

Appendix B: The War of Words: Voices of the Christians

For quite a long time after I had started my research in Kolojonggo, I had an impression that Christian villagers, though a minority, were not in a weak or defensive position vis-à-vis Muslim villagers. Several factors helped me to gain this impression: first, the three Christian *kadus* of the total nineteen *kadus* in Sumber happened to live in Kolojonggo and in its two neighbouring hamlets. The *lurah* in Sumber and two of the eight officials in the *kelurahan* office were also Christians.¹ This composition allowed me to think that Christians represented themselves well, and in some sense, better than Muslims, in the village government.² Secondly, religious activities of Christians were no less prominent than those of Muslims. They gathered once a week to study the Bible, while the youth had their own independent weekly meetings. As the Protestant and Catholic villagers ran their religious meetings separately, I was sometimes invited to Christian gatherings up to six times a week (including two Sunday Services in the Protestant *kapel* (chapel) and in the Catholic Church). Thirdly, Christians showed much stronger solidarity than Muslims. When a *kendhuri* or other ritual was held in a Christian family, not only the Christians from Kolojonggo but those from neighbouring hamlets came to help the host. Fourth, Christians participated in public events more actively than Muslims. Their presence was more clearly visible in *gotong-royong* and in funerals, two of the most frequently held public events. I considered the solidarity of Christians and their active involvement in public affairs as manifestations of their confidence in village life. Fifthly, unlike the public discourse of Muslims, that in the *umat Kristen* seldom dealt with problems related to Islam and Muslims. As I assumed that frequent discussions about Christianity and Christianisation among Muslims were based on their feeling of crisis, namely, that the *umat* Islam was in danger from Christians' attack, I attributed the lack of the public discourse about Islam in the *umat Kristen* to their confidence in religious life. I supposed that it should be those in a weaker position who were more aggressive and were more conscious of the situation in which they were located than those in a stronger position.

As I directed my research more at the relations between Christians and Muslims in Kolojonggo, and especially after I met several priests and clergymen, my view changed gradually. I came to learn of their pessimistic evaluation of their situation in relation to Muslims, namely, that Muslims interfered in the internal affairs of the *umat Kristen* to the extent that the Church could not carry out its own

¹ One of the two RW heads and three of the five RT heads in Kolojonggo were also Christians.

² Around one fourth of the total population in Kolojonggo were Christians in 1993. According to the official statistics, about 10 percent of the total population in the *kelurahan* Sumber were Christians in 1990.

religious activities, these pressures from Muslims had become stronger, and, in spite of these, Christians had no power to defend themselves.

As my view of Christians' position shifted, I began to interpret my previous experiences from a different angle. Christians' active involvements in religious and social activities were considered more and more as an adaptive strategy to protect their community from the threats of Muslims. I started to interpret a long session announcing miscellaneous news about the Protestant villagers in Sunday services and Christians' frequent visits to other Christians in other hamlets as their deliberate efforts to build and to maintain solidarity among themselves. I began to consider Christians' inclusive attitude toward other Christians and their reluctance to vilify Christians, to evaluate other Christians' religiosity, and to criticise wrong doings of Christians as their attempts to embrace all Christians under the rubric of the *umat Kristen*, not discriminating one from the others.³ Sometimes, this attitude seemed to go to an extreme, giving an impression that these efforts were desperate, as the following case shows:

About ten minutes after the study session of the Bible study group for youth had started, Mas Gin and Mas Gun appeared. They did not sit with others who seated themselves in a circle. Instead, they found their seats outside the circle, leaning against the wall. It happened that they sat just behind me, giving me a chance to exchange brief greetings with them and to chat for a while. The study session went as usual. One girl who had been appointed as a chair person the previous week gave her exegeses of several passages in the Bible. After this, others made comments on her exegeses, adding their own interpretations. When the session finished and all participants lowered their heads to carry out a collective prayer, I suddenly felt a kick on my back. I looked back and found Mas Gin smiling at me. With his finger, he signalled me to come to him. As I approached him, he, still smiling, asked a question. It seemed that he tried hard to keep his voice down, but, his voice was much louder than the prayer that the girl was leading. 'Can you smell something from my mouth?' I tried to smell it, but I could not. I said, 'No'. Hearing this, he gave me a smile filled with pride and said, 'I had just finished half a bottle of whisky and came here.' His voice was still loud, so that other youth busy sending their messages to Father in Heaven (*Bapak di Syurga*) were certainly able to hear what he was saying. Mas Gin and Mas Gun

