A Study of Carl Rogers' Humanist Approach in Interfaith Counseling

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Abstract

This article is the result of research on counseling services to counselees of different churches and religions. Is there a possibility that counselees from different churches and religions would be helped? The research used a qualitative method in which we focused on descriptive data that refer to the spoken words and behaviors of the counselees. The research took place at the Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor, Kupang, NTT. Here, it was found that counselees from different churches and religions could solve their own problems when their potentials were revealed. The Carl Rogers' humanist approach used by the counselor was very effective in maximizing the potential of the counselee. Through the theology of religions overview, finally, it is concluded that God's love is worthy of being enjoyed by counselees of different religions.

Keywords: Carl Rogers; humanist approach; interfaith counseling.

INTRODUCTION

Counseling is a conversation between the counselor and the counselee to increase understanding and awareness of the counselee's self-potential that comes from God as a source of strength to solve the problems he or she faces. The Bible presents a counseling narrative, for example, performed by Prophet Elijah when he acted as a counselor who gave instructions to a widow in Zarephath. Through this guidance, Elijah empowered the widow with what she had, namely a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a pot. At Elijah's direction, the widow first served the man of God by making a small round loaf of bread. What happened next was that the flour in the pot did not run out and the oil in the pitcher did not decrease until the time when the LORD gave rain on the earth (1 Kings 17:1-16). The result, of course, is that the widow realizes how much God cares and intervenes for the poor by pointing to her strong points (however small or insignificant) to get her out of trouble. Another counseling conversation and action can also be seen in the narrative of Jesus raising the young man in Nain (Luke 7:11-17). In the narrative, Luke tells us that Jesus was moved by compassion for the widow. Then Jesus said: "Do not weep!" These words were followed by touching the coffin and saying: "Young man, I tell you, get up!" Jesus' words and actions demonstrate the powerful work of God. This work through anyone and anything serves as good news to people like the widow, who was temporarily discouraged by the loss of her protector and breadwinner. Jesus' work made the widow strong and re-energized in God's mercy (cf. Deuteronomy 24:6-22). From the traditions of ancient Israel to the Jewish traditions of Jesus' time, sons have perpetuated the family lineage and inherited wealth, both

physical and non-physical as family honor.[1] Hence, Jesus' counseling, which arrived at the act of bringing the boy back to life, brought the widow back into her family that protected her economically and politically. Even more than that, the widow regained honor and belonging in the Jewish family.

The practice of counseling, as told in the Old and New Testaments, which is one of the tasks of the church today, shows a healthy and dynamic church organization.[2] In practice, counseling is not only for church members, but also for counselees from other churches or even other religions. This dynamic also occurs at *the Yayasan Tembok Harapan Timor*, an organization under the patronage of *Gereja Bethel Kemah Kesaksian*, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. Counseling involves guidance from "gifted" prayer ministers, followed by advice to improve behavior for the better based on Bible verses. This approach, as emphasized by Jay Adams (1929-2020), makes the words and life of Jesus Christ a strong basis for counseling and is considered effective for helping counselees.[3] However, will interfaith counselees be helped through this type of counseling? This article aims to determine the effectiveness of Carl Rogers' humanistic approach in counseling services to interfaith counselees. Humanistic counseling theory views freedom as the most important part of human life. Freedom must also be supported by the value of awareness of each person's responsibility. This means that freedom will be manifested in how to determine the direction of his or her life through every decision he or she makes. The humanist approach of Carl Rogers (1902-1987), an American psychologist, asserts that humans are capable of solving his or her own problems. Each individual has the ability within himself or herself to understand himself or herself, determine his or her life, and overcome his or her psychological problems as long as the counselor creates conditions that can facilitate the development of his or her self-actualization.[4]

According to Rogers, the motivation of a healthy person is self-actualization. Rogers' view is in line with Abraham Maslow's (1908-1970) view of the pyramid of human needs. That self-actualization is actually the pyramid of essential and highest human needs. The actualization of this need is fulfilled at this time, then the inner desires of humans are fulfilled at this time as well.[5] So, people who are aware of the importance of self-actualization will never be controlled by their bad experiences in the past. Hence, he will focus on what is happening now rather than what happened in the past.[6] Self-actualization is the process of becoming oneself and developing unique psychological traits and potentials. Self-actualization will be supported or hindered by past experiences and learning. Self-actualization will change in line with the developmental stages of one's life. When reaching a certain age such as earlier adulthood, a person will experience a shift in self-actualization from physiological to psychological. Rogers is also known as a phenomenologist because he puts a strong emphasis on reality that is meaningful to the individual. Each individual's reality will be different depending on their perceptual experience. The self-concept is a core part of individual experience that is slowly differentiated and symbolized as a self-image.

