching. Tertullianus formulated that God is one in his substance or substance and three in his persona or person. This formula is known as 'Una

¹³ Budyanto, *Mempertimbangkan Ulang Ajaran Tentang Trinitas*, 31-36

¹⁴ Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen*, 108

substantia tres personae'. Tertullianus said that it cannot be said that God is one without saying that God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit are one and the same.¹⁵

Augustine (354-430 CE) also known as 'Architect of Western Christianity' because after Jesus and Apostle Paul, probably there is no other individual in history is more responsible for the shape of Western Christianity.¹⁶ In his teaching about the Trinity emphasizes the oneness of God. Unlike the other church fathers who departed from a plurality of people then concluded that there was a difference between one person and another, but Augustine departed from the same essence of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. With this formulation, the tendency of subordinationism to Origen and Arius's teachings can be minimized. Furthermore, Augustine explained that God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit are eternal and unchanging, the glory and power are the same and each person in the Trinity is God and, together, also one God.¹⁷

THE MARRIAGE OF CHRISTIANITY AND EMPIRE AND CHURCH COUNCIL TO FORMULATE DOGMA TRINITY

The development of Christianity gradually happened and still the need to formulate the answer for the very basic question 'do Christians worship one God or more? As mention in the part a. *'the core of the dilemma'*. One of the most important political even in the history of Christianity was the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine, the first monarch to acknowledge the right of Christians.¹⁸ Constantine was baptized in his deathbed and issued the Edict of Milan which known as Edict of Toleration in 313. Because of this imperial declaration, Christianity become permitted and favored religion in the empire and Roman ruler had placed the empire under the protection of the cross of Christ.¹⁹ After Constantine, Christians began to see Roman imperialism as good thing, as a way of spreading the Gospel throughout the world. However the strong political influence in relation between Christianity

¹⁵ Budyanto, *Mempertimbangkan Ulang Ajaran Tentang Trinitas*, 41-43

¹⁶ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 153

¹⁷ Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen*, 109

¹⁸ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 151

¹⁹ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 151

and the Roman Empire brought Christianity to the new path, that Christianity as official religion of the Roman Empire also used as the tool of civilization and imperialism. Vision of Christianity to spread the Gospel mixed with the vision of Roman Empire to rule the world.²⁰

Because of that, pressure and political influence toward Christianity as official religion of Roman Empire also become stronger, Christianity need to formulate its dogma or faith confession. Therefore, some council was held by the Church. The most important council was council of Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381 and Chalcedon in 451. In council of Nicaea the most important formulation which was made mentioned that the 'Word of God to be same as (*homoousious*) with God'. *I believe in one God, the almighty Father, creator of heaven and earth all that is visible and invisible. And to one God, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, as close as the Father.*²¹

In 381 the council of Constantinople also affirmed another unique doctrine or belief of Christians, the belief in a triune God. The doctrine of the Trinity asserts that God is one essence but three persons. The formula "three persons in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" is not really about mathematics. Rather, it means that God, the creator of the universe, can at the same time be present in the life of Jesus and in all things in the world through God's Word and Spirit without ceasing to be transcendent or beyond the universe. The doctrine of Trinity states that God is in all things without accepting the pantheistic notion that God is all things.

Furthermore, as mentioned before many bishops and theologians debate about Jesus and concept of trinity and in some ways it cause problem in the congregation. In my opinion, The Roman Empire, in some case did not like this kind of debate because it disturb the socio-political stability. That is why the Council of Chalcedon for example, rejected all those theological and philosophical thought, insisting that Jesus had a human and a death like every other person. Jesus' humanity different from others because it is believed that he was have no sin and in Jesus as a man, God was wholly present. The formula then tried to reconcile the paradox that in "one person" of Jesus there was "two natures" (divine

²⁰ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 151

²¹ Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen*, 108

and human) united “without confusion” or mixture. That is in the person of Jesus divinity and humanity were united yet completely distinct.²² Simply this council promote the concept namely doctrine two natures and one substance in Christ.²³ Finally, in this part it is clear that the process of formulating dogma Trinity was very complex and involving not only religious interest or religious purpose but also political purpose. However, by this kind of complex process then the dogma Trinity was born and become part of Christian faith confession.