³ In Indonesia, Protestantism and Catholicism are treated as if they are different religions. Many Muslims considered them two different religions, and a few Christians shared this view. In spite of this, the attitude of the Protestant villagers towards the followers of Catholicism or vice versa was inclusive and both of them emphasised the commonality that they shared rather than distinctiveness. This inclusive attitude was expressed more clearly in the domains which may not be considered as religious *per se*. For example, the Protestant *kaum* in Kolojonggo officiated at *kendhuri* in Catholic families and, when the Protestant *kaum* celebrated a *kendhuri*, a Catholic villager led the prayer, although the prayers of the Protestant and Catholic villagers were somewhat different.

had apparently been drinking alcohol together. Hearing our conversation, Mas Gun also gave me a big smile. When Mas Gin finished talking, the prayer that the girl was leading was clearly heard: 'Father (*Bapak*), please give us a strong faith, so that we may not go astray and follow the ways that Father taught to us. ... Father in Heaven, we have already listened to Your Words (*FirmanNya*). Please help us with Your Holy Spirit (*Roh Engkau yang Kudus*), so that the Language of Your Spirit (*Bahasa Roh Engkau*) may fill our life.' Now that I did not give him any praise, which he might have expected from me, nor showed any further interest, Mas Gin made another move. At this time, he pointed out a calendar on which a Western girl posed in her bikini. Noticing that I also looked at the picture, he positioned his thumb between index and middle fingers, a sign signifying sexual intercourse, and said that she was good to 'eat'. Mas Gun, who kept watching us, also took the same position and commented to Mas Gin, 'Please, 'eat!'' Then, they looked at each other and giggled for a while. The prayer finished and the next session began in which an organiser of the Bible study group gave a brief comment on the whole process of the meeting. Even in this session, Mas Gun and Mas Gin did not stop talking. As their previous interest was in sex, they started to talk about girls. Mas Gin said that he had recently got a magical operation to insert *susuk* (a small piece of gold or diamond) in his face to attract girls. Mas Gun did not want to lose. He began to talk about *ilmu* enabling him to attract girls, arguing that the group from which he had learned this *ilmu* was the most powerful one in Yogyakarta. When his story touched on how to obtain the *ilmu*, a topic which was interesting enough to draw my attention, they had to stop talking. The meeting ended and snacks and drinks started to be delivered.

In spite of this somewhat 'deviant' behaviour of Mas Gun and Mas Gin, they were never ostracised by other Christian youth. Although they usually participated in the study session as onlookers and their presence was visible only when the time to sing hymns came, they were never discouraged from attending the Bible study group. On the contrary, the organisers of the group showed interest in their participation. When they did not come to the meeting, the organisers did not forget to tell their sisters, who usually came to the meeting, to bring them the next week. The same attitude prevailed when some Christian adults evaluated the behaviour of Mas Gun, Mas Gin or any other Christian 'naughty youth' (*anak nakal*), whose names represented the epitome of 'naughty youth' to most Muslim villagers.⁴ When I talked about juvenile delinquency

⁴ According to villagers, the 'naughty youth' referred to those who did not study, drank alcohol habitually, took hallucinatory pills, flirted with girls, wandered around hamlet late at night, were unemployed without trying to find jobs, sang songs loudly and loved to get into arguments, and who, in spite of carrying out these behaviours, did not feel ashamed.

with the Christian *kadus* and asked him to enumerate the youth who might belong to the 'naughty youth', he did not include any Christian names in his answer.⁵

If the Christians' inclusive attitude toward other Christians can be considered as part of their conscious efforts to draw all Christians into the *umat Kristen*, a certain religious significance may be found in interpreting the following case.

Around nine one evening, the Bible study meeting finished. When snacks and drinks ran out, Mas Hari, one of the organisers of this group, asked for the attention of the participants. First, he announced the venue and the time for the next meeting. Then, he proposed a plan which I could not understand properly. 'For the last few months, especially throughout the Christmas period, the money we collected reaches a reasonable amount. I think the time has come for us to carry out [something].' In spite of the ambiguity in his speech, no one asked any question about the 'something'. Seeing that there was no objection, Mas Hari added, 'I will go to Pak X's house on Sunday morning to see to [it]. If the condition is all right, I will get 'it'. According to my estimation, 'it' may cost about Rp 30,000 or so.' As he did not clarify what 'it' meant, his comments made me more confused, although everyone seemed to understand what 'it' meant. As Mas Hari changed the topic soon, I had to talk to him after most of the youth had gone home. 'It is a dog', Mas Hari said, 'We will buy a dog and eat together'. He talked to me for a while about the taste of dog meat and about diverse ways to kill dogs. He did not forget to say that he would deliver a portion to me, a proposal to which I responded with a smile. Irrespective of whether I said yes or no, it was clear to me that I would have a chance to eat it for dinner with my Christian landlord on Sunday evening. According to Mas Hari, this activity was a long tradition of the Christian youth in Kolojonggo. They collected contributions from the youth, usually between Rp 100 and 200, at the end of the Bible study meeting, waited until these reached a certain