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[1] Noh I. Boiliu, dkk. "Tinjauan Sosio Kultur tentang Posisi Anak dalam Keluarga Israel Kuno" *Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan Kristiani EPIGRAPHE,* Vol 4, No 2, November 2020 (214-224), http://repository.uki.ac.id/3019/1/TinjauanSosio.pdf. (28 Januari 2022.20.50)

[2] Apolos Dwi Kristantyo, "Pelayanan Pastoral yang Holistik" *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Stt Sumatera Utara, Gereja yang Sehat,* Vol. 1, No.1, 2021, http:/Users/USER/AppData/Local/Temp/60-234-1-PB.pdf, (31 Januari 2022. 10.01).

[3] Selvianti, "Menerapkan Prinsip Pelayanan Konseling Berdasarkan Injil Yohanes", *Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen Kontekstual*, Volume 1, No 2, Desember 2018, 256; file:///C:/Users/USER/AppData/Local/Temp/Menerapkan_Prinsip_Pelayanan_Konseling_Berdasarkan.pdf, (1 Februari 2022. 10.24).

[4]Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail & Mustafa Tekke, "Rediscovering Rogers's Self Theory and Personality", *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2015, 30. PDF, file:///C:/Users/win8/AppData/Local/Temp/3245-5959-1-SM.pdf . (8 Oktober 2021.20.01).

[5] Widodo Gunawan, "Pastoral Konseling: Deskripsi Umum dalam Teori dan Praktik", *Jurnal ABDIEL* Vol. 2. No. 1 April 2018. https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/286997-pastoral-konseling-deskripsi-umum-dalam-4a412738.pdf, (31 Januari 2022. 20.29).

[6]Singgih D. Gunarsa, *Konseling dan Psikoterapi*, (Jakarta: Libri, 2011), 122-128.

At least two studies related to interfaith counseling have been conducted by two researchers. Brenda P. Dima, a student of *Magister Sosiologi Agama UKSW*, conducted research on the service of Gereja Kristen Sumba's pastors to patients at Lende Moripa Hospital, Waikabubak, West Sumba, 2017. It was found that counselors' understanding of interfaith and cultural counseling was still inadequate. As a result, it is suspected that there is distrust of conselees to counselors' services. The second research was conducted by Jacob Daan Engel with a descriptive-analytical approach. According to Engel, the values of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), sharing, and brotherhood are the basis of counseling for counselees in the context of multicultural Indonesia. These basic values are the strength of counseling to enable counselees of different cultures and religions to become high quality Indonesians..[7] Based on these two studies, this article focuses on how to describe and analyze the effectiveness of Carl Rogers' humanist approach in counseling at the *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor*, Kupang, for counselees of different religions. Researchers believe that this issue, which is explored through the lens of theology of religions, has never been explored by previous researchers.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is used to collect, sort, and process data in the process of pastoral-counseling. This method produces descriptive data in the form of spoken words from individuals and observed social behavior. The data were analyzed. The psychological aspects behind the words spoken by the counselees were then identified. The researchers also looked at the spoken language and relevant literature to discover the socio-cultural meanings of the conselees involved in the interviews. In this case, we used purposive sampling. During the research, we did not give equal opportunities to all counselees, but only took data from counselees of different churches and religions based on certain considerations. The sample is counselees who were served face-to-face for the past three years. The sample consisted of three people. Each of them represented their religion. The reason for sampling this way was because they were recorded in the visitor book. In accordance with the ethics of confidentiality, the use of names is by initials. The same applies to the inclusion of address and type of problem. This is due to Kupang being a small town, which allows the counselor's secrets to be revealed and can lead to new problems.

We used verbatim data collection techniques and documentation. We also used literature, and in-depth interviews to obtain up-to-date information as well as evaluation in relation to the extent to which the application of the concept was understood by the counselee. Verbatim data is a complete record, word for word, of the counseling conversation. Once obtained, the data were classified and analyzed.