TAUHID AS A MAIN TEACHING IN ISLAM

“Allahu Akbar....There is no God but Allah” by hearing this calling then Muslim throughout the world come to prayer, five times a day.²⁴ The word Islam itself means submission or surrender. A Muslim is one who submits, who seeks to follow and actualize Gos’s will in history. The Muslim community (*ummah*) is a transnational community of believers, God ordained and guided, whose mission is to spread and institutionalize and Islamic Order to create socially just society as mentioned in QS 3: 110 “You are the best community ever brought forth for mankind, enjoining what is good and forbidding evil.”²⁵ Despite specific and significant difference, Judaism, Christianity and Islam share a belief in one God, the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe who is beyond ordinary experience. All believe in angels, satan, prophets, revelation, moral responsibility and accountability, divine judgement, and eternal reward or punishment.²⁶

Muslim believe that the Qur’an is the eternal, uncreated, literal and final word of God revealed to Muhammad as guidance for humankind (QS 2:185) One of the most important pillar of Islam is *The Declaration of Faith*. A Muslim is one who bears witness that “There is no God but the God/Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” One need only make this simple statement, known as shahadah, to become a Muslim.

²² John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 150

²³ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 132

²⁴ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 195

²⁵ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 198

²⁶ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 198

The first part of the shahadah affirms Islam's absolute monotheism, an unshakable and uncompromising faith in the oneness or unity (*Tauhid*) of God. The second part is the affirmation that Muhammad is the messenger of God, the last and final prophet, who serves as a model for the Muslim community.²⁷

**THE CONCEPT OF TAUHID IN QS 112:1-4
AS INTERPRETED BY M. QURAIISH SHIHAB**

One of verses in the Qur'an which mention the monotheism concept in Islam is from QS 112:1-4. This verses is chosen to be put in this discourse with concept of Trinity, because this concept beside explaining about the oneness of God, its also alludes to the concept of begotten God which in concept of Trinity become one of important issue.

- 112:1 Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One,
112:2 Allah, the Eternal Refuge.
112:3 He neither begets nor is born,
112:4 Nor is there to Him any equivalent."²⁸

According to M. Quraish Shihab's the main goal of the the main purpose of the presence of the Qur'an is to introduce the one God. This Surah Al-Ikhlâs answers the question of people who asked the Prophet Muhammad about the God he worshiped.²⁹ Shihab also explaine that according to the majority of scholars, this surah came down as an answer to the question of the idolaters who wanted to know how God was worshiped by the Prophet Muhammad. This is because they think that God is similar to their idols.³⁰

The concept of oneness of God in surah Al-Ikhlâs is taken from the root word *wahdah* which means unity, as well as the word *wahid* which means one. The word *ahad* can function as a name and can also be

²⁷ John L. Espocito. Et al. *World Religion Today*, 219

²⁸ <https://quran.com/112> accessed in 5 December 2019 at 9.33 PM

²⁹ M. Quraish Shihab. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an Volume 15 Juz'Amma*. Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002, 607

³⁰ M. Quraish Shihab. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: ...*, 605

an attribute of something. If this word is used as an attribute, then it can only be used for God. In this verse *ahad* serves as the attribute of Allah, in the sense that Allah has its own nature which is not possessed by others.³¹ There are three elements of oneness that are important to note of this verse. First is the Oneness of Substance, which means that people must believe that God does not consist of elements or parts. Both Oneness traits mean that God has properties that are not the same in substance and capacity as those of other creatures. Third, Oneness in deeds which means that everything in the universe, both the work system and its causes and forms, are all the result of God's actions. What God wants will happen and what he does not want will not happen, there is no power and strength except from God.³² An interesting verse in this section of QS 112 is verses 3 and 4 which say that God is not childless and not begotten. If God is One, He does not create children, nor is he born from father or mother. There is no one who is equal and equal to Him and no one resembles Him.³³