⁵ For almost seven months of my stay in his house, the Christian *kadus* did not intervene in my research nor in my private life except on one occasion. One night when we finished dinner together, he gave me a somewhat surprising advice: he did not care much about who visited my room late at night, but he worried about me a lot if the visitors were 'the naughty youth' who could have a negative influence on me. I tried hard to figure out why he talked about this matter at that particular moment, since many villagers visited me late at night after I had moved into his house and, consequently, he was quite accustomed to this. At last, I could find a clue. Before this conversation took place, Mas Noyo, a Muslim youth, visited my place several times. At first, I could not understand why Mas Noyo's visits triggered the *kadus* to give me such an advice in that, according to my own evaluation, Mas Noyo did not belong to 'the naughty youth'. Soon, I realised why the *kadus* categorised Mas Noyo as 'the naughty youth'. Mas Noyo had been unemployed for a few weeks and he was willing to make friends with 'the naughty youth', although he himself, for example, did not drink or gamble. After I understood why the *kadus* was so sensitive about Mas Noyo's visit, I asked the *kadus* to give me a few names of the youth who belonged to 'the naughty youth'. In his answer, he did not mention the names of any Christian youth, although some of the Christians were typical examples of 'the naughty youth' in Kolojonggo.

amount, bought dog meat and cooked it, sold it to Christian families, and re-contributed the profit to the Church. Mas Hari's plan was carried out without any problem. On the next Sunday afternoon, a few Christian youths gathered and cooked *dongseng* (a kind of stew) with dog meat. From about five in the afternoon, some made door to door visits to most Protestant households in Kolojonggo and to some in neighbouring hamlets, and sold the *dongseng*. As was expected, my landlord bought two portions, which were served at the dinner.

This case may be interpreted in diverse ways. However, it seems, at least to me, that it is difficult to understand this case without considering the minority position of Christians. We may interpret the practice of eating dog meat as a strategy of Christians to assert their religious identity. As a minority, Christian villagers have felt pressures to conform to the demands from Muslims. For example, the reformist Muslims prompted them, during the fasting month, not to eat, drink and smoke in front of Muslims, and even not to marry, not to make noise and not to sing hymns.⁶ One of the ways to face these pressures may be to strengthen their solidarity by asserting their distinctiveness and by emphasising that they share this distinctiveness together. Dog meat seems to be a good medium to attain this purpose. Unlike other religious symbols, dog meat can convey a much clearer message of their distinctiveness from Muslims, primarily because it is a forbidden food for Muslims and because this prohibition is well known to villagers.

It is not certain whether the practice of sharing dog meat originated from Christians' deliberate effort to consolidate their group solidarity or not. If this was the case, we may regard this practice as an act of symbolic resistance. By selling dog meat to other Christians, they 'contaminated' Christians intentionally with what is forbidden to Muslims, and, by donating profits to the Church, they, at least symbolically, let all Christians share the money obtained in a forbidden way to Muslims but in a permitted way to Christians. If they did not do this intentionally, on the other hand, the practice of sharing dog meat may be considered as a coincidence: the Christian youth wanted to raise funds for the Church activities; some of them happened to choose dog meat for this purpose;⁷ and, as they could not sell dog meat to Muslims, they sold it to

⁶ Although Muslim villagers did not express these demands directly to Christian villagers, Christians seem to have been aware of these demands. In general, the Christians in Kolojonggo did not take Muslims' demands seriously, so that, for example, they did not stop smoking during the fasting month in public. A few Christians, whom I questioned about the Muslims' complaints, showed their anger to me, as a villager put it: if we cannot sing hymns during the fasting month or if we have to change the venues to sing hymns (some Muslims argued that if Christians wanted to sing hymns, they should do it only in places located far from the *masjid*), is Indonesia a nation of *Pancasila* or of Islam?

⁷ Although the economic situation improved dramatically since the 1970s, many villagers still could not afford to eat meat every day. As dog meat is relatively cheaper than beef, its taste is, according to some, better than chicken, and is thought to have medical efficacy by some, the selection of dog meat for fund-raising may be considered to be based on the personal preferences of some Christian youth.

Christians.⁸ Irrespective of whether Christians deliberately chose dog meat or not, it seems to be obvious that the act of eating dog meat plays a role in clarifying Christian identity and consolidating the group solidarity. By eating dog meat, Christians feel that they are different from Muslims and they belong to the same in-group which can do what Muslims cannot do.