ANALYSIS

Carl Rogers' (1902-1987) humanistic counseling theory emphasizes freedom as the most important part of human life. Freedom must be supported by the awareness of each person who is responsible. This means that freedom will manifest in how he or she determines the direction of his or her life through every decision he or she makes. Rogers saw human as a being that is able to solve his or her own problems. Within him or herself, he or she is able to understand, determine, and overcome his or her own psychological problems as long as the counselor creates conditions

[7] Jacob Daan Engel,, "Pendampingan Pastoral Keindonesiaan", *Kurios, Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, Volume 6, No. 1, April 2020 (47-60), http:///C:/Users/win8/AppData/Local/Temp/153-587-1-PB-1.pdf., (Rabu, 27 Oktober 2021, 20.00).

that allow self-actualization of his or her potentials.[8] Still Rogers, the motivation of normal people is self-actualization. Therefore, conscious and rational humans are no longer controlled by the past events. Instead, Rogers looks more at the present. He argues that the past will indeed affect how a person responds to situations in the present. However, what is happening now is more important than past experiences for the resilience of an individual's personality.[9]

Rogers is known as a phenomenologist because he strongly emphasized on the meaningful reality for individuals. Everyone's reality is unique depending on their perceptual experience. The development of personality and self-concept, for Rogers, is a conscious part of the phenomenal space that is realized and symbolized, where the "I" is the center of reference of every experience. The self-concept is a core part of individual experience that is slowly differentiated and symbolized as an image of the self that says "what and who I really am" and "what I really have to do" in relation to God and in relation to others.[10] Therefore, a self-concept is a permanent inner awareness of experiences that relate to me and distinguish me from what is not me, so that it is the "I AM" (read: the power of God) that increases than man's power within himself or herself.

The goal of humanistic counseling is the expansion and self-improvement of the counselee's ability to choose. Humanistic counseling is more directive and aware of the counselee to become a capable, free, and responsible person. The counselee is directed not to depend on others but to solve his or her problems. In the end, the counselee becomes confident and able to make his or her own decisions. Humanistic counseling directs the counselee to the importance of responsibility in every personal decision and carries it out in the process of life.[11] The counselor plays an important role in guiding the counselee to be resilient to the risks that occur in every decision-making in relation to the problem faced.

Dynamics of Counseling

The counseling process was conducted with three people from different religious backgrounds. W is a Catholic, P is a Hindu; and Z is a Muslim lady.[12]

1. A Catholic counselee

W (26 years old) is a devout Catholic youth and an activist at one of the Catholic churches in Kupang. W is also one of the officials of the Catholic Youth Organization. On November 2, 2015, W was brought to counseling by a friend (M), a fellow church activist, who had undergone counseling a week earlier. W lost her boyfriend suddenly when they were planning their future marriage. Unexpectedly, her boyfriend fell ill and had to undergo treatment at the hospital. On the second day of treatment, her boyfriend passed away with symptoms of only fever.

W is a religious follower who obeys church rules. It is evident that while facing her personal problems, W has repeatedly dialogued with her pastor, but there was no way out. W secretly sought solutions for herself and kept this problem a secret from her parents and church although W's actions eventually became known. Subsequently, W used the medium of mobile phone as a means of communication with the counselor of the *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor*. Later, they made an appointment to meet face-to-face. W seemed to be afraid of being found out

[8]Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail & Mustafa Tekke, "Rediscovering Rogers's Self Theory and Personality", *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology* 2015, Vol 4, No 3, 30, http:///C:/Users/win8/AppData/Local/Temp/3245-5959-1-SM.pdf. (Jumad, 08 Oktober 2021, 10.30).
[9]Singgih D. Gunarsa, *Konseling dan Psikoterapi* (Jakarta: Libri, 2011), 122-128.
[10]Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail & Mustafa Tekke, "Rediscovering Rogers's Self Theory and Personality", *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology* 2015, Vol 4, No 3, hlm. 30, http:///C:/Users/win8/AppData/Local/Temp/3245-5959-1-SM.pdf. (Jumad, 08 Oktober 2021, 10.30).
[11]Singgih D. Gunarsa, *Konseling dan Psikoterapi* (Jakarta: Libri 2011), 123.

that she visited the *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor* and felt guilty for having come to the "wrong" place. Apparently, W had problems with the ordinances and doctrines of her religion.

