



# Reclaiming Jesus as source of peace in Luke 12:49–53 through the perspective of religious pluralism in an Indonesian context

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The reality of religious pluralism such as that possessed by the Indonesian people could be an opportunity to knit a peaceful togetherness, or it could be a threat and a trigger for conflict. One threat to the diversity of religions stems from religious teachings that tend to be exclusive in nature by emphasising the justification of one's own religion and viewing different religions as a challenge, even as the enemy. In the teachings of every religion, there are sacred texts, which, if read literally, can be texts of terror that give rise to permissive attitudes towards various acts of violence, hatred and hostility in the name of religion. This research aims to find the theological vision of the Gospel of Luke 12:49–53 and to explain its relevance in relation to the reality of religion and peace in the context of the pluralistic society in Indonesia. This research uses qualitative research methods through a literature study approach. The data analysis uses half of the historical criticism method, which starts from the translation of the text with our criticism of the sources behind the text, and then moves to an analysis of the historical context as the background of the text. Furthermore, exegesis is done to explore the meaning of Luke 12:49–53.

**Contribution:** This article contributes to developing the contextual hermeneutics of the text Luke 12: 49–53 and reclaiming Jesus as the source of peace which inspires the peaceful relationship between religions in the context of religious pluralism such as in an Indonesian context.

**Keywords:** Gospel of Luke; Jesus; Contextual; Hermeneutics; Pluralism; Religions; Peace; Bond of brotherhood; Indonesian.

## Introduction

In the context of religious pluralism such as in Indonesia, efforts to build harmony between religions are very important. The presence of religions can provide positive energy for developing the nation or alternatively can trigger problems that lead to religious conflict (Miharja & Mulyana 2019:121). John Titaley explained that ever since the proclamation of independence on 17 August 1945, Indonesia has struggled with the problem of identity. Indonesia is known as a nation that consists of many traditional societies with great social, cultural and religious diversity. Many questions arise regarding the nature of this nation and its future. Therefore, the struggle to keep it as a nation-state that started with its independence is not over yet (Titaley 2002). In the struggling, religions play an important role – not only to determine the future of the nation but also to build social harmony in a pluralistic society. We found that religion can conduct interpretation of the sacred religious texts involving the pluralist perspective such as in the pluralism in Indonesian.

In the Bible, in the New Testament, specifically the Gospel of Luke, the vision of peace is the primary message of the proclamation about Jesus (Craddock 1990:35; Kayumba 2017:2; Perrin & Duling 1982:296; Plummer 1902:58; Schnelle 1998:245). In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is mentioned as the king of peace or the source of peace in the world. The Lucan narrative begins with the story of the birth of Jesus, the armies of heaven reciting the praise 'glory to God in the highest and peace on the earth among people who are pleasing to Him' (Lk 2:14). The song fulfilled the message that the angel had originally brought to Mary that Jesus who was born was a king of peace.

However, in the narration of the writer of the Gospel of Luke, the controversial teachings and words of Jesus also tell us, '[d]o you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division' (Lk 12:51). The divisions narrated in this narrative begin to occur from within a family alliance (household). In the historical tradition, the Jews strongly emphasised the

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importance of family harmony in Judaism. The tradition of hospitality becomes the adhesive values of social relations amongst family alliances and also with fellow countrymen. 'That is why Jesus' words here would strike the hearers strongly' (Keener 1993:226).

If Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:49–53 is understood literally, then the potential for conflict between religious communities can occur. The teachings of Jesus can be interpreted as legitimising violence, conflict and hostility. The primary question for the followers of Jesus is whether Jesus is a source of peace or a source of conflict? Of course, there are many religious texts like Luke 12:49–53 that, if interpreted in a taken-for-granted way, can threaten peace between various religious communities. This is a reason why religion can be blamed as a source of violence. This is explained by Johan Galtung, who states that religious teachings are one of the ideologies of cultural violence that can legitimise direct and structural violence (Galtung 1996:2). In the context of the pluralistic religious situation in Indonesia, Yusak Setyawan mentioned that conflicts and violence that use religion for legitimacy are still rife at present (Schumann 2011:487; Setyawan 2017:2). For this reason, the Gospel of Luke 12:49–53 needs to be interpreted as a theology in historical context that is full of constructive meaning, both for readers in the past and the present (Parihala 2014).