In Chapter VIII, I have examined the reformist Muslims' view of Christians, Christianity and Christianisation. Concerning almost all examples that the Muslims use to show the vicious intention of Christians and the absurdity of Christianity, Christians have things to say. The voices of Christians about these allegations from the reformist Muslims will be dealt with below. For the convenience of discussion, I will follow the sequence of my discussion in Chapter VIII.

It has been shown that the reformist Muslims attributed all sources of inter-religious conflicts to Christians and that this became the basis for them to construct a negative image of Christians. The argument that Christians ignored Muslims' religious activities, especially in the fasting month, was interpreted differently by Christian villagers. For example, when asked why he (a Christian) provided meals to the Muslim participants in a *gotong-royong* mobilised to improve his house, Pak Mulyo had a legitimate answer:

If they (Muslims) vilify me [since I served meals to Muslims in the fasting month], this is intended to cover their negligence of the *umat* Islam. They do not know exactly what they are talking about and do not feel ashamed of what they have done to the *umat* Islam. Let's see. If all Muslims in Kolojonggo carry out the fast, why on earth do I have to serve meals? ... If I don't serve meals to the Muslim participants, they will go home and then start to vilify me since I did not serve them meals. If the situation is like this, which way do I have to choose?

If the reformist Muslims had heard Pak Mulyo's comment, they would have argued that what was wrong with him was to mobilise the *gotong-royong* during the fasting month. Although the context was somewhat different, another Christian villager had something to say about this argument:

Is it possible that we [Christians] choose not to die in the fasting month? Is it possible for us to die at a specific time, so that *kendhuri* [after death] will not be celebrated in the fasting month? [If Muslims criticise the serving of meals at the funeral⁹ or the mobilisation of Muslims to prepare

⁸ Some Christian youth preferred this interpretation when they were asked why they selected dog meat rather than beef or chicken. They emphasised that choosing dog meat for fund-raising was incidental but distributing it only to Christian households was inevitable.

⁹ It is a local custom that the host in the funeral provides food and drinks to those who come to the funeral. Until a few years ago, the host prepared meals for the guests, while in 1993-94, it was generally a slice of bread and a glass of tea. When a Christian died in the fasting month, the family

for a *kendhuri* after death in the fasting month] Please ask them to pray [to their God] not to take the souls of Christians in the fasting month!

The negative image of Muslims that Christians had was as strong as Muslims' negative image of Christians. Unlike the case of Muslims, however, the public discourse in the *umat Kristen*, such as sermons in Sunday services and at the end of weekly meetings, did not deal with any issue connected to Muslims and Islam. As a result, one of the important sources for Christians to construct a negative image of Muslims was their own experiences or the stories that they heard from others. Pak Mangku remembered his experience in West Java as follows:

When I was a peddler, I wandered around almost every part of Java. One day when I was travelling in rural areas of West Java, I had to ask a hamlet head for a night's stay. He examined my identification card and allowed me to stay in his house for a night. While I was talking with him in the living room, his wife brought dishes of food for me, but strangely, she placed these in the room where I was supposed to sleep. I thought his family had already finished their dinner. However, this was not the case. Later, I could see them eating at the other part of the house. At first, I thought this was due to their local custom to let the guests eat separately. Just after I finished my meal, however, it turned out that my guess was wrong. I found that his wife washed the dishes and the glass that I had used seven times with soil. ... Can you imagine how I felt at that time? They might have been more fanatic than other Muslims. However, this experience shows how Muslims, a majority, think about Christians, a minority.

In the Christian discourse about Muslims, the terms *minoritas* (minority) and *mayoritas* (majority) were frequently used. They argued that (Indonesian) Muslims, though a majority, have a minority mentality, so that, unlike the tolerance and the generosity that the majority generally shows toward the minority¹⁰, they oppress, discriminate against, vilify, and find fault with the minority. Two decrees issued in 1978, the stipulation of various rules to regulate religious life, especially, those of constructing church buildings, and mass-media were frequently mentioned examples to illustrate the minority mentality of Muslims. A Christian villager, for example, informed me that the studios to produce religious programs for TVRI (government broadcasting company) were different: the programs for Muslims were produced in Yogyakarta, while those

provided a slice of bread and a glass of tea. As hundreds of guests from dozens of hamlets came, all the guests were asked whether they wanted to eat and drink or not.

¹⁰ It is not certain why Christians had an idea that the majority generally is tolerant to the minority. This is probably due to their assumption that, if they were in a position of the majority, they would treat the minority with love and affection.

for Christians, in Jakarta. 'Do you know why?' he continued, 'this is because they [the Muslims in the TVRI station in Yogyakarta] do not want to have the pulpit which Christian preachers use in their studio.'

