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Forgiveness According to the Christian View in the Indonesian Context

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Abstract. Horizontal conflicts are triggered by intolerant attitudes. Intolerance arises when religious fanaticism is too excessive and there is no forgiveness. This research aims to describe forgiveness from a Christian point of view. To achieve this goal, the research was carried out with a qualitative approach using library research methods. The results show that for Christians, (i) forgiveness is the main condition for obtaining God's grace, (ii) forgiveness is God's commandment for His people to forgive fellow human beings, as God's model provides forgiveness to sinful humans by sacrificing Jesus Christ, and (iii) forgiveness is the need of people who believe in God, because without forgiving others, including their enemies, we will not get blessings from God. Forgiveness is the social capital of Christians to care for pluralism, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Unity of Indonesia. With forgiveness, any conflicts that arise in the midst of society, the country, or even the world can be resolved.

Keywords. Forgiveness; Christian view; social capital; Indonesian

1. Introduction

Indonesia is known as a model of a tolerant country, where religion and democracy can coexist. However, this image has begun to be questioned in the last five years. This was due to, among other things, the burning of places of worship, mass mobilization to protest against the former Governor of DKI Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, in 2017 (Cahyo Pamungkas, 2020), and the kicking and dumping of offerings at the site of the eruption of Mount Semeru in 2022 (Kurniawan, 2022).

This phenomenon can trigger horizontal conflict or hostility between religious adherents if it is not anticipated or resolved. Anticipating or resolving this problem is not only the task of the government but also of religious leaders and all followers of that religion. One of the religions in Indonesia is Christianity.

For Christians, the key to reducing conflict and, at the same time, avoiding inter-religious conflicts is forgiveness. Forgiveness is something that is closely related to Jesus' command to love one's neighbor.

In this era of information and technology, humans make mistakes against others, both consciously and unconsciously. This tendency tends to increase. Differences in choices, differences of opinion, and differences in beliefs can be a source of conflict if they are not accompanied by an attitude of tolerance and mutual forgiveness.

In a pluralistic country, such as Indonesia, forgiveness is an important factor in maintaining pluralism, unity, and integrity within the nation and homeland. For a people created by God, forgiveness is the basis for the realization of the national goal, namely a just and prosperous society.

Forgiveness is healing from the wounded memory of the offended person. Forgiveness does not mean erasing the experience felt by the person who was hurt (Soesilo, 2006). Forgiveness is a complex phenomenon that is related to the emotions, thoughts, and behavior of the person who gives forgiveness, so that the person who feels guilty about the person who hurts is slightly reduced (McCullough, 2000).

Forgiveness is a process, because forgiveness is not just a decision of the will to force oneself to give forgiveness to the person who hurt immediately. Forgiveness takes time and patience from the forgiver. Forgiveness is not something we do, but something that happens to us. If we allow healing to happen, we will realize that forgiveness also occurs (Meninger, 2009).

Forgiveness is the attitude of an individual who has been hurt, not to take revenge against the perpetrator, and there is no desire to stay away from the perpetrator. Forgiveness is the good intention or desire of the person who was hurt to make peace and do good to the perpetrator, even though the perpetrator has committed hurtful behavior (Sari, 2012).

Based on the background of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to explain forgiveness from a Christian perspective.

2. Research Methods

This research is qualitative and uses a literature study approach. Information is searched in two ways: the first through a personal library and the second through a directory open access journal (DOAJ) by selecting articles with the search keyword "forgiveness". The information collected was analyzed qualitatively by grouping the information according to existing themes and then looking for the relationship between these themes. The results of the analysis are understood (Kaelan, 2012) to create information (intelligence) (Tulungen et al., 2021) in the Indonesian context, then conclusions and suggestions are drawn.

3. Results and Discussion

Forgiveness is God's grace.

Forgiveness is a wonderful gift from God. Psalm 130:4 says, "But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared". It is God who gave His own Son as a propitiatory sacrifice between God and His people. Forgiveness is valid only because He gives blood to make atonement (Leviticus 17:11).

Forgiveness occurs only because God loves to forgive (Neh 9:17) and loves His people (Daniel 9:9). This forgiveness is based on God's gracious nature (Exodus 34:6). Therefore, God also asks his people to be willing to forgive and love others based on love, as God's example has forgiven humans.