2. Hindu Counselee

P is the first daughter of a couple from Bali. P is a Hindu. P has long lived in Kupang city with her parents, who are suckling pig entrepreneurs. P is a girl who is as cool as cucumber. She speaks only when necessary. Despite this, she is a smiling and gentle girl. P is a student at one of the nursing colleges in Kupang city . P was brought to the counseling center on July 10, 2016 by E, her close friend. P was in danger of dropping out because she always failed the nursing competency exam. P had repeatedly taken the exam, but was always unlucky at the end. The failure was due to the fact that P always performed medical actions that were not in accordance with procedures. P, for example, inserted the infusion needle incorrectly, treated the wound by wrong way, and always answered the supervisor's questions wrongly despite having just been taught the lesson. In fact, all these are the basic knowledge and skills of a medical nurse. P had done everything possible, including to bribe the lecturer with roast pork to pass the exam.

After trying to convince P on the one hand, and telling P's problem on the other, E then entrusted P with her problem to the counselor of *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor*. P also trusted herself to the counselor. P did not appear to be under pressure from family or others. Interestingly, P was fully aware that her Balinese background was an identity attached to her. This was reflected in how P always asked for prayers to get a partner from Bali.

3. Muslim counselee

Z is a 41-year-old Muslim from Java. She was recently divorced. She initially sold second-hand clothes in one of the traditional markets in Kupang City. This business did not bring her any profit. Instead, Z went bankrupt. To survive, she tried selling yellow rice. This business was not in line with her wishes and even made very little profit. However, she had to do so because she had to support her two children who were in elementary and junior high schools. At the same time, she had to send some money to her mother and other family in Java. What did she have to do in the end? She went into debt to a moneylender. Z was then brought by T to meet the counselor of *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor*.

During counseling, there were a few problems experienced by Z. Those problems were related to theological or doctrinal issues. However, both the counselor and Z were in agreement that there is only one God (*tawḥīd*). This agreement was the common ground that made the counseling atmosphere more friendly and progressive. This atmosphere supported the way to explore and provide therapy towards improving Z's attitude and lifestyle. Her ability to absorb the concepts discussed greatly supports the quality of her more creative and energetic thinking. In this way, Z would be able to easily find solutions for her problems.

Love as basis of Rogers' humanist approach

Rogers uses developmental and personality theories in his clinical trials with a concentration on experience and subjectivity. On the other hand, the theory of Jay E. Adams (1929-2020) is nouthetically seen as a comparison and used as an evaluation of the extent of Rogers' use of theory in his therapeutic efforts with each counselee.

Counseling to W. There is a tendency for W to talk about spiritual matters. W, who is active in the Catholic Youth community, is so sad. Her boyfriend died but she admits that she still feels God's love. William Johnston (1925-2010), an Irish Jesuit priest, says that we know God, but we do not know Him indeed; we know Him with love, but before that we should be in a state of

empty knowledge and intelligence.[13] These words remind us that knowledge and intellect cannot measure how great God is, unless we only acquisit of His love. From her testimony, it seems that W can measure how close her relationship with God is. She is able to compare obeying God's will and fulfilling her own desires. W analogizes God with humans who have feelings of jealousy. W's mindset persuades the counselor to go further and dare to lead her. What W believes reminds the counselor of the words of the Bible, that God is jealous (cf. James 4:5; 1 Corinthians 10:22).

Therapy for W can be done according to Jay Adams' theory with Bible verses. The question is: have the priests and nuns who are responsible for their people done the same as the Bible says? It seems that their ministry has not yet answered W's confusion. Here, it requires the counselor's creativity to find alternative approaches. In this case, the counselor utilizes the concept of the counselee and gives consideration according to her ability to understand and sense in exploring who she really is. On the other hand, Rogers' humanist theory emphasizes phenomenology about human experience and how it is constructed. This means that when describing the problem, it is the mind and the mood of the counselee that receive more attention to the therapeutic treatment. Finally, all forms of therapeutic treatment are tailored to the needs and abilities of the counselee at the appropriate time.

In relation to the role of the Catholic church, there was a willingness from W to get continuity counseling services from a priest or a nun for herself as well as for others. However, this is not possible unless she gets it from another institution. However, W believes that what she had experienced at the other institution was from God as well. Another interesting point is that W did not question the concept of therapy at the *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor* with the core values of her church. Apparently, she just needed help solving her problem at that moment. That was all! Therefore, she didn't want to leave her church, or even abandon her Catholic faith.