Among ordinary Christians, one of the most frequently discussed issues was the discrimination in job-searching. They firmly believed that they were treated unfairly in applying for jobs in the government and private sectors due to their religious status. 'Once, my friend told me this story,' a Christian villager said. 'They wanted a new person in his office and several candidates applied for the job. The boss in his office examined their curriculum vitae one by one, but, in a few cases, it took just a few seconds for him to read them. Then he put them aside.' The explanation was simple. These were from Christians, and the boss, once he knew that these were from Christians, did not want to read them. Some Christians argued that they were forced to change their religion in order to obtain jobs, and that some of them did so. To those who had to change their religion from Christianity to Islam to obtain jobs, however, Christians generally gave no severe criticism. Jesus will understand the difficulty of such Christians and will give His love to them, they argued. They also believed that, if someone was forced to accept Islam, one's conversion was just nominal and one would be saved in the Hereafter.

Compared with the minority mentality of Muslims, Christians were thought to have a majority mentality. They were tolerant, did not discriminate against Muslims, and tried to love Muslims as the same creatures of God. 'All teachers in the Christian schools and universities are not Christians', a villager said. 'This is not confined to schools. Go to the Christian hospitals! There, we can find Muslim doctors, and probably they outnumber Christian doctors'. Another Christian added his comment, 'is it possible for Christians to work in an hospital run by Muhammadiyah? Impossible! They think Christians contaminate the hospital. Christians are dirty (*najis*), aren't they?'

Conversion was a critical issue among the reformist Muslims. They believed that Christians used vicious tactics to lure Muslims to Christianity, such as material benefits, marriages (one Muslim called this tactic *hamilisasi* or to make Muslim girls pregnant), education, art groups and so on. When asked to comment on Muslims' conversion to Christianity, all Christian priests and clergymen¹¹ stressed its voluntary nature, noting that there is no compulsion in Christianity. One of the proofs (*bukti*) that they used to show this point was the obligation of people who want to be baptised to study Christianity for an extended period of time. The Protestant Church obliges them to attend Christian learning courses held

¹¹ As ordinary Christian villagers did not want to talk about conversion, the passages below are based on the data gathered from my interviews with the Catholic priests and Protestant clergymen. I met two priests whose parishes were in Yogyakarta city, seven priests whose parishes were in rural Yogyakarta and two clergymen whose churches were in rural Yogyakarta.

either in the church or in each *pepanthan* (a Christian community which combines with an existing church temporarily until they can form their own church) for at least six months. In the case of the Catholic church, the period is a year. If the Church wants to increase its followers, they questioned, 'why do they make such a regulation which would hinder the expansion of the Christian population?' Many also pointed out that conversion has been the most sensitive issue between Muslims and Christians and that Muslims have tried hard to find fault with it. In these circumstances, even a small mistake by the Church will be severely criticised by Muslims and will bring a disastrous impact not only on a specific Church but on the *umat Kristen* in general. Accordingly, there is no reason why the Church would incite Muslims by doing something silly, which will jeopardise the basis of the existing *umat Kristen*.

I experienced this cautious attitude of the Church when I attended the course run by the Catholic Church for those who wanted to convert to Christianity.

My proposal to attend the learning course for those who wanted to convert to Catholicism was readily accepted by a priest. He introduced me to a sister in charge of running the course, who informed me of the time and the place of the course. When I arrived at the convent (*Susteran*) a few days later, it seemed that I was a bit earlier than others. No participants in the course were there, except for the sister. After giving me a warm welcome, she started to talk first, asking me unexpected questions, 'Why were you (*saudara*) attracted by Christianity and why are you here to attend the course preparing for Baptism?' 'Was I attracted by Christianity?', I repeated her question in my mind. Her question confused me very much, in that, when I had met her before, I had explained clearly why I wanted to attend the course. Moreover, as I had visited the Church several times, I believed, my identity as a foreign researcher who studied Christianity was well known to the priest and sisters. By asking such questions, I thought, the sister treated me as if I was attracted by Christianity for personal reasons. I explained my research topics once again, emphasising that I attended the course as a researcher. Only when I finished talking and when she gave me her next remarks, I could understand partially why she asked these questions to me. 'From your remarks, it is clearly evident that there was no compulsion either from the Church or from Christians which forced you to come to this course. I understand your visit is based solely on your free will and on your independent decision. ... If one's intention to change one's religion is based on free will and on sound reasoning, our nation also permits it.'

