

Chapter 8: War of Words: The Muslim Villagers' View of Christians, Christianity and Christianisation ¹

The Preamble in the 1945 Constitution of independent Indonesia contains an ideological tenet called *Pancasila*, which is composed of five principles: Belief in One God, Humanity that is just and civilised, Unity of Indonesia, Democracy guided by the wisdom of representative deliberation, Social justice for all Indonesians. Since its installation as a state ideology, *Pancasila* has been the most commonly used rhetoric in political discourse and the governing principle of social life. In spite of this significance, *Pancasila* has remained an abstract doctrine which should be supplemented by concrete ideas, depending on the socio-economic and political considerations of each period.

The first principle, 'Belief in One God', has been a source of controversies since the independence of Indonesia. Each religious group has tried to exert its version of this principle on other religious groups and to implement it as official government policy. Two of the critical debates centring on this principle have been how to define 'One God' and how to interpret religious freedom included in it. There has been continuing ups and downs, but history shows that Islamic groups have been more successful in this struggle than other religious groups. Their definition of religion has been accepted by the government, so that only five religions, considered to be religions by Islamic groups, are officially recognised in Indonesia. On the other hand, the concept of religious freedom supported by Islamic groups was formulated as decrees in 1978, so that it is forbidden to carry out missionary activities among those who already confess another religion.

In spite of this success of Islamic groups and contrary to their expectations, the Christian population kept increasing in the New Order period (See Chapter VII), while Islamic groups have had no effective and direct measure to counteract this. Most importantly, they have no coercive power to put the law into practice without assistance from the government, which, fearing an open explosion of conflicts, has desisted. In this situation, the reaction of Muslims who are dissatisfied with the expansion of Christianity and the government's inertia has concentrated on exposing the nature of Christianity and of Christian missionary activities to the masses. They have published polemical books comparing Islam

¹ In this chapter, my discussion is focused only on the attitude of Muslim villagers toward Christians, Christianity and Christianisation. This does not mean that Christian villagers do not have ideas concerning Muslims, Islam and Muslims' view of Christians. For the consistency of the thesis, however, Christian villagers' view is not included in this chapter but will be discussed in Appendix B, titled 'The War of Words: Voices of the Christians'.

with Christianity, have written articles in magazines exposing tricks played by the missionaries², held *pengajian* to spread their ideas and founded an organisation to counter the expansion of Christianity.³ It is not certain how effective these measures have been in decreasing Muslim conversion to Christianity. However, it is rather clearer that these have facilitated the flow of information on Christianisation amongst Muslim intellectuals, on the one hand, and from these intellectuals to the countryside, on the other.

The focus of this chapter is on the ways Christians, Christianity and Christianisation are viewed by the reformist villagers in Kolojonggo. In the first section, the negative image of Christians constructed by the reformist villagers will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of one of the key issues underlying Muslim and Christian relations in Kolojonggo, namely, conversion. The last section will deal with one of the key concepts with which Muslims villagers evaluate their own religion and Christianity: *akal*.

8.1. Harmony and Tension in Everyday Life

In Indonesia, it was rare for *Pancasila* not to become a subject of conversation when I first met Indonesians, especially those who had received a formal education under the New Order. After introducing themselves briefly to me, they began to talk about the racial, religious and cultural diversities of Indonesia. This was followed by a comment on the strength of *Pancasila* in combining all these diversities into one without conflict. These casual meetings could give an impression that the Indonesian government has been successful in indoctrinating her citizens with *Pancasila*. This success has not been achieved without intensive programs to expose *Pancasila* to her citizens. Not only students or civil servants but peasants and housewives have been mobilised to participate in a special course designed to learn *Pancasila*. There, they are taught that *Pancasila* condemns behaviour such as objection to the collective consensus of a meeting (*musyawarah*); enforcement of one's own will on others; extravagant life; idleness; giving priority to private interests over state interests and intolerance to followers of other religions. If someone were brave enough to query some of this nationally-accepted ideology, he or she would be branded as 'anti-*Pancasila*', someone who should be corrected by the spirit of *Pancasila*.

² Christianisation seems to have been one of the most frequently discussed issues in Islamic magazines, especially in the early 1990s. *Panji Masyarakat*, one of the most widely read magazines in the Islamic circle has presented special reports on Christianisation and relations between Muslims and Christians at least once a year since 1991. The issue of Christianisation has been more seriously dealt with in a monthly magazine called *Media Dakwah*. Apart from carrying more articles about Christianisation than *Panji Masyarakat*, *Media Dakwah* has had a special column from 1990 onward devoted entirely to the expansion of the Christian community and the tactics of Christian missionaries.

³ In Yogyakarta, an organisation calling itself 'a foundation to guide converts to Islam', was founded in 1993. Apart from guiding converts, the aim of this organisation was to spread awareness of the danger of Christianisation to the masses and to inculcate cadres who would educate and guide Muslim villagers in rural areas who were facing the expansion of Christianity.

The same situation applies to villagers in Kolojonggo. Almost all adult villagers have attended the special course to learn *Pancasila* once⁴ and several have received a certificate as coordinators to guide the P4 course in a lower administrative unit such as a hamlet, RW and RT. Intensive contact with *Pancasila* made it possible for them, especially those who worked as teachers and civil servants, to have a comprehensive understanding of it. They knew its historical foundations and the detailed guidelines (*butir*) for each principle,⁵ and they readily incorporated it as rhetoric in private conversation. *Pancasila* was also a frequent topic in official religious discourse. Pak Timan in a *Jumatan* explained why the first principle of *Pancasila* had been accepted:

We have to be conscious of the fact that the inhabitants of this world of Allah, in particular, those in Indonesia are not only Muslims. We are living in a differentiated nation consisting of different races, cultures and religions. Therefore, the land of Allah is not our monopoly but the possession of ours (*golongan kita*) and theirs (*golongan sanes*). We should recognise that they have their own religious conviction and values, which should be respected. This is why *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution promote harmony (*rukun*) and tolerance (*toleransi*) among followers of different religions.

The next part of his speech explained how Muslims should understand *rukun* and tolerance in religion stipulated by *Pancasila*:

With these other groups, we will have both parallel and discrepant ideas. When ours is different from theirs, we are not permitted to be silent, just folding our hands. We should not be confused but hold our own identity tightly. We, Muslims, have to be certain that the only true religion is Islam, as is written in the Quran. ...⁶ What *Pancasila* teaches is not that we do not need to have certainty as to the truth of Islam. What is taught is that we Muslims need not deride other religions and others do not derogate us, and we do not interfere in religious matters of others and others do not intervene in ours. This will then bring about the situation of 'agreement in difference'.

⁴ In Indonesian, this course is called P4 (*Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila*). The government established a special organisation to instruct in P4, called BP 7 (*Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Pelaksanaan Pedoman Penghayatan Dan Pengamalan Pancasila*), which extends its branches to the district level.

⁵ As an effort to systematise education in P4, the Indonesian government and the MPR (People's Assembly) stipulated detailed guidelines (*butir*) to make each of the five pillars in *Pancasila* concrete. For example, its first pillar, Belief in One God, has four guidelines: to believe in and show piety to One God, to respect followers of other religions and to cooperate with them, to respect others' freedom to carry out religious obligations and not to force any religion on others.

⁶ He then recited Arabic verses from the Quran and its translation in Javanese, which has the meaning of 'the only religion on the side of Allah is Islam.'