Forgiveness is a gift from God. This can be seen, among other things, can be read in Holy Bible: Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us", Isaiah 38:17b, "for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back", Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins", Jeremiah 31:34c. "saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" and Micah 7:19c, "and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea". These verses state the perfection of Allah's forgiveness, which takes away the sins of mankind as a gift for His people (Zuck, 1999).

Forgiveness for Christians is a gift from God. Human sins are forgiven by God's grace by sacrificing His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for human sins against God. It is this grace of God that sets an example for His people, which just as God has bestowed salvation on His people, so humans, as His people, must be willing to sacrifice for the sake of reconciliation between humans and each other. Based on this fact, it is appropriate for humans who have obtained the gift of salvation from Him through forgiveness from God Himself to follow His example and forgive others.

Forgiveness is God's Command.

All religions teach about the commandment of forgiveness, as does Christianity. Forgiveness is at the core of the rules of religious life, society, and the state. The commandment to forgive fellow human beings is universal. Christians have taught and practiced forgiveness and made forgiveness the main focus of their relationship with God and fellow human beings. The Lord Jesus taught us that forgiveness is the main condition for following Him. He emphasizes forgiveness not only in theory or in His teachings, but also in his exemplary practice in the world.

Forgiveness is the first and most important condition for followers of Christ. Followers of Christ (Christians) are asked by God to forgive others so that God forgives us. This can be seen in Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses", and Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that you may not be judged," and Matthew 6:12, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors".

Furthermore, Matthew 6:14–15 explains and sharpens the issue of forgiveness. Human forgiveness of others is not the basis for God's forgiveness, but is evidence of a life lived according to the principle of God's grace (Guthrie, 1982). The same relationship is also found in verse 15, "but if you do not forgive other people's sins against you, then your heavenly Father will not forgive your sins against Him" (Newman & Stine, 2008). This is an important principle regarding the way God forgives sins.

Christians are constantly taught to forgive their enemies. If the left cheek is slapped, also give the right cheek to be slapped. Furthermore, Christians are asked to forgive their fellow human beings not only seven times, but seventy times seven times. One of the New Testament's most impressive parables, that of the prodigal son, has to do with forgiveness. The parable of the lost sheep also emphasizes divine forgiveness. When teaching prayer, Jesus stated that forgiveness is one of the main conditions for prayer being acceptable to the Father. It is from forgiveness that our prayers flow. In this passage, Jesus emphasizes that we cannot go before God if our relationship with others is not good. When speaking of a person who comes before the altar with an offering to the Lord (Matthew 5:23-24).

Forgiveness is one of the commands of Jesus that must be done. Because we have been forgiven by God first through the self-sacrifice of Jesus. Martin Luther also found that the greatest miracle in Christianity is God's forgiveness (Bjorge, 1990). In the process, forgiveness cannot come just by praying and reading the Bible, but requires a process and commitment that may take a long time, but if you have a sincere intention and heart, it can be done.

Forgiveness is a human need.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This verse means that in order to forgive others, we need to first receive forgiveness from God. God has forgiven our sins many times. He teaches

us that forgiveness must really be done continuously until we are able to free someone from guilt (Matthew 18:22).

We must learn to forgive others in the same way that God has forgiven us for our far greater sins. We need to let go of our burdens by forgiving others so that we can live God's commandments to race to achieve our ultimate goal in life.

Forgiveness is a human need, both for the hurt and the hurt. Yusuf had to wait quite a long time to be able to express his forgiveness towards his brothers. Yusuf was not traumatized by his brother's abuse and hated when he met his brother, but instead the joy that occurred because Yusuf had long waited for the time to forgive his brothers. Joseph was very grateful for this encounter. Without this encounter, Joseph would not have had the opportunity to express his apologies to his brothers (Genesis 45:1-28).

Forgiveness is liberation from punishment or demands (Wiriadinata, 2002). Forgiveness means the restoration of personal relationships that were not good. Forgiveness is the act of forgiving the wrongdoer. This is the same as a person who does not demand that others pay their debts. Forgiving another person means that we are no longer annoyed and hurt by him or her for the mistake that was made. From the Bible, we learn that we must truly love someone in order to forgive him, because love does not record loss (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).

