

Theological idealism of Gus Dur's Humanitarian response towards social transformation

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Abstract

Abdurrahman Wahid is a kyai as well as an organic scholar and a divergent figure. Gus Dur believed that Islamic theology needs to be re-actualized according to current conditions. According to Gus Dur's hermeneutical perspective on developing a theology of humanitarian action, he believed that theological writings could be understood both from *ma fin nash* (in the text) and *ma haulan nash* (around the text), with the spirit of seeking new universality of teachings.

Keyword: Divergent, Re-actualization, theology of humanitarian action

Abstrak

Abdurrahman Wahid adalah seorang kyai sekaligus intelektual organik, dan termasuk tokoh yang divergen. Bagi Gus Dur Teologi Islam saatnya untuk dilakukan reaktualisasi sesuai dengan kondisi sekarang. Dalam pandangan hermeneutika Gus Dur dalam membangun teologi respon kemanusiaan, teks-teks teologi tidak hanya cukup dipahami dengan *ma fin nash* (in the Teks) akan tetapi juga dari *ma haulan nash* (Around the Teks), dengan semangat mencari universalitas baru ajaran.

Kata Kunci: Divergen, Reaktualisasi, Teologi Respon Kemanusiaan

INTRODUCTION

According to its development, the kalam science emerged as a response to the spread of Greek philosophy and beliefs beyond Islam during that era. These ideologies and philosophical thoughts spread widely, thus Islamic scholars (read: ulama') felt compelled to foresee the potential for the Islamic faith to become contaminated. After that, they produced

writings with arguments that were supposed to fortify the Islamic faith using both logical reasoning and naqli arguments. (Muhammad In'am Esha, 2006, p. xvi)

Kalam science came to represent a sense of social crisis among Islamic scholars. Muslims of the period needed to rationalize their core convictions in light of the threats and challenges posed by Greek philosophy. Therefore, it is understandable that at that era, Islamic theology was only concerned with transcendent-speculative issues. (Amin Abdullah, 2003, p. 74-75)

Moreover, the formulators of Islamic theology (again) must once more address the realities of modern life, particularly those related to science and technology and their effects. The Islamic theology that has been formulated thus far has proven to be inadequate to equip believers to live in this age of science, technology, and information. (Machasin 2003: p. 74-75) This fact requires a paradigm shift in our present Islamic theology, from theological dialectic to theology that responds to humanity, as is the idealism of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid's thought is to realize the social transformation of Muslims in the future.

METHODOLOGY

The method employed in the current study is library research, involving systematic reading and in-depth analysis of the works (books) of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), particularly those addressing Gus Dur's theological perspectives. Concurrently, data about the analytical aspect of this issue will be traced from primary sources and relevant research results. After data collection, it is then analyzed analytically, inductively, and comparatively. The inductive method is used to obtain an overview of Gus Dur's thoughts regarding his views on the theology of humanitarian response.

This study applied a systematic philosophical approach (systematic approach); the term "system" is interpreted as a system of thinking (such as "logic system" and classification system). In this study, Gus Dur's thoughts on theology are constructed systematically and logically in the system of thinking "epistemology".

DISCUSSION

Biography and Socio-Cultural of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid

KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, familiarly known as Gus Dur, served as the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia from October 20th, 1999 to July 24th, 2001. He was born on August 4th, 1940, in Denanyar, Jombang, East Java, at the Islamic boarding school owned by his maternal grandfather, Kiai Bisri Syamsuri. (Greg Barton, 2008, p. 26) Out of six siblings, Gus Dur was the eldest son. His father, K.H. Wahid Hasyim, was one of the founders of the biggest organization in Indonesia called Nadlatul Ulama'. His mother, Hj. Sholehah, on the other hand, was the daughter of Jombang, the founder of the Denanyar Islamic Boarding School. Bisri Syamsuri, KH. Gus Dur, was the first son of six siblings. His father was a founder of the biggest organization in Indonesia (Nadlatul Ulama'), named K.H. Wahid Hasyim. Meanwhile, his mother, named Hj. Sholehah, was the daughter of KH. Bisri Syamsuri, the founder of the Denanyar Islamic Boarding School, Jombang. From his marriage to Sinta Nuriyah, they had four children, namely Alissa Qotrunnada Munawaroh, Zanuba Arifah Chafsoh, Annita Hayatunnufus, and Inayah Wulandari. (Faisol, 2011, p. 71)