The condition that Pak Timan refers to as bringing 'agreement in difference' is the Islamic interpretation of religious freedom in *Pancasila*: all Indonesians have freedom to carry out their religious duties in their own community, without violating the boundary of other religions. Just as Muslims confine their activities to Muslims, so should Christians.

Since the independence of Indonesia, whether a religious community should confine its religious activities to its own community has lain at the core of the debates between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially Christians. Christian leaders interpret religious freedom stipulated in *Pancasila* in its broadest sense. For them, it implies freedom to choose religion, to change one's religion and to manifest, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, one's religion in teaching, practice, worship and observance (Sudjabat, 1960:288). Therefore, religious freedom should include freedom to carry out missionary activities to those whom the Bible has not yet reached. This broad interpretation has not been acceptable to national Muslim leaders. For them, *Pancasila* cannot imply total religious freedom since no such freedom of choice is given to those who have already entered Islam (Singodimejo, 1969:73). In the eyes of Muslims, therefore, the interpretation of religious freedom implied by *Pancasila* should go as follows:

Islamic groups are not permitted to force others to accept Islam. But this command of Allah signifies that non-Islamic groups are not allowed to force Muslims to become apostates or to leave Islam, whether it be done subtly through cheating or openly by building a church, monastery or temple (*klenteng*) in Islamic areas mainly occupied by Muslims (Singodimejo, 1969:73-4).

The controversy surrounding freedom to spread one's religion finished in favour of Islamic groups in 1978 when two decrees were issued by the Ministry of Religion, one of which (No.70) reads⁷ :

The spread of religion cannot be approved of when:

1) [it is] directed to a person or persons who already have another religion;

⁷ The other decree issued in 1978 (No.77) gave the Department of Religion, which was under the influence of Muslims, the right to manage foreign Christian funds and to issue permits to foreign missionaries. Sect. 2 and 3 of Decree No. 77 read:

Sect. 2 Assistance from foreign countries ... can be accepted only after acquiring agreement/recommendation from the Department of Religion and when it is channelled through the Department of Religion.

Sect. 3 (a) ... restrictions apply to use of foreign personnel for developing and spreading religion.

- 2) [it is] done by resorting to enticement/distribution of materials of money, clothes, food/drink, medicines and so on to attract persons who already have another religion.
- 3) [it is] done by disseminating pamphlets, bulletins, magazines, books and other materials in areas/houses where the residents have a different religion;
- 4) [it is] done by making door to door visits on whatever pretext to those who already have a religion.

According to national Muslim leaders, this decree, if observed strictly by all religious communities, eliminates any possibility of massive Christian expansion in Java since all Javanese confessed one of the five official religions at the time that the decree was issued. The only possibility that a certain religious community can expand is through voluntary conversion. However, in a situation where no information on a certain religion can reach those who do not confess that religion, it is almost impossible for someone to change one's religion. Although it happens, it may be confined to only a small number of people.

No. 70 Decree 1978 is well known to villagers in Kolojonggo and they share the same mode of interpreting this as national Muslim leaders. One villager who worked in the sub-district office explained:

According to the government law [No. 70 Decree 1978], non-interference (*tidak campur tangan*) in the internal affairs of other religious communities is the most important principle for living without conflict in a multi-religious society. The core of this policy is that, if someone is of a certain religion, others are not permitted to say anything about other religions to him or her. Therefore, it is possible to say that a Christian son violates the law when he talks about Christianity to his Muslim parents. ... To invite a Muslim for Christmas celebration is not permissible in this context since it is definitely a religious activity rather than a social one. Therefore, the invitation of Muslims by Christians is a violation of this law.

To the reformist villagers, religious non-interference is the only principle that can combine the diversified population under the banner of Indonesia. This is also what was commanded by Allah to mankind, as the Surah of 'The Disbelievers (*Al-Kaafiruun*)' in the Quran reveals;

Say: O disbelievers!

I worship not that which ye worship;

Nor worship ye that which I worship.

Nor will ye worship that which I worship.

Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion.

The last verse of this Surah was so popular among the reformist villagers that many of them memorised its Arabic pronunciation (*lakum dinukum waliyadin*) with ease. Another Quranic verse frequently quoted to emphasise the urgency of implementing this principle into social life is: 'And each one hath a goal toward which he turneth; so vie with one another in good works' (ii:148). To the reformist villagers, harmonious life between followers of different religions is not such a difficult task since the ideas in *Pancasila* and in the Quran show the right and easy way to achieve it and as both Indonesians and Muslims, they are ready to actualise it.

In contrast to the hope of the reformist villagers, the reality is, according to their own evaluation, gloomy and disappointing. There have been many incidents which were incongruent with the spirit of *Pancasila* and which, as a result, complicated the realisation of harmonious life. The reformist villagers attribute such happenings to Christians. As a proof of this, they refer to the rapid growth of the Christian population in Indonesia. If *Pancasila* and No. 70 Decree, which only permits a conversion based on one's free will, have been observed by Christians, there should be little, if any, growth in the Christian population.

This opinion is somewhat 'prejudiced', in the sense that Muslims attribute all sources of inter-religious conflicts to Christians. This 'prejudiced' view of inter-religious relations cannot be appreciated without understanding the negative image that the reformist villagers have constructed of Christians. In this framework, Christians are depicted as ignoring Muslim presence in village life, disturbing the religious life of Muslims and luring Muslims by unfair methods. Below are two examples of how this image is used by the reformist villagers to interpret certain social phenomena. The first was delivered in the *Jumatan*. The second one was spoken by the chairman of a youth committee preparing for the fasting month:

As the Prophet did not give us an example, playing with fireworks in the fasting month cannot be permitted. This is also contrary to the regulation of the government which forbids it. Above all, this forms the best opportunity for someone (*sa'tunggaling tiang*) who is not friendly to Islam to distract the attention of our children from religious activities. ... Let's work hard, so that the atmosphere of this month is freed from the sound of fireworks.

Shall we always be influenced by them (*golongan mereka*) or shall we possess our own strong devotion to Islam? This is dependent on our own will. A good example is food. In Islam, all problems connected to food are spelled out while in their religion (*agama mereka*), no rules are made to regulate food. As a result, their bad influences make us confused and

some of us have been lured by this temptation and drink alcohol. Only by strong and mature will on our part based on Islamic teaching will we free ourselves from the addiction to alcohol, which originated with them. ... I am saying this because we all are brothers, belonging to the same *umat* Islam.

The two speakers did not explicitly indicate who belonged to the category of the 'someone' or 'they', who had possessed the vicious intentions of disturbing Islamic activities and of confusing the *umat* Islam. However, it is quite obvious that these two words pointed to Christians. No Muslims, in the view of the reformist villagers, would want to obstruct Islamic teachings or would get benefit from it. Only Christians would be damaged if Muslims follow the right track of Islamic teaching.