This study uses qualitative research methods, which aim to do descriptive analyses on data in the form of words, notes or texts that relate to meaning, value and understanding. The qualitative research model is carried out by interpreting the data concerning various aspects that may exist (Sugiyono 2018). Data analysis uses half of the historical criticism method, which starts with a translation of the text, with our criticism of the sources behind the text, and then moves to an analysis of the historical context as the background of the text. Moreover, exegesis is carried out to explore the meaning of Luke 12:49–53. Furthermore, the theological meaning and vision of the text found are discussed in greater depth for their relevance in the context of religious pluralism in Indonesia.

## Social setting and historical background of the Gospel of Luke

In this part we will not describe further the author, readers or Lucan community, nor the place and the time of writing of the gospel, as is usually done in historical criticism. In this article, we use Luke as the name of the author of the gospel, although it is still debatable (Burkett 2002:196; Perrin & Duling 1982; Schnelle 1998). Luke was written in the generation immediately following the fall of Jerusalem. Furthermore, his view of the church and its faith shows movement towards the institutionalism and theology characteristic of a later period. So, a date of AD 85, plus or minus 5 years or so, is appropriate (Perrin & Duling 1982:294). By the time of Luke's writing, the characteristic phase of the Christian movement before the fall of Jerusalem no longer existed in the same way. What we find is a growing Gentile Christianity more or less concerned with the Judaism it

ultimately descended from. The author is concerned particularly with the relationship between the church and the Roman Empire, but he also uses the earlier tradition of Hellenistic Jewish Mission Christianity. Perrin and Duling described that though the social relationship of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian church is a problem for the author of Luke–Acts, it is not major, nor is it the occasion for him writing his two-volume work. His major concerns are the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of its temple, the delay of the Parousia and the need to help the church normalise its relations with the Roman Empire and its members settle down to Christian witness in a continuing world (Perrin & Duling 1982:297).

## The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple

The Jews, who had been colonised by the Roman Empire since 63 BC, suffered severe oppression. There was, in effect, a declaration of war and revolt against Rome raised by some factions such as the Zealots (Horsley 1979, 1993, 2003). This revolt escalated in AD 66–70 and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Bernier 2013; Horsley 2014; Parihala 2014). During the spring of AD 70, Titus began the siege of Jerusalem, and the Jewish faction of the city united against a common enemy. Although they fought valiantly, Titus built a wall around the city, making it impossible for the Jews to get provisions. They were hungry and thirsty and then became weak. The Jews refused to surrender. Women, children and the elderly all were butchered, and the city and most of its walls were destroyed. The major battle was over. Titus set sail for Rome with 700 prisoners for the victory parade through Rome. The author of Luke interprets Jerusalem beyond the historical event of the destruction. Jerusalem is the place of the passion of Jesus, and the author of Luke regards its destruction as a consequence of that; Rome is the new centre of gravity for Christians. Jerusalem and its Temple are gone, but the preaching of the gospel in the world, of which Rome is the centre, remains (Perrin & Duling 1982:298).

## The relation between the Christian and the Roman Empire

The history of the New Testament is difficult to separate from the story about conflict and persecution. Writers in the early church were the first to label the cruel procedures of Nero against the Roman believers in Christ in the year AD 64 as persecution and the *institutum Neronianum* as the epitome of Roman measures against Christians. Domitianus (AD 81–96) was then the second emperor who at the end of his rule ordered the persecution of Christians (Stegemann & Stegemann 1995:317).