Gus Dur had been an avid reader since he was a little boy and regularly used his father's private library. He also made frequent trips to some public libraries in Jakarta. Gus Dur was already acquainted with a variety of periodicals, newspapers, books, and novels in his teens. He liked to play chess, football, and music in addition to reading. Gus Dur was actually asked to become a commentator on a football match on television once. Watching films was another pastime that went well with his other interests. This hobby gave rise to a deep appreciation of the world of film. This is why Gus Dur was appointed as chairman of the jury for the Indonesian Film Festival in 1986-1987.

The majority of Gus Dur's teenage years were spent at the Islamic boarding schools in Tegalrejo, Magelang, and Al-Munawir Krapyak, Yogyakarta. Gus Dur began to attend full-time Islamic boarding school classes after graduating from Yogyakarta's First Economic High School in 1957. (Barton, Greg, 2008, p. 52) It was in these two places that the development of knowledge began to increase. In the following period, Gus Dur lived in Jombang at the Tambak Beras Islamic boarding school until he continued his studies in Egypt. His uncle had proposed to him a girl, Sinta Nuriyah, the daughter of H. Muh. Sakur, before he departed for Egypt. Thus, the marriage was held in Egypt later on.

After returning from his studies, Gus Dur returned to Jombang and decided to become a teacher. In 1971, he joined the Ushuluddin Faculty of Tebuireng University in Jombang. Three years later, he became the secretary of Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, and in the same year, Gus Dur began to become a writer. He returned to his passion as a writer and columnist. Through these writings, Gus Dur's ideas began to attract a lot of attention. (Faisol, 2011, p. 72)

In 1974, Gus Dur was asked by his uncle, KH. Yusuf Hasyim, to serve as a secretary at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, Jombang. Since then, Gus Dur began to frequently receive invitations to be a speaker at several religious and Islamic boarding school discussion forums, both domestically and overseas. Gus Dur was involved in several NGO activities. Including, at the Institute for Economic and Social Research, Education and Information (LP3ES) with Dawam Raharjo, Aswab Mahasin, and Adi Sasono in the Islamic boarding school development project, then Gus Dur founded an Association for the Development of Islamic Boarding Schools and Society (P3M), which was led by that organization.

Gus Dur then moved to Jakarta in 1979. At first, he pioneered the Ciganjur Islamic Boarding School. Meanwhile, in early 1980, Gus Dur was trusted as PBNU Syuriah's deputy secretary. At that time, He engaged in meaningful conversations and arguments with people from different religious, ethnic, and disciplinary backgrounds about religious, social, and political issues. Gus Dur became more serious about writing and struggling with his world, both in the fields of culture, politics, and Islamic thought. As a religious leader and PBNU official, his career was viewed as "deviant" and drew derision. That was when he became chairman of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKI) in 1983. He also became chairman of the jury at the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI).

Furthermore, in 1984, Gus Dur was elected by acclamation by a team of ahl hall wa al-aqdi led by KH. As'ad Syamsul Arifin to occupy the position of General Chairman of PBNU at the 27th Congress in Situbondo. The position was reaffirmed at the 28th Congress at Krapyak Islamic Boarding School, Yogyakarta (1989) and another Congress in Cipasung, West Java (1994). The position of General Chairman of PBNU was then relinquished when Gus Dur served as the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia. During his time as president, Gus Dur had not a few thoughts that were controversial. He frequently held views that were different from many others. (Faisol, 2011, p. 73)

Gus Dur's Theology of Humanitarian Response

The hermeneutics¹ adopted by Gus Dur in building the concept of theology of humanitarian response is the search for a new universality of Islamic teachings, which is not only explored by *ma fin nash* (in the Text) but also by *ma haulan nash* (around the text). Of course, he was inspired by Imam Ghazali, who distinguished Muhammad as a prophet and Muhammad as an Arab. Gus Dur not only constructs the meaning in the text but also looks for other significance (*magza*) in the text.

As a science of interpretation, hermeneutics is a triadic process (having three interrelated aspects), namely: 1. sign, message, text, 2. mediator or interpreter, 3. delivery to the audience. (Nafisul Atho', Arif Fahrudin, (ed), 2003, p. 17) The interconnection between text, context, and contextualisation.