The reformist villagers' negative image of Christians has been constructed by influence from the outside world and from their own everyday experiences. Many routes have been found to import the ready-made negative image of Christians into the village. *Pengajian* is one of the best media for this flow of information. In 1993-94, five *pengajian* were held in Sumber and one in Kolojonggo, where the speakers from the city were specialised in so-called *Kristologi*, a polemical critique of Christian theology. Other routes are the regular and special courses held in the city by Islamic organisations to teach how Christians use certain tactics to lure Muslims to Christianity. A few *anak masjid* in Kolojonggo attended these courses and the cassette tapes of these lectures circulated among Muslim villagers for several months. In addition to the public flow of information, other chances of personal contact were also abundant. Below is an example of an indirect flow of information and of what this is about:

On returning home after photocopying two sheets of paper that I had just acquired in the *masjid*, I found two village youths who had handed over this material to me sitting in front of my house. As soon as they entered the house and sat down, one of them asked me whether I had made a copy of it or not. Hearing my affirmative reply, he apologised and then asked me to return the original copy as well as the photocopied one to him. He explained that Mas Guno who had originally circulated that paper requested that they find me so that I might return it to him. Although I regretted a lot that I had not written this material into my field notes, their desperate attitude urged me to hand it over to them. Looking at the relieved smile on their faces, I asked them to take me to Mas Guno's house, which they willingly agreed.

The letterhead of that paper showed that it was published by a Christian Group calling itself the Movement of Christian University Students (*Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen*). It was composed of sixteen passages, all of which concerned the tactics to be used by Christian students to realise their mission. Unfortunately, I could

not remember all of these passages but some of them went as follows: do not help Muslim friends; do not lend any study material such as reference books and lecture notes to them; try to conceal Christian identity when getting acquainted with new persons; do not sit with other Christians when attending lectures or visiting other public places; put forward the issues of emancipation of woman and human rights when talking to Muslims; and, especially for Christian girls, keep close contact with Muslim male students.

According to Mas Guno, this manual had been secretly circulated among Christian students. He obtained it by way of his close Muslim friend and brought it to the *masjid* to help other Muslims to understand the orientation of Christian activities in Indonesia, whose ultimate aim was, according to him, to destroy the *umat* Islam. He then talked enthusiastically about the attitude of tolerance taught by *Pancasila* and about how this message had been observed by Muslims and transgressed by Christians. At last, he explained the reason why he could not permit me to have a copy of it. He alluded to his concern that this paper would be made known to Christians in Kolojonggo through me, which would eventually incite them.

In addition to influences from the city, everyday life has also provided Muslim villagers with opportunities to construct a negative image of Christians. One thing that should be considered is that everyday life itself has not changed a lot. What has changed is the perspective of Muslims in looking at a certain phenomenon and the way they interpret it. For example, when conversion occurred a few decades ago, it was not interpreted as a result of a vicious tactic employed by Christians. When it occurs now, however, it is perceived as a proof of the offensive attitude of Christians toward the *umat* Islam. Marriage held in the fasting month is another example. When only a few Muslims participated in the fast, marriage in the fasting month did not arouse any concern. The frequency of the weddings in each month of the Javanese calendar shows that the fasting month was not regarded as a bad choice for marriage and no dramatic decrease in the frequency of marriages was recorded in the fasting month from 1979 to 1990.⁸ However, the situation has now changed. In the two fasting months in 1993 and 1994, only one wedding was held in Kolojonggo, which was

⁸ The frequency of the weddings in each month of the Javanese calendar between 1979 and 1990 in Sumber is as follows:

Month	Frequency	Month	Frequency	Month	Frequency
Sura	4	Jumadil Awal	50	Pasa	63
Sapar	49	Jumadil Akhir	68	Sawal	70
Maulud	82	Rejeb	94	Dulkaidah (Sela)	73
Bakdo Maulud	92	Ruwah	23	Besar	144

celebrated by a Christian family and this marriage was evaluated differently by the reformist villagers.

Pak Sastro had several good reasons to hold his daughter's wedding in the middle of the fasting month. First, his daughter was three or four months pregnant. Second, he could not tolerate an unmarried daughter giving birth to a baby, although his future son-in-law had made a promise to marry her. Third, his future son-in-law, who worked in Kalimantan, had to leave Kolojonggo before the end of the fasting month. After deciding to celebrate the wedding in the fasting month, he had to choose one of two options. On the one hand, he could hold the wedding on a small scale, skipping a reception to which lots of guest would be invited. However, he could not accept this option. In accordance with his status as a civil servant and the status of his daughter and his son-in-law as a university student and a university graduate, he did not want to miss a chance to hold a reception. Moreover, his own religion placed no restriction on a marriage in the fasting month.

When the news of this marriage spread to the hamlet, the *anak masjid* viewed it as a typical example of the intolerant attitude of Christians to Muslims and Islamic activities. It was offensive and provocative since a wedding reception cannot be held without food. As Pak Sastro's family had to ask for assistance from their Muslim neighbours and since all the work was closely related to food, whether it be to cook or to serve the food, it was quite obvious that a person's participation in the preparations escalated the possibility of cancelling the fast.

The nominal ideal of village life, harmony (*rukun*), made it difficult for the *anak masjid* to express their anger. In spite of this inhibition, however, they found a way to express it. They used the strategy of sabotage. With the excuse that he was busy working, the president of *Karang Taruna*, Mas Sri, who was a core member of the *anak masjid* and whose cooperation was urgently needed to mobilise the youth into work, did not convene a meeting to organise a working party for the wedding. This sabotage continued until three days before the marriage ceremony when a Christian youth visited the *masjid* late at night to meet with Mas Sri. This visit was an extraordinary one since it was the only occasion that I witnessed in 1993 and 1994 when a Christian entered the *masjid*. At that time, Mas Sri had already returned home after finishing his prayer, so that the Christian youth was asked to visit him at home. The next day, Mas Sri opened a meeting where a compromise was made to organise the working party. The time for the Muslims youth to work was set after six in the evening when the fast finished.

This case shows how Islamic development helps Muslims to see the same phenomenon from a different angle. This shift of perspective then helps them strengthen their negative image of Christians. Throughout the year, the fasting month provides many chances for the heightened religiosity of Muslims to be

offended by actions of their Christian neighbours. For example, when Christians organised *gotong-royong* and served a meal to the participants, they smoked freely in the face of Muslim smokers and they made a noise by singing a hymn at night and by loud music, all of these were considered to exemplify the intolerant and offensive attitude of Christians to Muslims.

8.2. Conversion; Ideological War

One of the central issues which has had an impact on the production and reproduction of the Muslim villagers' image of Christians is that of conversion. Conversion is quite frequently discussed amongst Muslims and numerous stories of conversion are circulated. The Muslim version of the conversion from Islam to Christianity contains all negative features: seduction, fraud, selfishness, foul play and violation of law. In reverse, the conversion story of Christians to Islam emphasises positive features: truth, spiritual pursuit, rationality and tolerance.

This gives the impression that Muslims wage an ideological war against Christians over the issue of conversion. However, this aggressive attitude is directed more at their own community than at Christians. This is because, first of all, no public sphere is available where Muslims and Christians can meet to discuss this issue. Secondly, Christians are generally reluctant to be involved in any religious discussions with Muslims.