ALTERNATIVE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE IN UNDERSTANDING TRINITY

It is clear that QS 112:1-4 mention similar issue with the debate of Trinity, but it should be acknowledged that this verses from Qur'an have its own context and issue to be answered. However, the context, the debate and the dilemma of this verses with the Christianity's dogma of Trinity is very different. Regarding the main question of this paper, then it is important to see is there any alternative from Islam in understanding concept of trinity.

First of all, Islam gives special status to Judaism and Christianity. The bearers of this religion, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are the prophets of God. What they bring, the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospel are revelations from God. Belief in these prophets and the revelations they bring are an integral part of the Islamic faith. Not believing it, even discriminating against it, is the same as apostasy. "Our Lord and your God is Allah, the Almighty God" This is the belief held and taught by many Muslim leaders, including Ayatullah Khomeini, known in the

³¹ M. Quraish Shihab. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*: ..., 610

³² M. Quraish Shihab. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*: ..., 611

³³ M. Quraish Shihab. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*: ..., 614-615

West as a fanatic Muslim.³⁴ According to the Qur'an, "*Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.*" (QS al-Baqarah 2:62).³⁵

Regarding Christianity and the Trinity,³⁶ there may be those who still feel impossible. If non-Muslims are not identical with infidels, and disbelief is a moral category, then how to understand the word of God: "*They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three." And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.*" (QS.al-Ma'idah[5]:73) One possible interpretation of this verse is that what is meant by the Koran is not the Trinity as believed by Christians, but certain Monophysite tritheism - that is, adherents of the belief that God is really three by believing that Jesus is truly God (the qadim and azali). The first, namely the Trinity remains monotheism, namely three in one (unity). (Namely, the two are a kind of His tajjali, if they follow Irfan's view).³⁷

In this context, it is interesting to note that Hujjatul Islam Imam al-Ghazali has a unique view when describing perception and living in stages, not monoliths. Even according to him, when Christians call God tsalitsu tsalatsah (as one of the three), this statement is not understood that God is three. In contrast, God is one, but three in terms of their nature. In their own words, quoting al-Ghazali, Allah is One in a distance, and three in person. 'Person' here is understood as nature. In other words, however al-Ghazali rejected this doctrine, he was still fair to admit it as containing a certain type of monotheism. Al-Syahrastani, in al-Miwal wa al-Nihal, states that it is more or less the same. Namely that what is called aqanim (plural of uqnum, unscrupulous) is not in terms of substance (Jauhar). In conclusion, the abhwa appointed by the

³⁴ Haidar Bagir. *Islam Tuhan Islam Manusia: Agama dan Spiritualitas di Zaman Kacau*, Bandung: Mizan, 2017, 186.

³⁵ <https://quran.com/2/62> accessed 5 December 5, 2019 at 4.13 P.M.

³⁶ Haidar Bagir. *Islam Tuhan Islam Manusia: ...*, 206-207

³⁷ Haidar Bagir. *Islam Tuhan Islam Manusia: ...*, 206

Qur'an are not followers of the Trinity, but Ya'qubiyah and Mulka'iyah / Mulkaniyah Christians who indeed believe in the idea of the existence of these three Gods.³⁸

ALTERNATIVE TO REMOVE 'THE STUMBLING BLOCK' FROM CHRISTIAN SIDE

This part will propose two theological thought which are from Amos Yong and Marianne Moyaert. Amos Yong theological thought especially about *pneumatology* will be used in order to revitalize concept of Trinity especially by referring to the certain Biblical text such as (Genesis 1:1-2; Matthew 3:16-17 and Acts 2:1-4). This revitalization is important as an effort to remove the 'stumbling block' in the discourse between both religious concept Trinity and Tauhid. However, as mentioned before in the introduction part of this paper the last naughty question which also important is 'should the stumbling block remove in order to have better interreligious dialogue?' Do Christian and Muslim can not make inter-religious dialogue whether their concept of monotheism are different? To answer this question, this paper will use concept interreligious hospitality from Marianne Moyaert which in a sense also use pneumatology.