As a text, both the Qur'an and Hadith as the foundation and basis of Islamic teachings are not autonomous. Religious texts do not revolve around themselves, because the reason is based on their meanings from the scope of the initial meaning of the verses. (Husen Muhammad, 2012: 5) Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid defined both the Qur'an and Hadith as a text, it certainly contains two fundamental elements, namely meaning and significance (*magza*). In the hermeneutic view, the sentence "the weather is cloudy today" could be considered incorrect if the weather today is actually clear. Because it turns out that the text or sentence has no significance to today's weather reality.

Throughout his life, Gus Dur nurtured thoughts and worries that were focused on humans and humanity. He had a deep affection for humanity. He put a lot of effort into translating these principles of humanity for this reason. He frequently stated outwardly that every individual needs to have their fundamental rights upheld, regardless of their background. (Muhammad Husen, 2012, p. 5)

One of the shortcomings of classical Islamic theological doctrine is the persistence of a transcendental-speculative discourse in Islamic theology. This kind of discourse is perceived as too "heavenly," philosophical-theological in nature, and too preoccupied with debates and discussions of a theoretical divine nature. For instance, the question "Is God substance or attribute? Does God have an absolute or limited will? Is the Qur'an created or

¹ Hermeneutics is defined by Zygmunt Bauman as an effort to explain and trace the message and basic understanding of an unclear, vague, dim, and contradictory speech or writing that causes confusion for the listener or reader. See Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an, Tema-tema Kontroversial*, (Yogyakarta: Kalimedia, 2015), p. 5-6

eternal?" And so forth. Islamic theological doctrines are regarded as not being "down to earth" or having an empirical-historical dimension because the issues brought up by the mutakallimin do not address the issues that are present in real human life, such as democracy, structural poverty, injustice, oppression, religious conflict, and a host of other issues. This kind of mode of thought, which talks about God up there or in the "Arasy" but does not relate it to universal human problems here or on "earth," has diminished the Qur'anic spirit, which Iqbal and Rahman have characterized as empirical-historical in nature (Lukman S. Thahir, 2004, p. 107-108).

It is time for Islamic theological discourse to shift to a new paradigm that understands God with diverse traits in the context of earthly existence in light of this objective state. This model of theology, initially, was actually pioneered and exemplified by the mutakallimin of the classical era, in which the concept of divinity they formulated was a response to the issues faced by the community at that time. However, in its development, because their arguments were more inspired by Greek philosophy (due to its interaction with the philosophical tradition of Hellenistic Greece, and not due to the social-empirical spirit of the Qur'an), the discourse of theology with a "heavenly" character became unavoidable. (Lukman S. Thahir, 2004, p. 109-110)

The functional method is one strategy that can be applied in this situation as a new paradigm to change the theological-philosophical concept of Islamic theology. This approach, according to Daniel L. Pals, in terms of religious discourse, holds the assumption that theology is not merely about showing how it causes its adherents to believe their faith is a truth. Theology must be able to explain how faith "works," how it functions, and how it can transcend the intellectual level in human efforts to meet their needs in every condition. In other words, in the discourse of Classical Islamic theology, it is not enough to merely show and prove to Muslims that the theological beliefs, whether Mu'tazilah or Ash'ariyah, are the correct beliefs. Even more extremely, it is not enough to merely show and prove (both with Qur'anic evidence and rational arguments) that the Mu'tazilah doctrine is more rational compared to Ash'ariyah. Rather, it is necessary to demonstrate how the belief in the correctness of these two schools or the rationality or irrationality of their theological systems functions and goes beyond the intellectual level, not only limiting itself to theoretical debate but also touching on the everyday social needs of their adherents. In this case, the community's consumption of theology is about the functioning of God's attributes

and substance rather than how Mu'tazilah and Asy'ariyah perceive God, whether He is substance or attribute, and so on. (Lukman S. Tahir, 2004, p. 108–109) God does not need to be defended, although He does not refuse to be defended either. (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2011, p. 86) Instead, our humanity must be defended and fought against ignorance, poverty, and injustice.