According to Perrin and Duling (1982:300), persecution in Luke is only a part of the whole problem of relations between the Christians and the Empire. As the author thinks of the long period of history before the Parousia, he has also to consider Christians living within that history, and that means

living within the historical circumstances dominated by Rome and the Roman Empire. The author of Luke consistently presents Roman authorities as sympathetic to the Christian movement. For example, Pilate finds no fault in Jesus (Lk 23:4); in Cyprus, the proconsul 'believes' (Ac 13:12); Galileo, proconsul of Achaia, takes Paul's side against the Jews (Ac 18:14–15) and so on. The Christians' difficulties are not the hostility of Roman authorities but the machinations of the Jews (Ac 13:28, 14:2, 18:12). Not only was this the theme of Christian preaching to Jews, but it also implied a claim that Christians shared the Jews' privilege of having their faith declared a 'legal religion' by the Romans, with its implications of tolerance and freedom to practise their rites. Thus, the author attempts to present the Roman authority to Christians, and the Christian to Roman authorities, in the best possible light, in the hope of fostering good relations between them (Perrin & Duling 1982:301).

## Exposition of Luke 12:49–53

This section (vv. 49–53) is part of the section on preparing for the coming judgement (12:1–13:9). Attention now turns to the coming judgement itself. Jesus has been commissioned to cast down upon the earth the fire of eschatological purgation, which is associated with that coming judgement. The time for the execution of that commission is not yet, but its purging flames are already anticipated in the baptism that is to be Jesus' own fate and in the heartbreak and challenge of the strife that, with the coming of Jesus, breaks apart the closest of human ties.

## Jesus comes to send fire onto the earth and to be baptised

<sup>49</sup>I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? <sup>50</sup>But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! (King James Version [KJV])

<sup>49</sup>I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! (New Revised Standard Version [NRSV])

Verses 49–50 are part of Luke's source because there is no parallel with other gospels, such as Matthew 10:34–36. John Nolland explained that the use of first-person verb formulation, such as the word *elthon* (ἤλθον), which means 'I (have) come', always refers to the purpose of the coming of Jesus (cf. Lk 4:43; 5:32; 19:10). In this passage, it is revealed that Jesus came to cast fire onto the earth. The words that have the closest parallels are Revelation 8:5,7,8 and 20:9 – with their apocalyptic imagery of judgement. Even in Semitic idioms, this expression is more akin to 'kindle' than to 'cast' (Is 9:4,5).

'Fire' here certainly belongs to the apocalyptic language of eschatological purgation and judgement. The word 'fire' can be understood as a sign of the glory of God, which will purify all people. This correlates with the word 'earth' used by Luke, so that it is not possible only for the Jewish

community but also gentiles and all creations on earth. Luke used the narrative relating to the Old Testament tradition, such as 2 Kings 1:10; Isaiah 66:15,16; Ezekiel 38:22; and Amos 1:4,7,10,14. The linked verses suggest that whilst the anticipated conflagration is yet withheld, its purging flames are anticipating Jesus' coming fate and the divisive strife to come upon his disciples. According to Nolland, in doing so the linked verses make it clear that Jesus does not stand over against the world as a fiery judge, but that he also must make his way through the end-time distress, for which it is his task to set ablaze the refiner's fire. In the context of Luke, this verse is intended to interpret the expectation of Jesus' presence as an imminent eschatological manifestation of Jesus' role in restoring a history of salvation (Nolland 1993:708).

Verse 50 begins with the connecting word 'but', which shows the paradox that Jesus had an eschatological vision to come to earth to all creation, but that his heart was full of distress. This anxious heart expresses the humanity of Jesus, who understands that his coming into the world is confronted with suffering. In the Septuagint (LXX), the precise imagery must belong to the Greek language phase of the tradition; the representation of the threat of disaster in terms of a flood of water is well attested in the Old Testament (e.g. 2 Sm 22:5; Ps 69:2–3, 15; 32:6; 124:4–5). In the Gospel of Luke's setting, there is, of course, no doubt that the coming passion is in view. We see it as not only about the passion of Jesus, but also about the passion of the followers of Jesus facing contradiction and conflict. As Christians, Jesus' teaching and experience could be a model to face the world and prepare oneself to face the threat of disaster. It connects to the historical story about the fall of Jerusalem, which lived at the time.