PNEUMATOLOGY ACCORDING TO AMOS YONG³⁹

Amos Yong is a theologian from the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition. Yong is of Chinese descent, born in Malaysia and raised in Malaysia and the United States. Yong's background will certainly have a lot of influence on how he performs theology. He holds a doctorate in theology from Boston University and is now a professor in the field of religious studies at Bethel College, United States. The approach used by Yong is a hospitality approach based on an understanding of the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit), or pneumatology.

According to Amos Yong The theological approach to religions using another triune personal element, the Holy Spirit, looks quite promising. Because all this time theological approach to the religions that have struggled between the universal and the particular side. If we use the approach through the person of God the Father as the creator, it will

³⁸ Haidar Bagir. *Islam Tuhan Islam Manusia: ...*, 207

³⁹ Hans Abdiel Harmakaputra, *Melepas Bingkai*, 55

certainly be very universal and it “seems” to deny the particular side that Christianity has teachings about salvation by Jesus Christ. But if the approach used is a pneumatology approach, then the Holy Spirit as an eschatological God has represented two other persons, both God the Father, and Jesus Christ. The approach to pneumatology opens up the relationship between the universal and the particular sides previously described. Regarding the theology of religions, the approach to pneumatology also promises opportunities to be open to others.⁴⁰

In an effort to explain the concept Trinity in more friendly way with the pneumatological approach of the Holy Spirit and its universal presence, Yong used a series of biblical views. The Biblical excavation carried out by Yong shows that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God working in creation. As seen in Genesis 1, God’s Spirit creates everything that exists by speaking. Therefore, if the Spirit of God is universal, then the Holy Spirit is also universal. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit of the Spirit of God works in re-creation, which also works in redemption and salvation. This is stated in the work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus, the Holy Spirit works and is directly involved in the history of human life. Finally, the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of God who works in eschatological final creation. The eschatological work of the Holy Spirit is not only for God’s people or humans, but also for all creation, the Holy Spirit works for renewal.⁴¹

There are three axioms that form the basis of the approach to pneumatology in the theology of religions. First, God is universally present in His Spirit this part is closely related with Genesis 1:1-2.⁴² *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.*⁴³ Second, the Spirit of God is the breath of life from the Image of God (Imago Dei) in every human being and becomes a presupposition of all human relationships

⁴⁰ AmosYong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 21

⁴¹ AmosYong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 41

⁴² AmosYong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 44

⁴³ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1-2&version=NRSV> accessed in 5 December 2019, at 11.27 PM

and relationships.⁴⁴ Third, the religions in the world, like other things that also exist or exist in the world, their existence is sustained and maintained by the Spirit of God for Divine purposes.⁴⁵ Therefore I argue that by using this three axioma the same Holy Spirit also exist in Jesus Christ himself as written in Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

and Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

By proposing this kind of concept of Trinity the oneness of God from Christian side become clearer and the openness and hospitality toward other especially with Islam can be better. I argue that by using this kind of interpretation toward Biblical text and concept of Trinity, the stumbling block between the two concept of monotheism can be remove and the interreligious dialogue and relation between the two religion also can be flourished.

SHOULD THE STUMBLING BLOCK BE REMOVED?

