

Negotiating Truth in a Hyperreal World Interreligious Relations in the Digital Age

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24071/tic.v3i1.299>

Abstract

In the post-truth era, the pursuit of objective truth has diminished, replaced by multiple alternative truths. As a consequence, societies lose the opportunity to share a common understanding of reality, leading to fragmented groups with competing perspectives. Drawing on the concept of hyperreality proposed by Jean Baudrillard, this paper examines how social actors construct and circulate certain ideas as “reality,” often generating a sense of urgency that demands immediate response. Focusing on the issue of proselytization – especially the perception of Christian initiatives both in political participation and social engagement among Muslims – this study argues that these dynamics often culminate in the politization of religion. This, in turn, contributes to the restriction of interreligious relation. In the context of rapid explosion of the digital era and artificial intelligence, these tendencies are increasingly amplified, producing forms of hyperreality that blur the boundaries genuine civic participation, social service and suspected religious agendas. The article further explores the theological implications of these developments, particularly in light of the call of Pope Francis, to promote dialogue and to reaffirm shared humanity as the foundation of human identity.

Keywords

Hyperreality; politization of religion; artificial intelligence; interreligious dialogue, Pope Francis, theology of engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Every historical moment seems to carry its own defining spirit. The year 1968 represented a wave of personal liberation and aspiration for social reform as the influence by the spirit of cultural change and resistance to authority that symbolize by civil right movement in the US and protest for transformation of social and political structures in France. The year 1989 is widely known as a time when totalitarian regimes started to fall apart as the collapse of many totalitarian regimes due to economic stagnation as symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall, marking the end of strict political control and the beginning of a new global order. Meanwhile, 2016 is

regarded as the year that firmly signalled the arrival of *post-truth* era due to the political events shaped more by emotion and belief than by objective facts. This was evident in moments such as the Brexit referendum in UK and the election of Donald Trump in US. In both situations, misinformation, social media influence and competing narratives played a decisive role in shaping public opinion.¹

In the contemporary digital age, the rapid development of digital media and artificial intelligence has led an overwhelming flow of information with varying degrees of accuracy and credibility. This situation has not only produced information overload but also a proliferation of narratives, some of which are intentionally constructed to shape public perception.

In the post-Truth era, people are living in a new stage of intellectual (and political) confrontation. Post-truth means, "Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." As consequence, *'in this era of post-truth politics, it's easy to cherry-pick data and come to whatever conclusion you desire.'*² Oxford dictionary defines this term as 'circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.'³

The development of news dissemination through internet-mediated media has enabled the emergence of various media platforms that offer alternative construction of truth. While mainstream media generally adhere to journalistic ethics and verification standards, many alternative platforms operate with ideological agendas. In addition, algorithm-driven social media tend to amplify emotionally charged and polarizing content. Enduring democratic values are being challenged by aggressive populism. Reasoned debate is progressively supplanted by emotional appeals, openness to diversity by nativist attitudes, and freedom by growing authoritarian tendencies. Politics is gradually perceived not as a competition of ideas, but as a zero-

¹ Judith Renner and Alexander Spencer, "Trump, Brexit & 'Post-Truth': How Post-Structuralist IR Theories Can Help Us Understand World Order in the 21st Century," *Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft* 28, no. 3 (2018): 315–21; Jonathan Rose, "Brexit, Trump, and Post-Truth Politics," *Public Integrity* 19, no. 6 (2017): 555–58.

² Steve Fuller, *Post-Truth: Knowledge as a Power Game* (Anthem Press London, 2018), 101.

³ "Post-Truth Adjective - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.Com," accessed March 6, 2026, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/post-truth>; "Post-Truth' Declared Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries," UK, BBC News, November 16, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-37995600>.

sum struggle in which one side's gain means another's loss. At the same time, scientific knowledge, both in the social and natural sciences, that for centuries become a standard of truth is frequently met with doubt and sometimes even open hostility.⁴ Shortly, people are looking at reality as, "Your fact" vs "My/our alternative fact." There is no sharing meaning that enable people to have communal ground in looking at the *fact*.

In the history since the earliest times, when people were organizing themselves into tribes, deception has been connected with politics. Anthropologists observe that misleading others played an important role in many early societies, especially, when interacting with those coming from out of their tribe.⁵ Plato introduced the concept of "noble lie," a story intended to promote social unity among citizens. The concept is seen as a means to establish an ideal and just state by constructing a fabricated account of the citizens' origins. However, the resulting notion of justice remains fragile, as it is still overshadowed by unresolved issues related to past generations.⁶ In the similar way, Machiavelli advises that ruler should understand the art of appearing deceptive and disguising the truth.⁷ The question is whether or not this situation control our society in the time when Artificial intelligence and digital media definite a lot of our daily activities.