## Jesus as a source of peace

<sup>51</sup>Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: (KJV)

<sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! (NRSV)

The phrase 'do you think' at the beginning of this section signifies that Jesus' followers still live in the hope that Jesus is a messiah who comes to liberate the people from oppression and will bring peace in their life. However, here Luke shows the paradoxical language, 'do you think that ... no! I say to you ..., but ....' According to Nolland, the language here is deliberately paradoxical: 'peace' is self-evidently the goal of Jesus' ministry and of the Jewish eschatological hope that Luke confidently presents as finding its fulfilment in connection with Jesus (1:79; 2:14; 7:50; 8:48; 10:5–6; 19:38,42). However, Old Testament prophets had insisted that the day of the Lord so longed for would be 'darkness and not light, destruction, gloom, very terrible' (Am 5:16; Jl 1:15; 2:12,11,31; Is 13:6), and the apocalyptic tradition anticipated a time of great distress to usher in the end (of particular note in the present context are 4 Ezra 6:24: '[a]t the time friends make war on friends like enemies'; and Jub 23:16: 'they will strive

with one another; the young with the old and the old with the young') (Nolland 1993:709).

Luke relates this passage to verse 49, which confirms the meaning of Jesus' coming as an immanent eschatologist, who comes by throwing purification fire at all. Through this division, those who faithfully follow Jesus can be separated from those who refuse, including division between family members. Jesus' presence is indeed to bring peace (Lk 2:14), but not everyone on earth wants to welcome that peace, so that what happens is disagreement and separation. However, Jesus is not a source of conflict and division, but rather a source of peace.

Jesus as the source of peace is seen in the Greek. The Greek word that is used, *dounai* (δοῦναι), besides meaning 'to bring' (NRSV) and 'to give' (KJV), in the context of this text also means 'to present' or 'be a source of things' (Moulton 1978:107). This word is no longer placed together with the word *diamerismon* (διαμερισμόν), which means 'division'. The statement of Jesus edited in the form of a question is rhetorical – which confirms the main purpose: the question lies with the writer or speaker, not with the reader. The truth depends on the speaker (I), not on the listener (you). Jesus, in the form of a rhetorical question, revealed: '[d]o you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division'. In the main sentence, 'I come to bring peace [or 'be a source of peace'] on earth' is the main aim of Luke's description of Jesus. Then, the phrases 'you think' and 'all division' refer to an ambivalent expression – related to the response to the coming of Jesus from those who rejected and contradicted it. In the Jewish tradition, it was the belief of Jews that the Messiah would at once introduce a reign of peace and prosperity (Plummer 1902:334).

Here, the word peace [εἰρήνην], which originates or which is presented by Jesus, is the ultimate peace from God. Peace is not replaced by opposition, though. This is in line with the concept of peace [εἰρήνην] in the New Testament, which emphasises the unity of meaning, both in the Greek profane expression as opposed to the war, and peace as a sign of God's presence – a source of peace through Jesus Christ, bearer and mediator of peace between humans and God. So, this part can be interpreted as Jesus being the bearer and source [*dounai*] of peace.

Jesus gave a choice to his followers. If you read retrospectively and prospectively, it is found that Luke frames this story in an immanent eschatological perspective – that the second coming of Jesus will take place as Jesus has come and works to bring the kingdom of God into the world (Lk 12:32). The Lucan community that awaits the Parousia requires *Pistis* – faithfulness because the unfaithful will receive punishment for their unfaithfulness (Lk 12:46). The next choice the authors stressed prospectively is the importance of living in harmony with one another. Jesus told about two people who were in conflict. Before they reached the government and were dragged before the judge, they had to make peace (Lk 12:57–59). So, Jesus showed his mission to bring peace between people.

## Division in one house

For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. <sup>53</sup>The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. (KJV)

From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup>they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. (NRSV)

This section is one of the peculiarities of the Gospel of Luke that is not found in the Gospel of Matthew. Luke uses it with the intention of explaining that conflict as a consequence of choosing to follow Jesus can occur in a family context. The words '[f]or from henceforth' assert that the conflict began at the time of Jesus' ministry.