According to the reformist villagers, none of the factors which induce a Muslim to convert to Christianity are directly connected to sincerity or pursuit of the truth but stem from the factors external to the converts. The first is economic benefits. The term *Kristen Sari-mie* (the trademark of a brand of instant noodle) summarises how the reformist villagers perceive the new converts to Christianity just as they were referred to *Kristen beras* (rice Christians) in the 1960s. As the Church is believed to tempt Muslims by distributing boxes of *Sari-mie*, *Kristen Sari-mie* symbolises the poor Muslims who sell their faith in exchange for material benefit. At the village level, the conversion stories are not connected to *Sari-mie* but water buffalo, cow or bull. A villager, when passing along the village path by motorbike with me, pointed out a big cow and commented that the owner received her from the Catholic Church when his whole family converted to Christianity. According to the reformist villagers, merely giving out material goods is a rather naive tactic of the Church, compared with the one which is said to have been used in the city:

Many Muslims living in the city slum converted to Christianity lured by economic benefits such as food and opportunities of work. However, these economic benefits did not last long after their conversion. Within a year or so, the Church withdrew all previous assistance since it was aware of the fact that the converts could not return to Islam again. Their re-conversion to Islam was impossible since Muslim neighbours of the

converts already knew their conversion and severed relations with the latter. As a result, the converts were forced to stay Christians, begging charity of the Church.

In this example, the Church is identified as a company running a business. In order to maximise its limited resources, it makes a deliberate plan to distribute and withdraw economic benefits. Its members are aware of the future isolation of the converts and use this isolation as a way to retain them without spending further economic resources.

The reformist villagers are well aware that Christians legitimise their assistance to non-Christians in the name of humanitarianism. They also admit that one of the purposes of religion is to rid human beings of sufferings irrespective of religious difference, so that, for instance, the donation of funds to those who suffer from disasters is not an inappropriate field for the Church's social activities. This admission, however, does not mean they approve of the Church's humanitarian activities. The reason is simple: if its assistance to followers of other religions is based solely on humanitarian grounds and no hidden intention is involved in it, there is no need for it to carry out these activities by itself or under its own name. In other words, the Church does not need to donate something directly to the *umat* Islam. What Christians should do instead is to collect funds and then donate them to the government or even to the *takmir masjid* in each region. Then, the government or the Islamic organisations will distribute them to those who suffer from disasters or from economic hardship. Seen from this perspective, the insistence of the Church that it should be the distributor of material assistance does have hidden implications. Pak Bibit put forward this view as follows, comparing it with world politics:

Have you thought why America sent their army to Somalia or to the Gulf? Have you thought why America strongly supports South Korea rather than North Korea? Is it because she is so humane as to sacrifice herself to keep world peace? The answer is 'no'. There are underlying reasons America sacrifices her economic as well as human resources. ... The same logic applies to the activities of Christians in Indonesia. The donation of money by Christians to Muslims does not stem solely from humanitarianism. They have hidden intentions beyond the appearance.

As Pak Bibit mentioned, direct assistance from Christians to Muslims cannot be legitimised in any case. Therefore, the fact that these activities have been going on by the Church is proof that it does not give up its plan to Christianise the whole Muslim population in Indonesia. In this way, according to the reformist villagers, Christians have kept violating Decree No. 70 1978, which forbids proselytising activities toward those who already have a religion, and which prohibits the Church from giving out material benefits to Muslims.

Mixed marriage (*kawin campur*) is the second factor which is said to induce Muslims' conversion to Christianity. The experience of the reformist villagers easily supports this. In the Christian community of Kolojonggo, there are thirty-seven married couples. Of these thirty-seven marriages, five were between Christians, eighteen were between a Christian and a Muslim and fourteen were between Muslim couples, one or both of which later converted to Christianity. This relatively low ratio of marriages between Christians to the total marriages in the Christian community was partly due to the fact that no pressure had existed until quite recently for Christians to marry Christians or for Muslims to marry Muslims. When mixed marriages did occur, it seems to have been Muslims who changed their religion to Christianity. Of the eighteen mixed marriages discussed above, Muslims converted to Christianity in seventeen cases while in one case, husband and wife have retained their own religions so far.

The reformist Muslims understand this state of affairs well, so that mixed marriage is one of the frequently discussed topics in *pengajian*. In these discourses, Christians are depicted as immoral, being ready to use love, the most basic component of humanity, as a means to achieve their own ends. The typical marriage story goes as follows:

A Christian girl approaches a Muslim experiencing hardship and lures him. After they fall in love and decide to marry, the Christian girl requests her future husband to convert to Christianity. As he is already blindly in love, he readily changes his belief.

As the conversion of one member of a Muslim family is a factor that may trigger the conversion of the whole family⁹ and marriage is one of the easiest ways for Christianity to be imported into a particular family, the reformist villagers stress the issue of mixed marriage and how to tackle this. According to them, one of the best means of hindering mixed marriages is to prevent the formation of close relations between Muslims and Christians. As a villager put it, 'Muslim parents should work hard so that their children will love Muslims and not fall in love with non-Muslims.'

This emphasis put on marriage between Muslims seems to bring tensions to social life where mixed marriages have not been stigmatised until recently. In 1993-94, there was only one case of mixed marriage and, differing from the

⁹ The conversion process of Pak Nadi's family to Christianity exemplifies how the presence of one Christian in a Muslim family may trigger the conversions of others. Pak Nadi's family was composed of three generations, his father-in-law, his wife, his brother-in-law and three children. In the 1980s, his wife was influenced by Christianity. Soon after this, she converted to Christianity. After her conversion, she tried to influence her children and succeeded in persuading two of them. The next target was her husband who converted in the early 1990s. As a result, her family was composed of four Christians and three Muslims. Her father and her son were also given several chances to become familiar with Christianity. Though they did not yet decide to convert to Christianity, they did not visit the *masjid*, appearing sometimes in the *kapel*.

previous mixed marriages, this aroused friction between the bride's and groom's family.

It was not certain how this couple, a Christian man, Pak Peno, and a Muslim woman, Bu Peno, had started their love affair. When the news of their affair reached me, it was when they had already decided to get married. Borrowing the perspective of the reformist villagers, this love affair was possible due to the weakness of Bu Peno's religiosity. Previously, she was not actively involved in Islamic activities and her visits to the *masjid* were confined to the first phase of the fasting month and special *pengajian*. In the case of Pak Peno, he was quite frequently present at the *kapel*, although he did not attend Sunday service every week. At the first stage when they decided to get married, religious difference did not seem to be a serious obstacle to their marriage. First of all, they themselves did not call their religious difference into question. The family of Pak Peno also did not object to the marriage since they believed Bu Peno would change her religion and the marriage would be celebrated in a Christian way. In accordance with their expectation, Bu Peno started to attend the Christian learning course. In a short while, however, the first obstacle to this marriage came from the side of Bu Peno. Her cousin who was an Islamic activist in Kolojonggo learnt that Bu Peno was going to change her religion. He made every effort to persuade his father to intervene in the marriage, an action effective enough to make Bu Peno reverse her previous decision. With the excuse that the learning course did not suit (*cocok*) her, she stopped attending the Christian learning course. However, at that moment, she did not seem to have decided not to change her religion to Christianity. Rather, it was likely that she reserved her decision, watching over the situations in both her family and Pak Peno's. The moment when she had to choose one of the two religions, however, came suddenly when her cousin who strongly opposed to her marriage ran over a passer-by with his motorbike. Later, this accident was interpreted to be caused by the fact that he had thought too deeply about Bu Peno's marriage and subsequent conversion until he had lost his control in the road. Whatever the actual cause of the accident might be, it worked as a turning point in her marriage. After hearing that the accident was caused by her, Bu Peno made up her mind not to change her religion and made her intention known to Pak Peno. After a few weeks, Pak Peno at last gave up his efforts to persuade Bu Peno. Instead, he decided to change his religion to Islam. This was a hard blow to Pak Peno's family and his parents did not approve of his marriage as a Muslim. The way they displayed their dissatisfaction with their son was somewhat extreme in village life. They did not attend the wedding ceremony which was held in Bu Peno's house. This step was followed

by most of his kinsmen, so that only his uncle came to the bride's house as a representative of the groom's family.