Counseling to P. There is very little oral communication between counselors and counselees in counseling. The counselor does not want to push counselee P to do more talking. Both are mostly silent and contemplative. The counselor is more silent and busy managing her empathy, while the counselee is silent because of stress and frustration. The soul of the counselee is so burdened. Thus, the time needed for this counseling process becomes longer.

In general, the counselor will explore as much information as possible from within the counselee. The goal is to find the self-potential of the counselee. This is the strong point that is used to guide the counselee in finding his or her solutions. In that moment, beliefs, religious doctrines, and scriptures, as we can see in P's experience, are ineffective to change his or her situation. In the case of P, the counselor can only use a sincere and compassionate conscience to guide the faith and hope of the counselee to God in whom the counselor believes. The counselor truly places herself as a friend who leads a hopeless person to the supreme authority to plead for His mercy. In this condition, of course, the value of compassion and respect for human dignity becomes significant and functional. The counselor acts as a servant who prays for the burdened counselee. Being an empathetic friend to the counselee does not stop in the counseling room. But then the counselor continuously builds personal contact either through telephone conversations or through personally prayer services after office hours.

Rogers' humanist theory emphasizes the importance of having the core conditions of congruence and unconditional caring as well as empathy towards the counselee. Rogers describes it as one of the advanced personal characteristics. Conditions such as having the soul and mind of someone who feels, exists, and support the counselee. Adams' theory also tries to apply empathy. However, he provides therapy by permanently using the following steps. These are praying together, reading the Bible, and accepting Jesus as God. By these steps, all problems are expected to disappear. Of course, this counseling process is irrelevant for interfaith counselee because it will

[13] Jan Aritonang, *Teologi –Teologi Kontemporer* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia 2018), 277.

leave a new burden for him or her. So, the counseling steps are not useful and do not even help the counselee.

Although P does not understand her own faith, in terms of prayer or other rituals, she believes that God, who knows all human problems, has a reach beyond human reason. God is able to reach her even though she does not understand the teachings and practices of living as a devout Hindu. Here we arrive at the important question, how could God, who created man, not know what man's needs are and how strong they are to carry their burdens? To answer this question, adequate experience and knowledge of the counselor is needed in counseling.

If the therapist is a Christian counselor, then he or she is expected to have knowledge of biblical truth and depth of relationship through a personal encounter with Christ through the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile, if the therapist is a Muslim, then he or she will refer to the straight path (Arabic: *shirātal mustaqīma*) which is believed to be the path of truth as written in the Qur'ān. To quote Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), an American personality psychologist, who is also often referred by Rogers, there is a diagram of man's needs. The man's need for truth is in fact the highest. Rogers once had a view on this need. He then decided to leave the periphery of his Christian family tradition and reached for that ultimate truth through the exploration of Jesus' work and life. The exploration and deepening comes to conclusion that the core teaching of Jesus is love. Rogers defined this love as compatibility, unconditional caring, and deep empathy. This definition implies that this is how God works as demonstrated by Jesus in his life and ministry in the world.

Indeed, the human struggle to solve life's problems does not only stop at the stage of doing good and avoiding the prohibitions of their respective religions, but also at the stage of understanding, internalizing and actualizing the truth of the religion they adhere to. At this stage, there is no other choice but for humans to return to their religion and learn seriously the essence of their own religious teachings.

Religions teach the essence or substance (b. Latin: *esentia* or *substantia*) of God which is the source of truth. On this, Olaf H. Schumann describes essence or substance by Islamic theologians who often refer to it in Arabic terminology of *jauhar*, *haqîqa*, and *dhat*. While Christian theologians express it with the Latin term: *persona*, or in the Greek terms: *hypostasis*, and *prosôn*.[14] In Indonesia, generally, both Islam and Christianity introduce Him by the name *Allah SWT*, or *TUHAN*, the Creator of the universe, and so on. The depiction of this essence is unique. Uniqueness can also be realized through His hidden actions. But none of the religions know exactly, but introduce the knowledge of *Allah SWT* or *LORD* according to their respective interpretations. In his article, *Teologi Toleransi: Dari Toleransi Recognize Menuju Toleransi Nilai,* Imam Hanafi states that *Allah SWT* is known through *al-asma al-husna* (beautiful names). But this interpretation is always changing from age to age and from generation to generation. That is why there are so many many disputes over different interpretations. In fact, Allah is actually a "being" that cannot be compared and cannot be likened to anything else. (Q.s. 42:11; Q.s. 112: 4).[15]

In the Christian tradition, the Lord is known through the person (*persona*) of Jesus. He is the ideal person, who humbled Himself as a human being, working in obedience to His Father until He died on the cross. This is the truth! Because of this truth, the apostle Paul confessed and delivered this confession to the Philippians: "Jesus Christ is Lord" to the glory of God" (Philippians 2: 5-11).