The contradictions or divisions mentioned in verse 51 have penetrated the intimacy of family relations. In accordance with Jewish tradition, a family consists of five elements of relationship: father, mother, son, daughter and daughter-in-law. Daughter-in-law is counted in the Jewish family structure because usually an adult man brings his wife to the house of his mother and father (Plummer 1902:335; Reiling & Swellengrebel 2005:442). Luke also explained in detail that there will be resistance between three against two and two against three. This means that resistance can occur between the many against the few, as well as the opposite of the few against the many. It can also refer to the conflict between Jews and believers in Christ, according to Luke's description (cf. Lk 12:11–2; Ac 17:5ff.) (Stegemann & Stegemann 1995:347–352).

In Jewish community life, the family gets a special place in the social environment of the community. The family is considered the core of society, so that everyone feels the family ties. As the core of society, the family also reflects the life of Jewish society. That means that if the family is harmonious, then the life of the community is as well. Therefore, Luke uses the family as the initial environment of the conflict described by Jesus because the family has a significant influence on people's lives.

This conflict involving the core elements of the family has a parallel with that told in Micah 7:6. This text influenced Jewish expectations about the coming of the Messiah, who was confronted with the collapse of morality of the people (Nolland 1993:710). So, rhetorically, the teachings of Jesus remind the community of Luke that the family should be the basis for building social harmony. We agree with Dunn (2003), who explains that:

[W]e should perhaps also recall that most vivid portrayal of conversion in the Jesus tradition, the parable of the prodigal son. It depicts the son as returning to his father and to his family household (Lk 15:17–24). This story reflects about the imagery of discipleship as new family in which God is father and fellow disciples are brother and sister to whom primary loyalty should be given. They can live in peace and joy. (pp. 592, 598)

## The reality of religious pluralism in Indonesia

In another article, I explained the sociological reality of Indonesia. I noted that Indonesia is the biggest multicultural country in the world (Parihala, Samson & Tika Lestari 2019). Related to this reality, we agree with Zainur Ittiad Amin's opinion that there is a fundamental issue with keeping the integration of Indonesia as a multicultural country. He says (Amin 2009):

It is difficult to unify a country as wide as Nusantara that has 17.508 islands, with citizens from two great races (Malay and Melanesia), over 350 tribes speaking in 583 dialects, and embracing the five major religions of the world. The varieties of these cultures and geographical conditions make that the Nation of Indonesia easier becomes fragile. (p. 2)

Deni Miharja and M. Mulyana explained a sad reality faced by the Indonesian people, who are known as a pluralistic nation, partly because of the diversity of their religions. This fact is expressed as follows (Miharja & Mulyana 2019):

It is unfortunate, almost a decade ago, a series of conflicts and violence with religious nuances continues to occur in Indonesia, ranging from religious riots in provincial cities in 1995–2001, campaigns against anti-witchcraft sorcerers in Java and conflicts between religious groups in Central Sulawesi and Maluku in 1998–2001, until the mobilisation of religious-based paramilitary troops and bombings carried out by terrorist groups in the name of jihad in 2000–2005. (p. 121)

Another challenge faced by all religions in Indonesia is identity politicisation based on identity diversity in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Frans Magnis-Suseno explained that often the democratic freedoms that we fought for 20 years ago were misused to play with identity for political gain. That is especially true for the politics of religious identity. Whilst ethnicity and ethnic identity can be restricted to certain areas, religion is different. We all have religious identities. If that identity is manipulated to distinguish between friend and foe, national unity is destroyed. If the national awareness that 'we are all sons and daughters of Indonesia' is replaced by 'we demand attention for our group', the Indonesian nation may disintegrate. The challenge of politicising this sense of identity is very strong, especially in the political arena. Political actors freely use religion as an instrument to gain power on the one hand and sacrifice the unity of the nation on the other (Magnis-Suseno 2018; Miharja, Mulyana & Izzan 2019).