Forgiveness is a condition for receiving God's blessing.

The purpose of the paralyzed man and his four friends coming to the Lord Jesus was to receive healing, not forgiveness. But why did the Lord Jesus only say, "Your sins are forgiven"? It turns out that forgiveness of sins is the first step that must be fulfilled in the healing process. To receive healing, sins must be forgiven first, so we are taught to forgive others (Matthew 9:1-8).

Forgiveness from the Father is also a definite answer to prayer. If we forgive, the Father will also forgive us. This principle is clearly stated in Matthew 6:15 and Mark 11:25. When we sincerely forgive our enemies, Allah will also forgive our sins. Therefore, the teachings of forgiveness and love must always be applied in the life of the congregation, society, and state.

The Lord Jesus gave an example of sincere and loving forgiveness, namely when He was undergoing the crucifixion on the cross, He still said to God for those who overtook Him: "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34). Jesus' teaching about forgiveness is very different from the others. He sets an example of how to forgive those who have wronged us (our enemies). We must give sincere forgiveness to our enemies so that we do not fall into the same sin or other sins. Don't repeat the same sin or mistake.

The Christian teaching and way of life always teaches us to love and forgive one another sincerely. This can be seen in how the Lord Jesus taught His people, namely: "*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*" (Matthew 5:39). This teaching is difficult, even illogical, to implement, but must be obeyed because this is the word of God.

God's role in the forgiveness process is very important. Through prayer, the path to sincere forgiveness can be worked out. Prayer is a great first step, rich with hope, faith, and finally, love, as we will experience it with love. In love is forgiveness (Meninger, 2009).

Forgiveness is a process (not once) that must be prayed for and done in community and congregational life. As a process, to arrive at the goal, it will definitely face many problems. Problems can definitely be solved when we are always attached to God and ask for help from God. The simplest example is when we pray for our enemies. It is difficult at first, but by asking for God's guidance, we can do it so that we may arrive at what is called sincere forgiveness.

Forgiveness does not mean a form of release from the responsibility of the perpetrator. The guilty person still has to be responsible for what he did to others, to society, to himself and to God. Giving forgiveness is a divine act. To forgive means to share in the unconditional love that comes from God; only God can release a person from responsibility for his or her sin. When we forgive the person who has wronged us, we do not consider the wrongdoing to be okay or release that person from responsibility. Furthermore, forgiving is not only for the sake of the person being forgiven but also for our own sake. However, forgiveness is our own need to forgive others as a form of our responsibility and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

True forgiveness does not arise from a great desire to become a Christian. When forgiveness occurs, it is more of something that happened to us than something that we worked very hard for. Forgiveness comes as a by-product of our healing. If our wounds are healed, then there is no reason not to give forgiveness.

The freedom resulting from forgiveness gives rise to new responsibilities that require new decisions. Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness but of strength. Our strength will come from love and freedom. Our forgiveness does not depend on the person who wronged us, no matter whether they sincerely repent or repeat the wrong against us. The main forgiveness is for ourselves and then for those who have wronged us (Meninger, 2009).

Forgiving and forgetting are two different things. Basically, we cannot forget the mistakes of others, even though we may recall them at any time. To forgive is to forgive other people's mistakes in order to make the condition of the heart safe and the situation peaceful, so when we remember that person's mistakes, we are not hurt anymore because we have made peace with them.

Some of the reasons why people find it difficult to forgiveness, among others: (i) mistakes that are too heavy to be forgiven, (ii) experiencing an unforgettable heartache, and (iii) fearing that the same incident will happen again. From some of the things above, it is clear that there are many reasons people find it difficult to forgive. But forgiveness is one of the commandments God teaches us to do. Forgive others as God has forgiven us first. Forgiving others doesn't mean we don't care about the painful events that occurred at that time, but when we forgive, we let our lives get out from the hatred that becomes a trap.

Furthermore, forgiveness will occur more easily if the offending party has, among other things, empathy (McCullough, 2000). (ii) admission of guilt; (iii) minor degree of injury (Zechmeister et al., 2004). (iv) positive personality traits (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). (v) good interpersonal relationships, and (vi) apologizing to the offended party (the victim) (McCullough, 2000).