In view of the Javanese social norm not to show one's real feelings in public, the absence of Pak Peno's parents and their kinsmen from Pak Peno's wedding seems to have been too extreme and this sort of reaction may not happen again in Kolojonggo. In spite of its abnormality, however, it shows the importance of religious identity as a factor in choosing one's spouse and the degree of friction which existed between Muslims and Christians concerning the issue of mixed marriages.

Apart from economic benefits and mixed marriages, what the reformist villagers enumerate as factors in causing conversion to Christianity include education in the Christian school, contact with Christian friends, involvement in a Western-style art group and indulgence in Western popular culture.

Many counter-measures were discussed by the reformist villagers to offset the proselytising activities of Christians. Deepening religious piety of Muslims to make them strong enough not to be tempted by the Christian mission was considered to be the most urgent one. The need to know more about Christian tactics, to give religious education to one's children, to improve the economic standard of Muslims and to intensify the welfare system in the *umat* Islam were also put forward. However, these measures are little more than principles and can hardly be realised with ease. The better and more practical way seems to be to clarify the boundary of the *umat* Islam and to strengthen the sense of collectivity within the *umat*, which will function to exert collective pressure on a Muslim who wants to change his or her religion. The effectiveness of this approach was actually proven when a Muslim girl gave up her intention of entering Christianity.

When the third section of the *takmir masjid* meeting came to discuss miscellaneous things, Mas Toro asked for time. With a voice full of excitement, he began his speech. 'Before I speak, I ask forgiveness of everyone, if there is something inappropriate in my speech. Here, I'd like to discuss a problem of Mbak Tinah.' Then, he summarised a rumour that she had participated several times in the meetings of the Bible study group. After this, he added: 'I tell this story in order for us, especially Muslim youth in our hamlet, to reflect upon ourselves. When I first heard this story, I felt ashamed. I wondered why the activities of Muslim youth had deviated so far from the right track. Why aren't our religious programs designed to embrace all Muslim youth before? Once again, I ask Muslims in Kolojonggo in general and Muslim youth in particular to recollect our previous activities. In addition, I request Muslim parents to pay more attention to their children and Muslim youth to take more

interest in their friends.' Without talking further about the problem of Mbak Tinah, he ended his remarks.

As Mas Toro mentioned, Mbak Tinah had attended Christian youth meetings. However, her attendance at these meetings did not mean her automatic conversion to Christianity. The Church decrees that someone who wants to be baptised should take instruction in Christianity for six months and Mbak Tinah had gone to these meetings just a few times, which was not enough to qualify her for baptism. The reason why she participated in these meetings was not clear. It was plausible that, as Mas Toro said, frequent contact with her close Christian friends might have played the major role.

It was unfortunate for her that publicisation of her intention preceded her actual conversion. A few days after the meeting of the *takmir masjid*, Mas Toro and a few others visited her. As they did not talk in detail about this meeting, it is difficult to know what discussion took place at that time between them. It might have been no more than making a simple suggestion or questioning her on the truth of the rumour. What is clear is that their unexpected visit conveyed a certain message to her. In Javanese social life where not many villagers are brave enough to express their hidden or real intention to others and where villagers are quite cautious about speaking directly of what they have in mind to others, this kind of simple but unexpected visit can mean something important. This visit could imply that their previous indifference to her was changed to deep concern about her. This show of interest in her behaviour clearly represented indirect pressure on her, alerting her to the fact that Muslims were monitoring her behaviour. As the Muslim youth expected, Mbak Tinah's visits to the *masjid* increased dramatically after their visit to her at home. A position was even given to her in the meeting to prepare for the fasting month, symbolising that she was fully incorporated into the *umat* Islam.

This success of the Muslim youth is somewhat exceptional. Their action seems to have been made possible by the fact that all of those involved in this incident belonged to the younger generation and somewhat aberrant behaviour could be more easily accepted, at least amongst themselves. However, if the news of an adult villager's conversion is heard, it would be unlikely that similar kinds of visit by adult Muslims would take place. They would not be brave enough to violate the social norms prohibiting direct involvement in others' private affairs until one is invited to do so by those directly connected with it.

In spite of this aberration, this example implies that the domain which was previously considered to be private is changing into that of collectivity. Conversion is no longer viewed, at least by some villagers, as an individual responsibility but a collective one. Islamic development and subsequent clarification of the boundary of the *umat* Islam have been the momentum bringing this change. When the boundary of religious identity can no longer be blurred,

the religiosity of others is gradually incorporated as a concern of those who belong to the same 'in-group'.

This situation in Kolojonggo parallels the development at the national level in which the interpretation of religious freedom has shifted from the idea of *laissez-faire* to something that should be regulated. One of the factors which triggered this shift was the success of Islamic groups in prompting the stipulation of Decree No. 70 1978. Following this legalisation, Muslims have emphasised the need to interfere in religious life for the purpose of achieving religious freedom, as was exemplified by the inter-religious meetings (*musyawarah antara agama*) in Yogyakarta in 1983 and 1984. The primary aim of these meetings was to let delegates from the five official religions reach an agreement on ethical codes for followers of different religions. In the 1983 Yogyakarta meeting, the delegates agreed upon five ethical codes related to (1) construction of places of worship, (2) spread of religion, (3) marriage between different religious followers, (4) burial and (5) commemoration of religious days (Departemen Agama, 1990:19-48). Some of them go as follows:

(1) When building a new place of worship, the number of the population who will use that place and its distance from the existing place of worship of another religion should be considered; an ordinary house should not be used as a place of worship.¹⁰

(2) Proselytism should not be directed to a person or a group of persons who already have another religion.

(3) The ideal marriage is one between a man and a woman who have the same religion. Thus, marriage between a man and a woman who have different religions should be avoided (*dihindari*) and prevented (*dicegah*) as much as possible. When a mixed marriage takes place, guidance has to be sought in order for the newly married to carry out their religious practices respectively.¹¹

¹⁰ Apart from the regulations related to the spread of religion, Muslims were also successful in enacting a decree to regulate the construction of a church. The decree issued in 1969 necessitated permission from the government and from the residents of a certain area as a prerequisite to construct religious buildings (Proyek Perencanaan Peraturan Perundangan Keagamaan, 1980/81:87) while the decree in 1975 prohibited an ordinary house from being used as a praying house for a group on a regular basis (*ibid.*:91). These decrees could effectively control the expansion of missionary activities since Christians were forced to receive agreement from the Muslim population in order to build a church. The 1975 regulation made it almost impossible, at least in legal terms, for Christians to initiate missionary activities in a new area where no mission had been carried out previously since, according to the law, their private house could not be used for religious purposes and no church could be constructed.

¹¹ According to the marriage law passed in 1974, a certain marriage can be valid only when it is performed in a way prescribed by each religion (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama, 1987/88:2). However, the different rules in each religion to regulate mixed marriages have brought about a situation in which all mixed marriages can be viewed as valid within the framework of the Indonesian legal system. This is because, of the five religions in Indonesia, only Islam has strict regulations governing mixed marriages: a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man while

(4) The burial place prepared by the government is open to everyone who lives in a certain area irrespective of religion.