METHOD

This study adopts a library research approach, drawing on secondary data derived from the author's previously published scholarly works. The first source is '*Internet mediated Interreligious Dialogue: A Case Study on @KatolikG's Model of Dialogue*,'⁸ published in the *Journal of Asian Orientation in Theology*, while the second is '*Imaginary Boundaries of Christianization in Indonesia*,'⁹ published in the *International Journal of Asian Christianity*. Both studies provide critical insights into

⁴ Matthew d'Ancona, *Post-Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back* (Random House, 2017).

⁵ Ralph Keyes, *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life* (Macmillan, 2004), 25.

⁶ Kateri Carmola, "Noble Lying: Justice and Intergenerational Tension in Plato's Republic," *Political Theory* 31, no. 1 (2003): 40.

⁷ d'Ancona, *Post-Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back*.

⁸ Martinus Joko Lelono, "Internet-Mediated Interreligious Dialogue A Study Case On@ KatolikG's Model of Dialogue," *Journal of Asian Orientation in Theology* 3, no. 2 (2021): 149–74.

⁹ Martinus Joko Lelono et al., "Imaginary Boundaries of Christianization in Indonesia," *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 1, no. aop (2026): 1–26.

the dynamic of truth plurality within contemporary society, particularly in relation to the shifting epistemological landscape shaped by digital media. The data drawn from these works are analysed to uncover and critically engage the underlying logic of the digital era, especially in terms of how truth is constructed, mediated and contested in online spaces.

DIGITAL ERA AND SHIFTING SOCIETIES

This following explanation of Jill Shepherd from the University of Strathclyde, UK enable us to understand the correlation between digital era and new framework in grasping reality.

The Digital Era is characterized by intense socio-economic transformation on a scale similar to that of the Industrial Revolution. Everyday life involves socio-economic interactivity which is more varied than before, causing faster turnover of socioeconomic knowledge. The knowledge base of the Digital Era is more abstract and theoretical than in the past, but is often also more trivial (e.g., the increase in 'reality TV') and more fickle (e.g., the dot.com boom and bust). The era is ever more associated with information and communication technology (ICT), the functionality of which is increasingly able to mobilize knowledge, at faster speeds, and in ways that can be addictive (e.g., chat rooms) or out of control (e.g., computer viruses), as well as productive (e.g., across distances). Innovative and analytical knowledge workers, as well as celebrities, move the Digital Era forward faster in time. Knowledge workers have access to, and also interact with, more and more knowledge.¹⁰

In the digital era, the algorithm is mediating social interaction, human relations, both online and offline. These algorithms are implemented to recommend new online connections – “followers” or “friends” – to social network users, based on supposed offline similarity, likelihood of establishing a future relation, similar interests, or the potential to serve as a source of useful information. Current data provide evidence that link recommendation algorithms impact network topologies and increase network clustering.¹¹

¹⁰ Jill Shepherd, “Why Is the Digital Era?,” in *Social and Economic Transformation in the Digital Era* (IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2004), 1–18.

¹¹ Fernando P. Santos, Yphtach Lelkes, and Simon A. Levin, “Link Recommendation Algorithms and Dynamics of Polarization in Online Social Networks,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 50 (2021): 2.

Epistemic bubble that grouping people with shared interest and Echo Chamber that resonate certain idea to be accepted by as many as people configure patterns and peculiarities of social interaction in the perspective of “ours” and “theirs, us/them, self/other, own/stranger, familiar/alien. In the Max Weber terminology, it is well known as the Binary Opposition: white/black, holy/sin, good/bad. This world classification has already been a key concept in the several field such as Philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, cultural studies, linguistic and political studies.¹² In the M. Rock perspective, “all elements of human culture can only be understood in relation to one another and how they function within a larger system or the overall environment”.¹³ When it is implemented in the cultural studies, the exploration work on several themes such as: upper class and the lower one, male and female, developed and under-developed. In the context of social conflict, people work with the idea of living in the area with those from different affiliation. In the religious based conflict for example, people are thinking that they are totally different from those from different religious affiliation. In the time of exponential influence of social media and artificial intelligence, the way people regarding others could be worst. The limitation of social contact, and the algorithm that grouping people in certain affiliation could build social distance among people with social conflict as following consequence.