It is not certain why the sister, who had already been informed about the reasons for my participation in the course, asked questions about what she might have

known before. This might be to confirm what she had already known, or, as some of my Muslim friends with whom I discussed this experience suggested, this might stem from her deliberate strategy to impress a foreign researcher with the cautious attitude of the Church. What is certain, however, is that she asked the same questions of all new-comers in her course and received the same answer; that their participation was based not on compulsion but on their free will. Some Muslims who listened to this case argued that this procedure could not change their perception of the Church's vicious actions toward Muslims: if Muslims had already been lured by unfair tactics of Christians before they came to the learning course, whether their visits to it were based on their own free will could not change anything.

Two Catholic priests whose parishes were in the city and who, accordingly, managed a larger amount of material resources than those in rural areas, admitted that they assisted people irrespective of their religious affiliation. The priests and clergymen in rural areas mentioned that their Churches were not in a position to give economic assistance even to Christians. On the contrary, they sought donations and contributions from poor Christians to run their Churches. In these circumstances, they argued, it was impossible for them to give material assistance to non-Christians, an activity which all of them considered as the duty of the Church and which, if the situation permitted, they were willing to do. This was because the Church is obliged to help people, no matter what their religion may be.¹² All of them, including two Catholic priests in the city, denied the allegation

¹² When I visited a Catholic Church in the city, I had to wait for a while outside the priest's office since he was receiving a guest. Sitting in front of the office, I could see a man approaching me. It seemed that he also wanted to meet the priest. When I asked a question as to how long he had been baptised, he gave me a surprising answer, 'No, I am a Muslim.' He said he came from a rural village in Central Java to find a job in Yogyakarta. For several weeks, he had tried to find a job, but in vain until he had no money left and no places to go. He then remembered the story that the Church gave food and jobs for Muslims, and came to the Church to ask assistance. When the guest came out of the priest's office, I asked the Muslim man to meet the priest first. It did not take long for him to come out of the office. He gave me a brief comment, 'it does not work', and then quickened his pace to the street. When I met the priest, our conversation naturally led to the Muslim man. 'Almost every day, a few Muslims come to the Church to ask assistance, although we have never given them jobs or any other material benefits.' The priest strongly denied the allegation that the Church assists Muslims to convert them to Christianity. 'When we assist non-Christians, these activities are carried out officially and directed not at individuals but at an organisation', he continued. Hearing my question as to why Muslims kept coming to the Church if the Church had never helped them individually, he attributed this to the vicious propaganda of Muslims. 'This is because Muslims propagate an idea that every Muslim, if they want to accept Christianity, will obtain assistance from the Church. Look at the man who came here earlier. He just believed the lie that Muslims spread intentionally and came here to get a job and food.' As I witnessed that the Muslim man's demands were rejected by the priest, I had nothing more to say about him with the priest. When I discussed this experience with some of the *anak masjid* in the following evening, however, they gave me a different interpretation. 'Do you think Christians are so stupid as to give assistance to Muslims in front of others? Moreover, you are a foreigner who will talk about your experience later in foreign countries. Are they stupid enough to reveal their secret to you?', one of them commented. Another youth who had listened to my story expressed the same idea differently. 'What a pity he (the Muslim whom I met in the church) was! His fortune was really bad today! ... If he arrived at the Church just a few minutes earlier than you, he would now have a job, a place to sleep

that the activities or the readiness of the Church to help non-Christians were aimed at luring Muslims and eventually at converting them to Christianity. To explain their position concerning this issue, some of them used an example of Romo Mangun, a Catholic priest who was famous for his social activities for the deprived. According to their version of the story, Romo Mangun prohibited the Muslims, who were moved by his self-sacrificing spirit and thus wanted to embrace Christianity, from becoming Christians. The message Romo Mangun delivered to these Muslims was, according to a priest, that 'you don't necessarily need to be a Christian when you want to be a good human being'.

Concerning mixed marriages, which were alleged to be used by Christians to lure Muslims, the priests and clergymen stressed its voluntary character. No Christians forced their future spouse or future in-laws to change religion from non-Christianity to Christianity. Some priests even said that they recommended strongly to the Muslim who would marry a Christian to fulfil his or her Islamic duties after the marriage. The same attitude pervaded their view of education: no Christians forced Muslim parents to send their children to the schools founded by the Christian organisations. As there were many schools founded by Muhammadiyah, they argued, the reason Muslim parents sent their children to Christian schools was simple: these schools gave a better education than Islamic ones. They also pointed out that Muslim students were encouraged to follow their own religion and that most, though not all, of them maintained their faith until they graduated from Christian schools. If this had not been the case, they argued, the Christian population in Yogyakarta would be far larger than now, since, for almost half a century, Christian schools had produced more graduates than Islamic schools. One of the priests had an opinion that education in Christian schools gave Muslim students better chances to be 'good Muslims'. This was because, unlike religious education in Islamic schools which put emphasis only on the formalistic and ritualistic aspect of religiosity, that in Christian schools stressed the inner dimension of religiosity. Accordingly, Muslim students who learned how Christians practised their religion would understand the importance of spirituality in their religious life and would put this into their practice of Islam.