Moreover, with or without our defence, God remains the Most Majestic, the Most High, and the Most Glorious. God Himself will defend His religion. As explained in Surah at-Taubah, verse 32:

الْكَافِرُونَ كَرِهَ وَلَوْ نُورَهُ يَتَمَّ أَنْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَيَأْبَى بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ اللَّهُ نُورَ يُظْفِقُوا أَنْ يُرِيدُونَ

That means: “They wish to extinguish Allah’s light with their mouths, but Allah will only allow His light to be perfected, even to the dismay of the disbelievers.”

This is what Van Peursen meant, that the model of functional approach does not rest on the question of what it is, but how it is. For instance, the question is not whether God has an absolute will or not, nor whether God is One in essence and qualities, but rather how one and absolute God is. If the first question “What,” tends to place God as One and willing, but does not have empirical-historical implications, in the sense that the entire question is solely directed towards God (theocentric), then the second question, “How,” contains empirical-historical meaning, because it involves the values of God’s oneness and absoluteness in various human activities (anthropocentric). For example, without having to get trapped in debating whether the Mu'tazilah and Asy'ariah systems of thought are rational or not, by believing that God is One and has absolute will, then all creatures other than God, including humans themselves, are relative or uncertain. Any attitude of absolutizing human value, whether done by a person to himself or others, is against the principle of God’s unity and absolute will. In other words, this principle requires that there is nothing single and fixed in human life; there is only multiplicity and uncertainty. All forms of human social life arrangements that do not require diversity, diversity, and temporariness, for example (the emergence of absolute power in politics, monopolies and conglomerations in the economy, as well as the attitude of exclusivism and truth claims in religious aspects). These are contradictory to the logic of omnipresence and the absolute will of God. (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2011, p. 86)

The kalam science is called so because the issue that is its central theme is kalam or “word”, namely the kalam of Allah (the word of God). However, a question arises regarding the mention of this name, namely whether al-kalam is actually “the word of God” or is it only “the word of man”, because in any case, the word of God (kalam) can be known only after being read, interpreted and comprehended by humans. Hence, knowledge of the first is impossible to obtain without knowing the knowledge of the second. Thus “the word of man” becomes a discourse on “the word of God” based on human thoughts, feelings, and words. It becomes a study of “who and how God is” (hadith an Allah; Discours de dieu) and not about “what is the word of God” (hadith an Allah discours de dieu). (Hassan Hanafi, 1988, p. 1819)

The kalam science is a science called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the science of analyzing conversation, not only concerning the pure form of speech but also concerning the context of speech, and meaning concerning the world. Revelation becomes an intentionality of God (words sent from God to humans), it has a human relevance. Theology is anthropocentric, which means the science of humans, both as the goal of the word and the subject of discourse. Theology as hermeneutics is not a sacred science but humanly produces social science. Therefore, theology could reflect social and political conflicts. Each social group in a believing society has its interests and defends them through a given belief system. This definition is called theology. (Hassan Hanafi, 2005, p. 18-19). Theology in Islamic discourse is actually standardized but “demanding”. However, when we look for the answer, we encounter a dogma: do not think about God, but think about God’s creation, because whoever recognized his God recognized himself, and whoever recognized himself, recognized his God. Due to this, God in Islam becomes an impossible area (an area of impossibility to find a firm answers) as Muhammad SAW described “Qul al-Ruhu min Amri Rabbi” (Its nature is known only to my Lord). In addition, Karens Armstrong defined that God becomes personalistic transcendent (distant and private belonging) so this idea is often accused of being a different idea (furqan) from the theology in Christianity which has been immanent (God’s presence in every human activity). (Airlangga Pribadi & M. Yudhie R. Haryono, 2022, p. 89-90)

Mainstream theological theory is fundamentally theocentric when considering God's relationship with humanity, holding that God is the center of all power and authority and that humans have to yield to and be subdued before God. Many people have started to doubt the applicability of theology in resolving social and humanitarian issues amid the

complexities of theological debates. This question came up due to theology, instead of answering humanitarian problems, in many cases were used as a tool to oppress humans. Therefore, theology is not a means to transform society. (Rumadi, 2002, p. 23) This dichotomous way of thinking considers religion as a way for people to believe in God (theocentric theology), a theology that invites humans to “leave everything” for God. It makes sense that we should give everything to God as we all succeeded from Him (Inna Lillahi Wa inna ilaihi Rajiun). Because everything, including the universe and man’s destiny, is irrelevant save for him. (Rumadi 2002, p. 94–95)