Indonesia has been known and recognised by the world as a pluralistic nation, but it is unified under one government, namely, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

This unity is truly realised and bound by its sacred motto, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* [Unity in Diversity]. This confirms that the unity of the nation, based on the great consensus to accept each other in the diversity of each one's respective identity, aims to maintain the integrity and peace of life as an independent nation. This goal is the common goal of all components of the nation, including all religions that live together in Indonesia. If so, then the interpretation of sacred texts in each religion requires an Indonesian perspective on acceptance, recognition and appreciation of the reality of pluralism, including religious pluralism.

## Reading Luke 12:48–53 through the perspective of religious pluralism

Re-reading the Gospel of Luke 12:49–53 is a process of contextualising theology in Indonesia. Ebenhaizer Nuban Timo described it as '[c]ontextualize the Gospel in the Indonesian Earth'. According to Timo, this is not merely an *acta cognito* [intellectual exercise], but an accountability of faith, an *acta credo* of Indonesian Christians (Nuban Timo 2019).

The Gospel of Luke 12:49–53, if read and interpreted regardless of its historical context, can be a text of terror in the context of Indonesia's pluralism. This text can be used to give legitimacy to attitudes of religious extremism that perpetuate violence, opposition and the politicisation of identity, which results in conflict and division. Followers of Jesus can postulate that Jesus has shown that his way is the way of division, and that is why the path they are taking is also the way of division. Readings and interpretations such as these are not only taken out of the context that produces the essential meaning of the text, but also bring disaster to humanity, which is contrary to the noble nature of the presence of religions (also Jesus' mission) – to bring peace on earth.

On the contrary, reading and interpreting scriptural texts with a historical theological approach within the pluralistic sociocultural lens of Indonesia reveal some essential meanings of the Gospel of Luke 12:49–53. Firstly, religions should require a 'fire' in the midst of their struggles in the world. The religious fondness for allowing oneself to be an instrument of propaganda, violence and conflict needs to be transformed. Jesus' foretelling that he will come to throw fire onto the earth aims to purify humanity from various tendencies to commit evil and oppress others. In fact, the oppression that caused the suffering must also be experienced by Jesus because of the greed of religious and imperial powers at that time, which was unjust. However, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' agonising suffering is interpreted as a baptismal deed – immersing himself completely in God's grace to offer salvation and peace to the world. It inspires Christians to be brave, although they have to face the threat of disaster to present peace in the world. Being Christian in the Indonesian context means not merely waiting to have peace, but rather struggling to bring peace.

Secondly, religion needs to be aware of its nature as a source of peace. Jesus' rhetorical statement, '[d]o you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division', emphasises the answer to a reality outside of it that actually lies in the existence of the speaker. The Gospel of Luke summarises the existence of Jesus, who came into the world to bring heavenly peace from God so that all creation in diversity can enjoy it. In other words, the existence of Jesus is a source of peace. Then, Jesus' expression is closely related to what Frans Magnis-Suseno said about the politicisation of identity. Jesus reminded his disciples to be vigilant and not to be people who are infatuated with politicising their religious identity to clash with one another's religious communities. That is what happened in the time of Jesus. Because of the different responses to Jesus' return, his arrival is seen as a source of division. Religions have their own uniquenesses that distinguish them from one another. The uniquenesses cannot be reconciled, but they also do not have to be opposed; they can be valuable and embraced as a combination of positive energy to advance harmonious coexistence. In Indonesia, embracing differences has become a shared vision of the founding fathers of this nation by accepting *Pancasila* as the basis of our country, as well as embracing the diversity of the nation according to the motto of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* [Unity in Diversity].