A Christian counselor should have his or her needs fulfilled to the highest degree in knowing and internalizing the truth of Jesus Christ (cf. John 8:32,36, Galatians 5:1). Meanwhile, a

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[14] Olaf H. Schumann, *Pendekatan Pala Ilmu Agama-Agama 4; Al-Masih dalam Pandangan Pemikir Muslim,* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019), xii.

[15] Imam Hanafi, "Teologi Toleransi: Dari Toleransi Recognize Menuju Toleransi Nilai", *Progresiva: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam* Vol. 8 No. 2 (2019), 123; https://ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/progresiva/article/download/11041/7355 (Kamis, 4 April 2022. 14.54).

Muslim counselor is expected to guide the counselee to the straight path in order to live according to God's guidance (Q.s. 1:6).[16] The truth as Christ's will and the truth according to the straight path in Islam are subjective. Nevertheless, as Rogers says, these truths have a mystical dimension. The mystical dimension is closely related to one's faith. The deeper one goes into his or her faith, the more he or she recognizes the highest "being". The more he or she recognizes the " being," the more the spirit of the " being" will secretly control his or her thoughts, words and actions. This is the meaning of personality mysticism, which Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) refers to in man's intimate relationship with God. It is the creature's relationship with the Creator; or the slave's relationship with his or her Master; or the lover longing for his Beloved.[17]

Mystical spirituality is related to the belief, internalization, and actualization of the noble values of religious teachings. In connection with providing therapeutic assistance in the counseling process, the value of truth is reflected through a concept. Rogers conceptualized it as a core condition. The core condition, which is an extraction of the truth in Christ or the truth on the straight path in Islam, is congruence, unconditional acceptance, and empathy. This is the core condition that will dominate and play a very active role in the counseling process. So, humanist counselors are required to have that core condition when he or she does counseling.

Unlike Rogers who views humans as having abilities from within themselves, Adams explais that counselees should be helped with therapy based on the counselor's faith and biblical understanding. The reason is that non-biblical sources are unable to help the counselee. Adams also views that the counselor should be directly responsible for the salvation of the counselee just as a shepherd treats his or her flock of sheep.

P, finally, realized that she has potential after her graduation ceremony. Evidence of her potential is in the following three things: (1). The few words that she uttered turns out to be very powerful, impactful and fruitful by the graduation she had experienced; (2). P is able to take risky actions. Confidently, P tried new and unusual things through the counseling process in the *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor*; and (3). After graduation, she is directly accepted as a medical personnel in one of the hospitals in Kupang city. This allows her to realize her burried capacity. This is precisely what Howard Garner, an American developmental psychologist, said that there are multiple intelligences hidden in everyone.[18] Therefore, the counselor's guidance to P, who eventually discovered her hidden intelligence, is amazing.

Counseling to Z. Counselor Z represents other counselors who only need treatment at a basic and immediate level. The needs in question are therapies related to how to get economic reinforcement and assistance. The counselor tried to make her aware of some facts that had been made earlier. And also emphasized about the risks of life due to wrong decisions such as falling into the trap of moneylenders. The counselee is invited to sort out which work will be able to be done today. For example, living frugally by stopping sending money to the family in Java. This is a choice that can lighten the burden of life.

Rogers' humanist theory views Z's position as requiring only a bounce back and repetition of what the counselee has expressed. Not the application of Bible verses as used by Adams in his nouthetic theory. Adams generalizes that all messes like Z's are caused by the sinful nature of man. Sinful human nature is true, but the impact of Bible verses is not appropriate for Z's condition, especially since Z is a Muslim. Alternatives should be sought that are in line with the counselee's

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[16] Arifin Zain, Maturidi, "Konseling Islam: Menelusuri Akar Praktik Konseling dalam Aktivitas Dakwah Nabi Muhammad" Hisbah: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling dan Dakwah Islam Vol. 18, No. 2 (2021), 113, | doi: 10.14421/hisbah.2021.182-02 (Kamis, 4 Mei 2022, (17.43)

[17] Annemarie Schimell, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press 1975), 5.