As already mentioned before, in this part (shortly) will be elaborated concept of interreligious hospitality from Marianne Moyaert. In her book entitle '*Fragile Identity: Toward a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*' it is clear that Moyaert basing her theological thinking on George Lindbeck argument about the particularity of religions, so that religions are so unique and untranslatable.⁴⁶ Lindbeck claims that the untranslatable

⁴⁴ Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 45

⁴⁵ Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 46

⁴⁶ Marianne Moyaert, *Fragile Identity:...*, 157

as unique character of religion can be serious obstacle in interreligious dialogue. Therefore, the question then do religion want to be open or steadfast.⁴⁷ Why religions are untranslatable? Lindbeck explain that every concept or metaphor in religion has its own context.⁴⁸ Translation will separate the text and the context, the result is neutralization of religious beliefs, practices and text. Something is lost.⁴⁹ Lindbeck argue that it is not possible to translate the Christian concept of God into the way in which this concept functions in Hinduism. That is why it is not possible to understand one religion on the basis of another, just as it is impossible to “translate” religious meanings by means of “foreign theories.”⁵⁰ This condition lead to what so called by Moyaert as *fragile hermeneutical space*⁵¹ because there is a gap between what is familiar and foreign with the interpreter of text or even religious concept.

In my opinion, it is very interesting that Moyaert is very open to the fragility in interreligious dialogue especially related to untranslatableability of religion. I argue that the case of trinity and tauhid in this paper may also become an example of untranslatableability of religions. Both religion have its own concept of monotheism which formed in its own time, with its own context, struggle and need. If this kind of concepts seen as ‘stumbling block’ of interreligious relation between Islam and Christen, it does not mean that this ‘stumbling block’ should hastily thrown away. Both side should be open to the fragility in their interreligious relation because of those untranslatableable concepts of faith. Finally, what is very interesting from Moyaert is her proposal about interreligious hospitality which also based on pneumatology. She mentioned that

“Theologically, it seems that this hermeneutical openness is possible only on the basis of an optimistic anthropology, a belief in the “readability” and thus comprehensibility of the creation, and the trust in faith that God also reveals himself in the other

⁴⁷ Marianne Moyaret, *Fragile Identity*:..., 7

⁴⁸ Marianne Moyaret, *Fragile Identity*:..., 158

⁴⁹ Marianne Moyaret, *Fragile Identity*:..., 158

⁵⁰ Marianne Moyaret, *Fragile Identity*:..., 158

⁵¹ Marianne Moyaret, *Fragile Identity*:..., 236 also see Daniel K. Listijabudi. *Bergulat DI Tepian: Pembacaan Lintas Textual Dua Kisah Mistik (Dewa Ruci dan Yakub di Yabok) untuk Membangun Perdamaian*, 2019, 86

religions. Here pneumatology seems to have an important role. Hospitality is assisted by the activity of the Spirit: “The Spirit makes it possible to accept the strangeness of others and to understand strange languages. The Spirit sets people in motion toward others, toward strangers” (Sundermeier 1996: 211). Christians ask the Spirit for support in the hermeneutical process. From a Christian theological perspective, the hermeneutical attitude also implies a praying attitude. The Christian asks for the gift of the Holy Spirit to understand the religious other properly. Theologically, this testifies to a trust in the activity of the Spirit that people hazard the hermeneutical process and “expropriate” themselves to receive the strange in what is their own. The Spirit leads the community to the truth (John 16:13). “The wind blows wherever it pleases” (John 3:8). But it is also the Spirit who warns against claims to domination. From this perspective, interreligious hermeneutics means receiving the religious other, thanks to the Spirit’s help, in trust. This trust makes it possible to adopt an attitude of receptivity in hermeneutical hospitality and to allow one’s own “structure of prejudices” to be interrupted. The Spirit makes it possible to understand the “strange religious languages” (Acts 2). The Spirit does not remove the differences but makes them accessible.”⁵²

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Christian and Islam have its own concept of monotheism or oneness of God. It is formed in its own context and it is untranslatable. If this both concept put as ‘stumbling block’ of interreligious relation between the two religions, then it will be happened, but it also can be a way for better interreligious dialogue if both religion accept its fragility and develop hospitality based on its own theological concept.

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⁵² Marianne Moyaret, *Fragile Identity:....*, 267

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