(5) In principle, the commemoration of the Holy Days of a certain religion should be celebrated and attended by those who profess that religion. However, those who belong to a different religion can also participate on this occasion on the condition that this visit is made to maintain family ties, good neighbourhood relation and community spirit (*kegotong-royongan*).

The behavioural norms between different religious followers are not confined to these five codes but are also expected to embrace all other domains of social life. Therefore, people are expected to be aware that their behaviour and speech could offend followers of other religions in everyday interaction. The spread of this emphasis on adequate behavioural codes to every level of the population has resulted in a gradual change to grasp the relations between followers of different religions. These have begun to be viewed as something that should be taken care of (*dipelihara*), cultivated (*dibina*) and taught in the family, school and community. This is a shift from the Old Order period when *laissez-faire* was a dominant concept in discussing such relations. In this framework, an individual or a given religious community was considered to be an entity fully responsible for making harmonious relations with other religious followers. With the shift of perspective, however, full responsibility is no longer given to an individual or a religious community since, according to Muslims, harmonious relations between people and groups having different religions cannot be attained without due attention and regulations. One Muslim intellectual puts the reason for this as follows:

The meaning of religious freedom ... is that the parents who have a certain religion have to maintain and take care of their own religion among their family members lest they should change religion. If conversion of a member happens, it will cause instability in a family. It is not totally impossible that the proselyte will leave the family. This will lead to a situation in which the basis of religious freedom and harmony supported by mutual respect will disappear in that family (Sahibi Naim, 1983:38-39).

One of the results of this emphasis on adequate behavioural codes has been that it demands people should monitor the religious identity of others with whom they interact. This is because they cannot behave appropriately unless they

a Muslim man may marry a Christian or Jewish woman on the condition that there are clear reasons for marrying a non-Muslim woman (Majelis Ulama Indonesia DKI Jakarta, 1986:30). By contrast with Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Protestantism do not have clear guidelines to regulate mixed marriages while Catholicism tacitly admits the validity of mixed marriages by way of dispensation (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama, 1987/88:5-10). This makes it possible for a Muslim marrying a non-Muslim to legalise the marriage in the national legal system since, seen from the perspective of the non-Muslim, a mixed marriage is valid.

know the religious affiliation of others. For example, Christians may offer pork or alcohol to Muslims and Muslims may use Arabic greetings to Christians if their religious identity is not clearly recognised. The only way to avoid these mistakes, which will jeopardise harmonious relations between different religious followers, is to be conscious of each other's religion. In brief, the emphasis on appropriate behavioural norms has made people include religion as a factor in their everyday interactions, has highlighted the importance of religious identity in social life and has transformed religious life, at least in the conceptual domain, from personal responsibility to what should be taken care of and guided by others of the same religion.

8.3. Superiority of Islam

The reformist villagers' discussions of the Christian mission or the negative picture of Christians that they support are ultimately underpinned by one fundamental idea: the superiority of Islam to Christianity. Their belief in superiority is clearly expressed in the stories of conversion to Islam. It is one's pursuit of the truth which leads one to Islam rather than the factors outside of oneself. A typical conversion story, presented by a preacher from the city in a *pengajian*, went as follows:

I was born in a Catholic family and was educated in a Catholic school where I learned about Christianity and how to invite non-Christians into Christianity. As my knowledge deepened, I frequently argued with the priests over several religious issues but they could not respond to my questions properly. They just emphasised belief, evading the key questions of mine. This setback led me to knock at the door of the Protestant Church. There, I also debated with the clergymen but they could not satisfy me, either. Then, I was attracted to *kebatinan*. The impression that I got in the *kebatinan* group was better than my previous experiences in the Church, so that I wanted to be a cadre of that group. However, it turned out that the founder of that group had got his inspiration while performing Islamic ritual prayers. This discovery made me hesitate once again and I at last decided to resume my search for the truth. At that time, I was lucky enough to get in touch with people who had similar experiences to me, that is, people who had converted to Islam as a result of a long and painstaking pursuit of the truth. One of those to whom I addressed my problem was a famous Islamic leader who had studied in Cairo but who had once been a priest. Conversations with him at last strengthened my confidence that Islam was the answer that I had sought after for such a long time. I recited *sahadat Islam* in the office of the Department of Religion and added an Arabic name to my original one.

This sort of conversion story is not found among villagers in Kolojonggo. However, similar stories are heard about two families in which parents and children have different religions. For unknown reasons, Pak Toyo and his wife were Christians while one of their children was a Muslim. According to the reformist villagers, Pak Toyo, as an active Christian, has worked hard to persuade his child to accept Christianity, often with direct pressure or coercion. According to Mbak Sumi, Pak Toyo did not give money to his Muslim son whenever he did so to his other children. She said, 'I know this because I played in that house quite often when I was a child. ... To children, that kind of money matters a lot. Moreover, it was the time of poverty. Even a candy could make one feel the richest among one's friends.' The same tone is also found in the story of Pak Harto's family where two of his four children were Muslims. The *anak masjid* described Pak Harto as a cruel man devoid of fatherly love. Rumour had it that he objected to paying school fees for his Muslim daughter because she went to the *masjid*. He was also said to have forbidden his wife to prepare breakfast for his Muslim children during the fasting month, so that the girl had to get up at two in the morning to prepare it by herself.

What the story of conversion to Islam and the stories of Muslim children's hardship under the Christian parents try to convey is the contrast of 'the inner' to 'the outer', 'accident' to 'necessity' and 'strength of will' to 'easy life'. If it is material desire, job or romantic attachment (marriage) which induces one to convert to Christianity and just a short period of time is needed, it is the painstaking pursuit of the truth for longer period of time and the hardship which make conversion to Islam or the maintenance of the Islamic faith possible. To Muslims, this contrast is a proof that Islam is superior to Christianity. It is superior since conversion to Islam is a result of a long quest for the truth rather than of momentary vicissitude of mind and situational compulsion.

The equation between a search for the truth and the superiority of a certain religion cannot be understood without referring to the concept of *akal* (reason).¹² To the reformist villagers, *akal* is one of the key concepts with which to approach religion and to determine the rightness or incorrectness of a particular religion. Therefore, using *akal* in the quest for the truth is the right attitude of someone who accepts or rejects a certain religion. Their religious allegiance to Islam is also explained in terms of *akal*. They believe in Islam not because it is the only religion that has been available to them but because it 'makes sense' (*masuk akal*) while others do not. With this conceptual shift, they are described

¹² *Akal* originates from an Arabic word, *al-'aql*, meaning 'restraint from desire', 'prudence as opposed to weak reasoning (*lemah pikiran*)' and 'heart' (Harun, 1986:5-7). In Indonesian, '*akal*' is used to mean mind, intelligence or reason. The reformist villagers define one of its meanings as 'power to think' (*daya pikiran*). The popular idiom of '*masuk akal*' (to make sense) is in many cases interchangeable with that of '*pakai otak*' (to use brain).

not as submitting themselves to Islam blindly but as choosing Islam among various other possibilities.