[18] Katie Davis, Joanna Christodoulou, Scott Seider, and Howard Gardner, "The Theory of Multiple Intelligences", Researchgate, Chapter · January 2011, 488. https://www.researchgate.net/?enrichId=rgreq-5a6d670da490d44ba4ea85a575aedd10-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzMxNzM4ODYxMDtBUzo1MDI3MDg3NDg1MTMyODBAMTQ5Njg2NjUxMzg5NQ%3D%3D&el=1_x_1&_esc=publicationCoverPdf. Diunduh pada 02 Januari 2023, 13.20.

condition and ability to help themselves. For example, living frugally by stopping sending money to family in Java. This is an option that can reduce the burden of life.

It can be seen that the counselee is pressed and difficult to get out of the trap of self-made rules on the grounds of doing good to relatives and parents for the sake of self-glory. What is more burdensome is that the counselee is faced with the reality of the destruction of her household and business. Her life became even harder when she had to struggle with her debts. Without realizing it, Z was also trapped in the debt of "success". The words of her parents' prohibition to migrate continued to haunt her. The only way is for the counselee to try to free herself from the shackles of the past. The counselor only helps provide consideration based on the facts that exists now. The counselor tries to invite her to look back at what she is like today.

The counselee's problem actually comes from herself. Therefore, the counselee needs a friend who is willing to listen. More than that she needs a solution from the counselor for her problems. Interestingly, the difference in religion between the counselor and the counselee is not a barrier for her to get out of the existing problems. In this step, as Rogers said, the therapy is more focused on the importance of trusting one's own self-organization.[19] Hopefully, after going through failure after failure, Z learns to look at herself while realizing that no one is perfect. Anyone must make mistakes. Yesterday someone made a mistake, but today realizes and corrects that mistake. Then, he or she becomes better in the next days of life. Life is short. We don't know when we will die. In Z's case, therefore, being a humble and frugal person will certainly add value to his or her life, even his or her religious life.

Regardless of whether Z really goes deeply into the truth of her religion, it is evident that she tried to find a "straight path" to fulfill her urgent needs. Z believed that there would be a "straight path" in spite of coming to a counselor of a different religion. Z was convinced that there would be a solution for her after hearing the success story of her neighbor who came to the same counselor. Z believes that there are more powerful "beings" that she can rely on. Therefore, she had to break through the walls of her tradition to seek solutions from this powerful being. While the basic need to seek solutions to her life problems is far more important than anything else. In this way, is Z's faith just a formal identity, or is she truly enlightened? Only God and Z know it

Theology of Religions Overview

The Theology of Religions overview here refers to the Bible as the basis for developing theological ideas related to the cases in counseling as outlined above. For this purpose, we start on the following biblical narrative. The text of the Syro-Phoenician Greek woman, in Mark 7:24-30, proclaims the good news. Jesus' statement: "Let the children be filled first, for it is not right to take the bread set aside for children and throw it to the dogs," verse 27, is interesting. Ancient Israel had three concepts of social relations in relation to the three Hebrew terms: *bêt 'āb*, meaning "father's house"; *mišpāḥâ*, meaning "extended family/clan"; and *šēbeṭ* or *matteh*, meaning "tribe." To build family solidarity and marital bonds, *bêt 'āb, mišpāḥâ*, and *šēbeṭ* or *matteh* are all connected in sameness of language, economic cooperation, legal traditions and customs, ancestral stories, and religion.[20] Out of these solidarity and marital bonds, anyone is considered an enemy and must be made aware of his or her existence. The "dogs" as Jesus spoke of are actually a legacy of Israel's exclusive concept of social relationships. In this concept, Israel is called the chosen people and receives privileges from God, while other people do not.

Although not as privileged as Israel, "the dog" waited for the crumbs that the children of Israel threw from the table. In the same manner as the "dog", the mother begged Jesus for mercy. Being a "dog" was the only alternative at that time to obtain healing for her daughter. The mother's

[19] Carl Rogers, *On Becoming A Person*, ter. Tim Pustaka Pelajar, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar 2012), 184-186.
[20]Johanna S. Talupun, *Resensi Buku* dalam *Jurnal GEMA TEOLOGIKA* Vol. 2 No. 1, April 2017:102. http://journal-theo.ukdw.ac.id/index.php/gemateologika/article/view/297/237.pdf. (Selasa, 28 September 2021. 07.00).

attitude was praised and recognized by Jesus. This effort eventually freed her daughter who was possessed by an evil spirit. The mother's acceptance of, what Matthew calls the Canaanite woman as a "dog," reveals some of the fundamental values that guided her mystical journey in seeking healing. Passionate, hope for mercy, and surrender are the stages of mystical journey. Jesus praised, honored, and declared her effort or faith or self-potential as the reason for her daughter's healing. (Matthew 15: 28). The concrete solution is the best thing that every counselee looks forward to. For Jesus, self-potential (or read: faith) should be from whitin everyone.[21] Counseling at the *Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor* or anywhere else is simply a place to strengthen everyone's self confidence to realize and maximize his or her self-potential just as the Syrophoenician lady attained before Jesus.