In sum, the priests and clergymen had strong bases to reject Muslims' arguments that Christians employed unfair methods to lure Muslims. No material benefits were given to Muslims to convert them to Christianity and Muslims' marriages to Christians and Muslims' enrolment in Christian schools took place voluntarily. In some cases, Muslims' criticisms of Christians were used by the latter to show the 'minority mentality' which Muslims were supposed to have. 'Do you know the way Muslims criticise mixed marriages?' a priest asked to me. 'They argue

and food to eat. Therefore, it is your fault that he could not get a job. You have to find him and give him a job and food!

that a mixed marriage takes place due to the priests who are unwilling to prohibit their followers from falling in love with non-Muslims.' Some of the priests believed that there were hidden intentions for Muslims to make these allegations: by attributing everything bad in the *umat* Islam to Christians, Muslims attempt to cover their failure in carrying out their religious programs toward other Muslims and try to avoid the blame that they deserve. They argued, it was not Christians but Muslims who should take care of and give guidance to their fellow Muslims and who eventually were responsible for them.

When asked about several theological issues raised by the reformist Muslims, Christian villagers generally had no idea how to defend Christianity against criticisms (see the dialogues between a Muslim boy and a Christian girl in Chapter VIII). Parts of the answer might be that public discourse in the *umat Kristen* did not deal with theological issues intensively but was directed more at learning the stories related to Jesus Christ and exegeses on these stories, on the one hand, and that many Christians did not consider themselves to be in a position to comment on these theological themes, on the other hand. They recommended me to go to the priests or to the clergymen when I asked troublesome questions. The priests and the clergymen agreed that ordinary Christians' understandings of theological themes in Christianity were not deep, although they evaluated this differently. Some attributed this to their lack of zeal to learn Christianity, while others, to the Church's emphasis on the inner aspects of religious life and on the realisation of God's love rather than on theological knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

This evaluation of the priests and the clergymen is closely related to one of their central frameworks for comparing Christianity with Islam. They considered Christianity to be a religion of faith (*iman*) but Islam to be a religion of rules and regulations. A priest quoted a passage from the Bible to show this difference: 'in Christianity, 'The Word became our flesh and lived in our body'¹³ whereas in Islam, 'The Word became the written word and lived in the Book' (*Sabda telah menjadi tulisan dan tinggal di dalam buku*). As Islamic teachings are confined to the Book, according to some priests, Muslims are inflexible in understanding religion and are bound to be formalistic and legalistic, and observance of rules and regulations overshadows their faith. Their ideas are well expressed in the following example which was given by a priest:

Let's say there is a Muslim astronaut revolving round the earth. When he or she wants to carry out *salat*, how can he or she decide the right direction and time for *salat*? This question will become a critical issue

¹³ This is a literal translation of an Indonesian phrase, *Sabda telah menjadi daging kita dan tinggal di dalam tubuh kita*, which the priest mentioned without consulting the Bible. This phrase Yohanes,1:14) goes 'Firman itu telah menjadi manusia, dan diam di antara kita (Yohanes,1:14)' in Indonesian or 'The Word became flesh and dwelt (lived) among us (John,1:14)' in English.

among Muslims. If some say that deciding the right time and direction is not an important matter, others would argue against it until death. If some propose a certain *fatwa*, others would fight against it to the extent that hundreds of Muslims will slaughter hundreds of other Muslims who do not agree with them. How about Christianity? Let's suppose Christians are commanded to pray at a fixed time. However, Christians will not fight each other to find an answer. To Christians, it is irrelevant to raise such a question. Why? Because we put emphasis on the inner side of religiosity. If the astronaut had an intention to carry out *salat* but he or she could not do it due to his or her uncertainty about rules, this would be received as *salat* by God.

Hearing this speech, the reformist Muslims probably say that the priest's understandings of Islam are totally wrong.¹⁴ Irrespective of whether these understandings are right or wrong, however, the dichotomy of the inner and the outer and of faith and rules provide Christians with repertoires to defend Christianity from Muslims' theological attack, on the one other, and to argue for the superiority of Christianity over Islam, on the other hand.