Forgiveness will always occur if we do it based on principles, such as: (i) forgiving others because Jesus forgave us first. Forgiveness doesn't mean we approve of what was wrong or pretend it never happened, but we still remember it painlessly. If we forgive others, God will also forgive us (Matthew 6:15, 15), (ii) harboring anger and resentment so that we can live a more peaceful, healthy, and happy life (Proverbs 14:30; Matthew 5:9). (iii) realize that we are not perfect (James 3:2), so we can certainly make mistakes and hope that others will also forgive us (Matthew 7:12) and (iv) try to forgive others as quickly as possible (Ephesians 4:26, 27).

Forgiveness as Social Capital for Caring for Pluralism

Forgiveness as a command of God means that every believer must obey the command. Every Christian is obedient to God's commandments. Every person must practice forgiveness in their life. Forgiveness must be practiced by the devout Christian for those who have offended him. To create religious people, religious education, especially forgiveness, needs to be taught

and practiced in people's lives from an early age, namely in the education of children and adolescents (Muchtar, 2019).

Forgiveness, according to the psychological approach, is something that must be done by someone who has been hurt in order to be free from psychological and moral pressures that can negatively affect their health. Forgiveness is seen as something that can be managed and taught to reduce stress and improve health (Leget, 2020). This means that people are taught to forgive others who are guilty so that they feel relieved and free from the burden of sin.

Forgiveness is a manifestation of the spiritual capacity of humans. The higher the spirituality, the greater the willingness to forgive. This means that the higher the understanding of the theory or teachings, the more the practice of forgiveness can be practiced in everyday life. Therefore, efforts to continuously teach people to improve their spiritual understanding and practice forgiveness in their daily lives are important. This fact indicates that it is very important for religious institutions to continue to teach their people in order to improve their spiritual abilities.

In the context of Indonesia, Protestant Christianity is one of the six religions in the country. The Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM) is one of the church denominations of Protestant Christianity. GMIM has about 1 million members. The GMIM is obliged to teach its people to forgive fellow humans who have wronged us.

The GMIM teaches its people to forgive others as a condition for following Christ. The church teaches forgiveness and at the same time asks its people to practice forgiveness for others, even for enemies. People who have the willingness to forgive are very important social capital, not only for caring for differences in ethnicity, church denomination, and religion, but also for maintaining the unity and integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The GMIM, as an integral part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, is called to teach people who are obedient to God's commands. Obedient people are people who like to forgive, which is a very important social capital in caring for diversity. GMIM, as a religious institution, has made a real contribution to creating people who like to give forgiveness (as social capital). People who like to forgive are people who are very tolerant of differences. This is a very important social capital to maintain inter-religious harmony, the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation.

Forgiveness is the highest spiritual capacity of today's human beings to maintain the freedom of oneself and others (Matjcková, 2017). This means that in the information and ICT era, the industrial era 4.0, forgiveness becomes very important in maintaining the freedom of oneself and others. The success of taking care of the freedom of self and others (peace with fellow human beings) is the first step to preventing horizontal conflicts, whether due to religious, ethnic, regional, or state issues.

By forgiving, we can forgive one another, starting from one person to another, one brother to another, one neighbor to another, one tribe to another, one group to another, one region to another, one country to another and one religion to another (Yasir, 2014). With the forgiveness, coexistence and state life can take place well so that development in Indonesia, in particular, and the world in general can also take place well.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

Forgiveness according to the Christian view is: (i) forgiveness is the main condition for obtaining God's grace; (ii) forgiveness is God's commandment for His people to forgive fellow human beings, as God's example provides forgiveness to sinful humans by sacrificing

Jesus Christ; (iii) forgiveness is the need of people who believe in God; without forgiving others, including their enemies, we will not receive blessings from God; and (iv) forgiveness is the main condition for following Jesus and being forgiven.

Suggestion

Forgiveness is the social capital of Christians to care for pluralism, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Unity of Indonesia. With forgiveness, every conflict that arises in society, the country, and even the world, both horizontal and vertical, can be muted or resolved.

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