God's love is the theme of the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven. Love becomes the benchmark of counseling and theology of religions (Latin term: *theologia religionum*). Or in the view of Paulo Freire (1921-1997), love is an important element in the dialogue between human beings that has implications for humility, faith, hope, and freedom. Paul F. Knitter, quoting Karl Rahner (1904-1984), states that Christianity recognizes that God truly loves humanity. God does not discriminate between people based on ethnicity, religion, race and class. Why? Because God loves all people.[22] Likewise, in Olaf H. Schumann's view, God's love becomes a magnet that attracts every religious person to live together in harmony despite different backgrounds. Living together that upholds equality, fairness, and mutual respect for each other without anyone feeling superior to others.[23] From the theology of religions perspective, God is known in Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself is love. Because of His love, He visits and embraces people without looking at their origins.[24] This narrative of the Syro-Phoenician Greek woman reveals the basis of *theologia religionum*, in which truth also exists in other religions. Therefore, other religions also deserve to enjoy God's love. Jesus honored and valued the woman's self-potential that made her daughter well. This is proof that God's love cannot be confined within the walls of one religion alone. It is free and even crosses religious boundaries to reach out to other faiths.

Knitter further explained that by using real human struggles, this is an opportunity to look again at what the Bible and human tradition say.[25] Even the act of ministry does not stop at guiding, but goes beyond that to reveal the understanding of concepts that are true and responsible. This view certainly invites us to return to the roots of counseling, namely the person of Jesus. As Christian counselors, we certainly take Jesus as a role model. The words and actions of Jesus, therefore, which have a direct impact on the return of life, hope, protection, justice, and freedom for anyone (cf. Matthew 25:35-43), are inspiring an effort in counseling services.

Furthermore, both the counselor and the counselee must be in an apopathic attitude. Or in Rogers' words, to deny their ego or pride. Finally, let God Himself works through His Spirit to reveal the self-potential of anyone who is willing to realize and bring better life, hope, protection, fairness, and freedom as these are in the kingdom of God that is reigning in this world (cf. Matthew 6:10-11).

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[21] Fredik Y A Doeka, "Berjumpa Sebagai Orang-Orang Serumah", dalam *Teologi Perjumpaan; Teologi Perjumpaan' Pengalaman, Gagasan, dan Refleksi*, ed. Karolina A. Kaunang & Denni H. R. Pinontoan (Tomohon: UKIT Press.UKIT Press, 2017), 275.

[22] Paul F Kniter, *Satu Bumi Banyak Agama*, ter. Nico A. Likumahua, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia 2015), 47-48.

[23] Samuel Cornelius Kaha, "Dialog Sebagai Kesadaran Relasional Antar Agama: Respons Teologis Atas Pudarnya Semangat Toleransi Kristen-Islam Di Indonesia", *Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen dan Musik Gereja*, 4 (2) (2020):132-148, https://journal.stt-abdiel.ac.id/JA/article/view/165/104 (6 Februari 2022. 14.40).

[24] Fredrik Y. A. Doeka, Enduring Mission of Moses; The Enduring Mission of Moses; Indonesian Muslim and Christian Representations of a Jewish Prophet, *Dissertation*, (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2011), 241. https://docplayer.net/47534012-The-enduring-mission-of-moses.html

[25] Paul F Kniter, *Satu Bumi Banyak Agama*, ter. Nico A. Likumahua, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia 2015), 119-200.

CONCLUSION

We come to three conclusions. First, the Carl Rogers humanist approach used by counselors to interfaith counselees at the Yayasan Tembok Ratapan Timor is very effective. Second, the approach used by the counselor is able to maximize the self-potential of the counselees to solve their own problems. The most interesting thing, lastly, is God's love as a common ground between the counselor and the counselee in the counseling process.

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