According to the priests and clergymen, to observe rules and regulations is important in religion, but what is more important is to have faith, to understand religious teachings based on this faith¹⁵ and to apply these in one's life. When the emphasis is placed on rules and regulations, this will naturally install a scriptural, legalistic and formalistic attitude as the most correct way to approach religion and will result in a neglect of faith. The religious life of the believers then will be overwhelmed by unproductive arguments concerning the right interpretation of the Scriptures, whereas the efforts of the believers to reappraise and to realise in their life what God truly intends to convey, a process which should be ceaselessly carried out, will lose ground in religion. The obsession with the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, which is supposed to characterise the *umat* Islam, was explained by a priest as follows: 'Before helping people suffering from AIDS, Muslims may argue first whether this act is written in the Quran as a recommended behaviour. It is not at all impossible for some to argue Muslims should not help those infected with AIDS since no passage in the Quran teaches that they have to do so.'

¹⁴ See Chapter IV for more about the reformist villagers' emphasis on the inner side of religious life.

¹⁵ A priest told me that there was no way for him to refute the argument that Jesus Christ was a clever impostor (*penipu besar*). According to him, the only way for someone to prove (the priest used the term, *membuktikan*, but I think the better term might be *yakin*, or to be certain) whether Jesus had been an impostor or God, is his or her faith and personal experiences. He then continued, 'in my case, my experiences and feeling (*rasa*) allowed me to believe (*percaya*) that Jesus was not an impostor but God.' Although somewhat extreme, the attitude of the priest showed the stress that Christian leaders put on faith.

The priests and the clergymen were of the opinion that Muslims' criticisms of a few theological themes in Christianity are based on their understanding that religious ideas should be interpreted literally. In this framework, therefore, it is possible to say: as Christians use three different names to call their God, there must be three Gods in Christianity; since Jesus was God and Jesus ate and drank, God in Christianity must do what human beings do; and since Original Sin is said to be inherited by human beings, people of these days must be responsible for Adam and Eve's sin. If they used the same framework as Muslims did, some of the priests suggested, they also agreed that Christianity has a few theological themes which seem to be illogical and irrational. However, according to them, this is not the right way to understand and interpret religious teachings. On the contrary, the right way is to look beyond the literal interpretation of religious teachings and to see their deeper meanings and, in some cases, to think about why God revealed these teachings to human beings. Seen from this perspective, the inheritance of Original Sin, for example, does not mean that we are responsible for the sin committed by Adam and Eve. Instead, it warns us that we as offspring of Adam and Eve are liable to commit sins. The same is true in the case of the three names of God. This does not mean that Christians worship three different Gods but that these names illuminate God's attributes in a way human beings can understand them. Several priests used the following comparison to convince me that the Trinity does not signify three different beings: people have diverse roles in a society and are called differently according to these. For example, one can be called father by his son, chief of an organisation by its members and teacher by his students at the same time.

In sum, the priests' and clergymen's framework for understanding religion makes it possible for them to defend Christianity from the criticisms of Muslims and to assert the truthfulness of Christianity. First is their emphasis on faith rather than on reason (or logical explanation). They argued that human beings cannot comprehend all religious teachings with their reason, nor did God recommend this attitude as the right way to approach religion. Second is their flexible attitude to the Scriptures. Although the equation of the Bible with the God's Word is not denied by them, they admitted that its contents were delivered in a language that human beings could understand, the Bible was recorded by human beings having their own subjectivity, it was transcribed from one to others, and accordingly, it may contain the bias of those who recorded and transcribed it.

The priests' and clergymen's emphasis on faith and on the spiritual side of religiosity shows that they share much in common with the reformist Muslims. This similarity, however, seems to be difficult for both Christians and Muslims to appreciate due to their somewhat 'prejudiced' preconceptions about the other religion. To Christians, Islam is the religion of rules and regulations devoid of faith and love, while to the reformist Muslims, the faith and belief that Christians have is useless since their faith and belief is directed to a false, man-made religion.

A lack of venues where Christians and the reformist Muslims talk about one another's religion seems to have played a pivotal role in producing and reproducing their mutual suspicion and their reluctance to understand each other. Somewhat ironically, the lack of common grounds has also been a factor in creating harmonious social life where no villagers disrespect the other religion, at least in the presence of the followers of that religion. So far, this atmosphere has dominated social life and no open conflicts have taken place between Christians and Muslims in Kolojonggo or in Sumber. It is my impression, however, that this does not seem to guarantee that the same situation will prevail in the interactions between Christians and Muslims. If reformist Islam gains a stronger grip over a much wider circle of Muslim villagers, if the expansion of Christianity continues at the same pace as it has done in the last few decades, and in so far as Muslims' concern about Christianisation is not expressed in a space which is shared by followers of both religions, it is not unlikely that the degree of friction will escalate and open confrontation will be considered an inevitable option.