The concept of *akal* is used by the reformist villagers in examining Christian theology. If Christianity 'makes sense', they argue, they will convert to it. Due to this emphasis on *akal*, one of the most frequently used ways of criticising Christianity takes the form of polemic: they question a certain concept in Christianity and show that it does not 'make sense'. Below is a conversation between a Muslim boy and a Protestant girl in their late teens, showing how the concept of '*akal*' is used by Muslims to evaluate Christianity.¹³

As soon as Mas Gino and Mbak Padmi arrived at my place, it started to rain cats and dogs, giving them a chance to stay together in my place. Our conversation began as usual. I asked about their recent activities and we exchanged the gossip about other youth in the hamlet. When I and Mbak Padmi were talking about the Bible Study Group, Mas Gino who had kept silent for a while entered into our conversation. To my surprise, he asked her a question about Christianity: 'What is the relationship among *Tuhan* (God), Allah and *Bapak* (Father)? I heard these three terms were frequently used in Christian prayers. Until now, however, I cannot understand what is the exact relationship among *Tuhan*, Allah and *Bapak*?' Seeing his face filled with a smile and hearing the tone of his voice, I could easily recognise that he asked this question to tease her. Mbak Padmi hesitated for a while and answered that these three terms designated the same entity. 'Why do you use *Tuhan*, Allah, *Bapak* at the same time rather than using each of them individually?' he asked. 'That is just for emphasis and there is no other hidden meanings', she replied. Although the tone of her reply was rather aggressive, Mas Gino continued his questioning. 'Who is Jesus? Is he *Tuhan* or is he the son of *Tuhan*?' Mbak Padmi answered reluctantly, 'Jesus is the son of *Tuhan* as well as *Tuhan*.' At this point, I thought he would stop questioning, but he did not. Instead, he incorporated Maria into their conversation:

'Who is Maria?'

'Maria is the mother of Jesus.'

'Who made Maria pregnant?'

'*Tuhan*.'

¹³ As I have pointed out earlier in this chapter, no Muslims or Christians were willing to speak about religion with one another. The conversation in the text was the only one that I heard during my stay in Kolojonggo and in this respect, it was an exceptional case. This conversation might not have happened if the Muslim youth had not had a close relation with the Christian girl. At the time of this conversation, they were in love, which made it easier for him to speak about a taboo topic to her. His original intention seemed to tease her rather than to criticise Christianity.

'Whom did Maria give birth to?

'Jesus.'

'Is not *Tuhan* and Jesus the same?'

'Yes.'

Hearing her reply, Mas Gino responded in a way which did not seem to be appropriate to his original intention of teasing her: 'Does it 'make sense' that father and son are the same? Does it 'make sense' that *Tuhan* begot Himself? Definitely not!' He took a brief look at her and continued his interrogation: 'If *Tuhan* and Jesus had been the same entity, where was *Tuhan* while he was in this world? Was *Tuhan*, as Christians say, still in Paradise when He was in this world?' Still, there was no reply from Mbak Padmi. Although her silence made the atmosphere tense, he did not stop questioning: 'I cannot understand, first of all, *Tuhan* and Jesus are the same, existing in two different places and taking two different forms. In the ordinary course of reasoning (*secara akal*), is it possible that one can stay in two places in two different forms? Moreover, one of them took the form of a human being. How can *Tuhan* and a human being have the same form?' Mbak Padmi did not answer his question nor make any other comment. A long silence was broken down when Mas Gino changed his topic: 'What is the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism?' He seemed to think this question was easy for her to answer. However, his guess was wrong. Mbak Padmi did not seem to have any clear explanation in her mind. After a pause, she answered that the Catholics worshipped (*menyembah*) Maria and every Catholic Church had the statue of Maria, an object of prayer for the Catholics. After answering, however, it seemed that she realised her reply was somewhat inappropriate. She tried to add another explanation, but she could not. Instead, what she did was to end our conversation by saying that 'I don't know much about it' in a somewhat loud and angry voice.

14

In this conversation, the concept on which Mas Gino relied to question Christianity was *akal*. He asked about the identity of God in Christianity and received the answer that the Son of God (Jesus) and Father of God (*Tuhan*) are the same entity. As the Son of God and Father of God cannot be the same entity and one cannot beget oneself in the ordinary course of reasoning (*secara akal*),

¹⁴ After hearing her comment, Mas Gino tried to ease the tense atmosphere between them. He finished their conversation by referring to *Pancasila*: 'When I was in high school, I was taught that discussions on other religions are recommended by *Pancasila*. These discussions are not to disparage but to deepen our understanding of other religions, which will eventually help to achieve harmonious relations between followers of different religions. The previous question of mine, therefore, should be understood in this context.'

the argument of Christians that Jesus and *Tuhan* are the same entity, according to Mas Gino, cannot 'make sense'.

This sort of criticism of Christianity cannot be maintained unless one premise is satisfied. Muslims should be able to show that all teachings in the Quran 'make sense'. Two slightly different positions are taken by the reformist villagers: first, everything in the Quran 'makes sense' but the development of *akal* until now is not high enough for all of it to be understood and this gap is compensated for by revelation (*wahyu*); and second, not all of its contents can be understood by *akal* due to its absolute limitation and this is compensated for by revelation. The difference between these two positions may not be a trifling one. However, this germ of potential controversy has not been clearly recognised by the reformist villagers. Instead, they select one of the two positions dependent on the context. For example, when they use the concept, *akal*, as a step in criticising Christianity, they resort to the first position whereas, when they talk with other Muslims who are sceptical about certain Islamic teachings, the second position may be adopted.¹⁵

Whatever positions are taken by the reformist villagers, the way the concept, *akal*, is used is somewhat different from the way the English term, reason, is used since its application is based more on analogy than on empirical verifiability or falsifiability. In order to judge whether certain facts or ideas in Islamic teachings 'make sense', for example whether the teaching that Prophet Muhammad journeyed at the speed of light in *Miraj* 'makes sense' or not, the reformist leaders do not need to show a direct proof that this actually happened in the 7th century or it can happen now. Instead, what they use is a parallel example; the modern technological development makes it possible for human beings to journey as fast as sound, which was not imaginable at the time of the Prophet. This is then used as an example to show that people will be able to fly at the speed of light in the future, implying that the journey of the Prophet at the speed of light does 'make sense'. As the way to explain *Miraj* shows, the analogy to which the reformist leaders resort is also heavily dependent on an historical approach. They take several examples which had remained puzzles but which could later be explained with the development of science and use these to show that Islamic teachings 'make sense'. One of the most frequently used examples is the prohibition from eating pork, as a villager put it:

By the Prophet, pork was categorised as forbidden. At that time, human beings did not understand why pork should be prohibited. Only the development of modern science showed that pork, compared to other meats, contained certain parasites endangering our health. This is the

¹⁵ In general, the reformist villagers warn of the danger of extreme use of *akal*. According to them, *akal* should be applied to confirm the genuineness of Islamic teachings while the limitless use of *akal* may divert one from the right path.

secret of Allah (*rahasia Allah*). ... This example teaches us that the commands of Allah which do not seem to 'make sense' in the present time is not because these cannot 'make sense'. With the development of human *akal*, the Islamic teachings which have been regarded as incomprehensible will 'make sense' in the future.