The understanding of theocentric logic is the path of life with the omnipresent presence of God (Maujud). God not only created man but also intervened to come and dwell in worldly life; he is considered to be present in physical form in every place. Therefore, human life is a passive life, linear, status quo, monotonous, and subservient, even a form of scenario absoluteness. (Airlangga Pribadi & M. Yudhie R. Haryono, 2002, p. 95)

In relation to its own social reality, theology is fragmented. Theology is the domain of divinity, while social reality is the domain of humanity. If we follow this view, there is no connection between theology and social transformation. This means that if someone wants to make theology the basis of social transformation, it is like looking for a needle in a haystack. The question that then arises is: “What kind of theology can be used as a basis for social transformation?” This is where the importance of “humanizing theology” and “theologizing people” comes in. Humanizing theology means giving theology a humanitarian vision. Otherwise, theologizing people means making people the basis of theological understanding. For this reason, theologians began to formulate alternatives to a more humane theological understanding. For instance, in Christianity, the term liberation theology emerged, which was later adopted by some Islamic scholars. The reason for this is that this model of theology is considered to be more humane. (Rumadi, 2002, p. 24) Namely, a theological model that seeks to eliminate poverty and injustice (among other things) as a form of liberation movement. (Djam’annuri, 2002, p. 162) Or the Nahdliyin people called it development theology. (M. Masyhur Amin, (ed), 1989, p. 234)

If we continue to utilize the previously mentioned comprehension, namely the dichotomous way of thinking, then monotheism is simply understood as a form of belief. (Nurcholish Madjid, 2000: 74) According to him, it remains limited to belief in “God”, even though the theocentric understanding of theology produces good effects in the form of

guidance for life, even though the effects themselves could be wrong. However, Nurcholish Madjid argued that it is precisely this that is more clearly dangerous, that the real harm lies in the side effects, namely personal bondage and the degradation of dignity and humanity. (Nurcholish Madjid, 2000: 99-100) Belief in this sense is not belief in "God", it had become a necessity, the need for a paradigm shift in theology (kalam science). Due to, if theology only talks about God (theocentric) and does not relate its discourse to the issue of Universal humanity (anthropocentric), then the formulation of theology will gradually become irrelevant. (Amin Abdullah, 1995, p. 42)

Contrary to the idea that religion is only a way for people to believe in God (theocentric), it gave rise to the opposite interpretation and perspective, that religion is a way for people to be humane. This way of understanding religion has given birth to a topocentric theology, a theology that places humans at the center of everything. This understanding also believes that God has created the universe. Therefore, humans are free (Free-Secular) to determine humans as the center of the universe. This is because the core of religion is how to humanize and prosper humans. This can lead to a discourse on eco-religion, such as basing things on capitalist, secular, and anti-environmental values. It is a focus that places humans as the legitimate leaders to exploit all natural resources based on profit and loss for their interests. "Humans are infallible, and by extension, not sinful." for such behavior. (Airlangga Pribadi and M. Yudhie R. Haryono, 2002, p. 95)

Towards Islamic Social Transformation

Transformation in Islam is essentially Islamization, a process of integrating the fundamental values of Islam into human lives. "Islam is a system for practical human life in all its aspects." It is a system that brings ideological concepts that convince and explain the nature of the universe, as well as determine the position of man in this world as well as the main purpose contained in it. Moreover, Islam is a complete system of life and the success of Islamic society in this life and the hereafter depends on the total adherence to the pattern of life described by the shari'ah. (Mamoon al-Rasheed, 2010, p. 142-143)

Tawhid, ummah, al-adl, and ihsan are key concepts in Islam. These concepts are dynamic and can play a role in transforming rural society and human liberation. These principles explain the importance and meaning of Allah's grace, which requires a change of heart and a change of social structure. A transformation in the heart without a resulting

change in structure will still leave oppression. A transformation of structure without a change of heart can lead to new oppression because the liberated oppressed are still ridden by self-interest and greed, which in turn can become new oppressors. If both are carried out simultaneously, that situation will certainly arise in which people can live together in brotherhood and freedom. It is in such a society that people live freely without exploitation as Islam teaches us to become a society and Islam shows its inherent dynamism through faith. It is not a blueprint or a vision, but a divine reality that initiates a new order-tauhid, ummah, al-adl, and ihsan. Muslims are committed to the eternal task of creating a social structure in which these values can be realized and safeguarded. (Mamoon al-Rasheed, 2010, p. 142-143)