Thirdly, Jesus' teaching reminds religious people to make the family a basis for building harmony in diversity. Families must not be hostile to each other just because of the different religious belief responses. If this text is read in the culture of one community in Indonesia, namely, in Maluku, then the real harmony of families of different religions is a social reality and a theological reality. The Maluku people have lived for a long time in the *pela-gandong* cultural heritage, which asserts that all Moluccans, whatever their different religions and tribes, are fellow brothers [*pela*] who come from the same womb [*gandong*] of the Maluku ancestor (Lalopua & Iwamony 2019). The primary goal of living together as *pela-gandong*, unity in diversity, is to embrace and be embraced (Iwamony, Gaspersz & Souisa 2019). The culture of *pela-gandong* emphasises a collective identity of the community as fellow brothers and sisters conceived from the womb of the same ancestor. When people then embrace different religions and live within their respective religious communities, the bond of brotherhood is still built up in the cultural rituals of *pela-gandong* (Lestari & Parihala 2020:51).

For example, according to Lattu, the church and mosque in Maluku highlight how intertwined Christianity and Islam are in a given religious shrine. Rooted in the collective memory of cultural networks, or *pela-gandong*, the churches and mosques of local communities in Maluku convey interreligious-cultural aspects. The church in Tuhaha, a Christian village, for instance, holds a Muslim pillar in the middle of the sanctuary. Tuhaha's *pela*, Rohomoni (a Muslim village), donated the pillar to the Christian church. During the inauguration of the church, the imam of Rohomoni, along with elders from both Tuhaha and Rohomoni, inaugurated

the pillar according to Islamic tradition. The pillar holds the name of Rohomoni (Muslim), but stands inside the Christian sanctuary. Considering the visibility of the name Rohomoni on the pillar, Christian worship in the church functions as a moment of remembrance of the Muslim *pela*. In the same way, the mosque of Batu Merah (Muslim) holds four pillars for its *pela* from a Christian village named Ema. Through oral narratives and cultural practices of the mosque's annual renovation, before the Holy Ramadan, the people of Batu Merah transfer the narrative of the Christian-Muslim relationship behind the four pillars to the younger generations. Therefore, any time of prayer in the Batu Merah mosque serves as a moment of cultural-interreligious engagement with Christians through the symbol of the pillars (Lattu 2019b:83).

Thus, religious differences do not become a contested problem. Instead, they become a unique way to strengthen brotherly relations, and they can continue to mutually transform relationships. Mutual transformation goes beyond religious pluralism because it invites people to be involved in a deep dialogue and to be openhearted to learn from the teachings of other religious traditions. Mutual transformation has brought new hope to religious relations. In mutual transformation, religious adherents also have a great chance to understand and interact deeply with other religious people (Lattu 2019a:19). Thus, through the sociocultural lens and in the reality of religious pluralism in Indonesia, the sacred texts of each religion can be reinterpreted to make harmony and peace.

## Conclusion

The theological vision of the Gospel of Luke 12:49–53 is to preach about the presence of Jesus as an imminent eschatological event, igniting the fire of the purification of life, presenting separation as a human response to both those who accept and reject his presence. The paradoxical response – some accept and others reject the presence of Jesus – is the root of the divisions and conflicts that occur, even within the family unit. These divisions and conflicts occur not because Jesus brought them, but because of ambivalent human attitudes that contradict one another. Ambivalence is an attitude that finds it difficult to accept different realities and tends to make it a trigger for conflict or terror. It is this attitude that drives the emergence of identity politicisation, which results in divisions within different religious communities.

The Bible unfolds virtuous values in reflection on the historical experiences of the author and reader. By reinterpreting it, we find meaning that is relevant to the reader of the text, in the past and the present. Through the reinterpretation of the Gospel of Luke 12:49–53, we can understand that Jesus is a source of peace. This message provides inspiration for Christianity and the church as followers of Jesus to continue to bring and struggle for peace, even though in the world around us, even in the smallest units, such as families, attitudes of division and conflict arise.

Religion can be a reference to God's way as a source of peace. Thus, religions are also called to promote the path of peace as a religious attitude in the midst of pluralistic realities.

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### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this research article.

### Authors' contributions

Y.P. and B.B. contributed to the design and implementation of the research, analysis of the results and writing of the article.

### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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### Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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