Seen from the positivist philosophy, the conclusions that the reformist leaders draw from the above examples might not be easily accepted since these cannot be negated. When a certain teaching can be shown to 'make sense', for example if modern science shows that pork is more dangerous than other meats, this is used as a basis from which to argue that this Islamic teaching 'makes sense'. Although a certain statement is not yet fully clarified, however, this cannot be taken as proof that this statement does not 'make sense', since it is thought to be due to the limited development of *akal*. In this respect, no Islamic teaching is falsifiable. On the other hand, the reformist leaders have the last means of rationalising all Islamic teachings which do not seem to 'make sense': the Omnipotence of Allah. As one villager put it, 'Allah created everything in this universe, so why cannot Allah, the creator of human *akal*, do or command something which does not seem to 'make sense'?' Seen from this framework, any proposal that Islamic teachings do not 'make sense' can not be accepted. The statement that Allah can do anything gives a rationale that everything can 'make sense' while this statement itself cannot be negated in any case. In this respect, the specific way the term *akal* is used by the reformist villagers allows them to believe that all Islamic teachings 'make sense'.

According to the framework which the reformist villagers adopt to criticise Christianity, all ideas and phenomena in human society including religion can be divided into three classes: those which 'make sense' such as the prohibition on eating pork; those which cannot be explained by the present state of *akal* such as the process of Creation¹⁶; and those which do not 'make sense' such as many beliefs in Christian theology. The Christian concepts which are considered not to 'make sense' by the reformist villagers include: the concept of Trinity; Original Sin and its inheritance; the Redemption of sin by Jesus Christ; several

¹⁶ An Islamic leader at the regional level, Pak Pamung, whose name was well known to other Islamic leaders in Yogyakarta and who had widespread popularity among Muslims in the rural areas, proposed in a *pengajian* that even the process of Creation could be proven with *akal*. Pak Pamung based this idea on the research which he had carried out: he collected 22 kinds of soil and 21 kinds of fluid, mixed them and boiled the mixture. The material that he obtained from this was white and smelled sperm (*nutfah*). He then related this result to the teaching in the Quran that human beings originated from clay and fluid (he did not quote the verses in the Quran; for the use of clay and fluid in the process of Creation, see such verses as vi:2,xv:26 and xvi:4 in the Quran). Some of the villagers who attended Pak Pamung's *pengajian* with me mentioned that they were convinced by Pak Pamung's idea that virtually all Islamic teachings could be proven with *akal*. When I told this story later to several reformist leaders in Sumer and asked their opinions, they generally gave credit to Pak Pamung's efforts to prove Islamic teachings, although some of them suggested that the process of Creation was not proved by Pak Pamung's research.

self-contradictory verses in the Bible on the nature of God; and other contradictory statements in the Bible. They attack these problems resorting to an analogy based on *akal*: as 1+1+1 should be 3 rather than 1, so God, the son of God and Holy Spirit cannot be one; as the child cannot be responsible for the crime of his or her father, so no sin can be inherited from Adam by later generations; if Jesus Christ is God, He cannot ask of Himself the Redemption of sin; many passages in the Old Testament ascribe to God the human qualities of anger, shame, regret and so on and these are contradictory to the attribute of God transcending humanity; and while one passage in the Bible teaches that it was handed down only for the Jews, in another, the Bible was said to be revealed for all human beings.

These examples are used by the reformist villagers as proofs that theological themes in Christianity and the contents of the Bible do not 'make sense'. This enables them to argue that the Bible is not revelation from God. If it is from God, there should be no contradictions or inconsistencies in its contents which can easily be discerned by human *akal*. This argument eventually leads to the thesis that Christianity is a man-made religion which has totally deviated from the teaching of God and that Islam is superior to Christianity.

8.4. Summary

Christians and Muslims have co-existed in Kolojonggo since the first conversion to Christianity in the early 20th century. Until recently, the significance of religious difference between Muslims and Christians did not go beyond the religious domain. Villagers of one religion gathered on religious occasions but this grouping did not extend into non-religious life. In some cases, Christians were even included in the religious activities of Muslims and vice versa, as the exchange of foods and visits in the fasting month and at Christmas showed. As Islamic reform has accelerated, this situation has gradually changed. A clear line has been drawn dividing the *umat* Islam from the *umat* Christian, and villagers' consciousness of each others' religious difference has grown. This consciousness has been paralleled by the formation of the idea of 'in-group' and 'out-group' and, the exclusiveness of this concept has begun to extend into non-religious domains. It is now an important matter whether Muslims should make friends with Christians, may marry Christians, should choose a Christian in a election and should help Christians or not.

The clear awareness of religious difference has created tensions and friction between Muslims and Christians. Until now, these strained relations have not led to open conflict. Even verbal discord is seldom heard in public places where Muslims and Christians gather together. The maintenance of harmony in public life has been possible due to the effectiveness of the government's policy of imposing the ideology of *Pancasila* on public life and the pervading social norm emphasising harmony (*rukun*) in public. This does not mean, however, that the

same attitude prevails within the 'in-group'. On the contrary, the reformist Muslims have been quick to point out offensive and provocative behaviour by Christians which jeopardises harmony between followers of different religions and they have tried to attack Christianity.

One of the issues of most concern to the reformist Muslims is the conversion of Muslims to Christianity. As a way of challenging this, Muslims wage an ideological war against Christians. In this ideological war, the main weapons they employ are *Pancasila* and the concept of *akal*. The concept of *Pancasila*, which is interpreted as not permitting any missionary activities among those who already confess a religion, is employed to highlight the unfair tactics used by the Christian mission. The concept of *akal* is used to show the logical absurdity of Christian theology, the truthfulness of Islam and the ideological dominance of Islam over Christianity.

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the changing nature of the relations between Muslims and Christians in Kolojonggo. Apart from giving a better understanding of this relationship, the discussion has also provided a chance to look at the impact of the presence of Christians on the on-going process of Islamic development in Kolojonggo. As was indicated in Chapter III, Islamic development has opened a door for Muslim villagers to have intense contact with the scriptural tradition of Islam. The increasing religious knowledge, on the one hand, and the numerical increase of Muslims who make every effort to observe religious prohibitions and commands, on the other hand, have brought a diversification of the meaning of 'Muslim-ness'. At least to a certain segment of Muslims, especially those referred to as reformist villagers, the simple act of reciting *sahadat Islam*, once thought to be a sufficient condition of 'Muslim-ness', can no longer be regarded as a criterion to make someone a Muslim. They see it as merely the starting point. The differentiation made through this concept of 'Muslim-ness' has been recognised by the reformist Muslims, so that the term, 'Islam KTP', is used, even if not openly, to designate those Muslims who do not carry out their religious duties and who do not participate in Islamic activities.

The trend of the reformist villagers to divide the Muslim population into two, however, has not been fully developed¹⁷ and an inclusive attitude is still retained by them vis-à-vis villagers belonging to 'Islam KTP'. One of the most important factors in maintaining this inclusive attitude is the presence of Christians and their threats to the *umat* Muslim. This makes it urgent for the boundary of the *umat* Islam to be drawn to embrace all Muslims, impeding the process of

¹⁷ The recent study of reformist Muslims in Central Java shows that the core members of the reformist Muslims develop a dichotomised view of their own group and others. They regard themselves as the main vehicle of religious and moral excellence in village society while considering other Muslims as belonging to an unenlightened or heedless community (Irwan Abdullah, 1994:98-9). This situation may show one possible way the differentiation of villagers in terms of their religious outlook can be developed in rural Java.

differentiation amongst Muslims in conceptual and in social forms. As a result, the *umat* Islam is still defined in its most inclusive form, namely, as including anyone who is not a Christian, irrespective of his or her religiosity.