In Islam, tawhid is at the center of all forms of transformation. It is a principle of absolute spiritual truth that can give shape to social life in all its manifestations and impacts in everyday life. Moreover, tawhid can connect the metaphysical and spiritual with various aspects of daily life. For example, in work, we are familiar with terms such as production, trade, consumption, distribution, business, family relations, and social behavior. Moreover, social institutions, law, and art all make up the whole of Islamic society. Tawhid is the core concept that makes all aspects of rural social transformation achievable. It is the unifying factor of all life.

The next thing that is important when considering Islamic transformation is the concept of ummah, as it is an integral part of the concept of tawhid. It is through this concept of community that Islam aims to build a social order in which individuals are united in the bonds of brotherhood. Individuals living in an Islamic society are like members of one family that Allah created from one couple.

“O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Quran, 49, 13)

Ummah is not parochial but is universal instead. It created an egalitarian and cooperative environment and an integral part of it is al-adl. This concept indicated the balance of power at a fundamental level. It also puts all aspects of life in a proper and balanced perspective. Moreover, ummah is Islam’s basic concept of socio-economic justice. Social justice should characterize human social behavior, which in turn affects economic

behavior. A faith that has elements of injustice is not acceptable in the sight of Allah. Al-adl guides people to sirat-al-mustaqim and helps individuals to avoid excesses.

However, according to Gus Dur, Islam is a religion of compassion and tolerance as well as a religion of justice and honesty. This means that Islam is an egalitarian religion, a faith that fundamentally does not support unequal treatment for reasons of class, ethnicity, race, gender, or other groupings in society. (Muhammad Yahya al-Mustaufi, 2019, p. 35)

Furthermore, Ihsan is another factor that is important to the overall socio-economic relationship in Islam. It refers to the kindness in social relations that results from an individual's willingness to forgive and forget the wrongs of others, to sacrifice for others what he or she deserves, to favor others over oneself, and to be generous.

“Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as generosity to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful.” (Quran, 16:90)

Furthermore, Ihsan can foster an individual's social bonds. This is particularly important in relationships among the lower society and between family members. It also enabled society to exist in love, affection, brotherhood, and friendship.

The discussion is written to interpret and describe the significance of your findings in light of what was already known about the issues being investigated, and to explain any new understanding or insights about the problem after you have taken the findings into consideration.² It should connect to the introduction by way of the research questions or hypotheses you posed and the literature you reviewed, but it does not simply repeat or rearrange the introduction; this section should always explain how your study has moved the reader's understanding of the research problem forward from where you left them at the end of the introduction.³

CONCLUSION

KH. Abdurrahman Wahid often known as Gus Dur, is a divergent figure, a figure who is different from other figures, a figure who stands between two conflicting sides, a

² Mubin Shaikh, “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Online: An Anecdotal Case Study Related to Engaging ISIS Members and Sympathizers (from North America, Western Europe, and Australia) on Twitter,” *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 98, no. 4 (2015): 478–87, <https://doi.org/10.5325/soundings.98.4.0478>.

³ Endi Aulia Garadian, “Youth Camp for Preventing Violent-Extremism: Fostering Youth Dialogue, Encountering Diversity,” *Studia Islamika*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i2.7924>.

fundamentalist, a liberalist, a traditionalist, a moderationist, a feudal, and also a democrat figure.

Gus Dur positioned tawhid or aqidah as being focused on defending humanity as well as the presence of God. Theology is not only oriented towards theocentric areas but also anthropocentric, which is defended not only to God but also to our humanity, such as injustice, ignorance, poverty, and colonialism.

In accordance with the development of the times, the Islamic world needs an Islamic theology that is tajriby (empirical), as a theology that is more 'down to earth' than 'heavenly' as it has been. The theological dialectic continues throughout the history of human civilization, by the context of the times in which it is embedded. However, theology does not mean only talking about faith an-sich. If faith remains a 'pure matter' or substantive, it means that theology is more methodological.

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