Jean Baudrillard, a French Sociologist and Philosopher explained how danger is living in the time when reality is slowly blurred. Putting idea in the binary opposition is an attempt in blurring reality. It seems that there is no common ground between two opposite sides. Baudrillard use the term simulation, as the opposed to representation and naming the system of building simulation as simulacra. While representation stems from the principle of the equivalent between the sign and the real, simulation stems from the utopia of this principle. It is the radical negation of the sign as value. Furthermore, whereas representation absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as simulacrum. Shortly, the simulacrum is not what hide the truth as it is, but rather hide the fact that there is none. He explains:

the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referential – worse: with their artificial resurrection in the systems of signs, a material more

¹² Olga Byessonova and Elena Gordienko, “Binary Opposition’us/Them’in British and American Media Texts about Conflicts,,” *SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics* 18, no. 2 (2021): 91–92.

¹³ Melissa Y. Rock, “Deconstructing Binaries,” *GEOG 128: Geography of International Affairs*, 2020.

malleable than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalences, to all binary oppositions, to all combinatory algebra. It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes.¹⁴

This concept work in hyperreality that “sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences.”¹⁵ The era of simulation replaces reality with a system of signs – a ‘hyperreal’ where the line between reality and imagination vanishes. In this world, we no longer creating anything truly new; we only recycle the same digital models and produce fake varieties of the same thing over and over again.

These following studies aim to clarify the boundary of Christian-Muslim relation in Indonesia, namely the issue of Christianisation and the social media boundary.

RESULT

Binary Opposition in Christian-Muslim Relation in Indonesia

Bagus Laksana, in his article entitled, *The Pain of Being Hybrid: Catholic Writers and Political Islam in Postcolonial Indonesia*, explained the situation of Christian-Muslim relation in Indonesia due to the increasing of the politization of religion in Indonesia. This is evident in the dynamics surrounding the Jakarta gubernatorial election, which has raised concerns about the role and future of Christian communities amid the rise of political Islamic movements. The case of Basuki Tjahaya Purnama illustrates how religious issue can be politicized and used to mobilized mass support, there by intensifying tensions between Christians and Muslims. This situation reveals the fragility of Indonesia’s plural and hybrid national identity as country continues to grapple with issues of religion, race and postcolonial identity.¹⁶

¹⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *The Precession of Simulacra* (2001), 454.

¹⁵ Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulations (1981),” in *Crime and Media* (Routledge, 2019), 2–3.

¹⁶ Albertus Bagus Laksana, “The Pain of Being Hybrid: Catholic Writers and Political Islam in Postcolonial Indonesia,” *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 1, no. 2 (2018): 226–27.

This study reveals the boundary in the Christian-Muslim relation in Indonesia as the challenge of maintaining unity in diversity in Indonesia. However, this situation is not the one and only reality. In the Indonesian context, various idea regarding interreligious relations are alive. These following anthropological studies reveals that the idea of Muslim-Christian relation is one of hyperreality among other realities.

Politization of Religion and Respond of @KatolikG

My research in 2020 and published as journal in 2021 entitled [*Internet-mediated interreligious dialogue a study case on@ KatolikG's model of dialogue*](#).¹⁷ The background of this research is the politization of religion in the social media and respond of society. During the parliamentary and presidency general election in Indonesia in 2014 and 2019, the politization of religion growth. In between, the election of the governor of Jakarta reinforce this politization. Several scholars argued that these elections were the real elections of the era of internet. These elections involved the construction of specific social imagination that split Indonesian is divided into clear cut social relation regarding their religious affiliation.¹⁸ The idea of denying certain candidate with different religious affiliation or those with different religious idea run together with the idea of choosing those with same religious background. The binary opposition between people from Christian-Muslim, Christian-Hindu, Muslim-real Muslim and others become the dialectic of the time. The image of others as enemy or threat build social imagination among Indonesians.

In the middle of this situation, The *Garis Lucu* Line come as an alternative on discussing religion in social media. The initiative of *Garis Lucu* (funny line) was began by a group of youth in Nahdatul ulama in 2014 as respond toward the politization of religious discussion during the general election. A significant consequence of this radicalism is the deepening of social polarization.

Started in 2014 with Twitter and then followed by Facebook and Instagram social media, NU Garis Lucu initiated discussion about religion in humour vibe. In the following general election in 2019, with Jakarta Regional election that brought religious issues toward the next level of complexity, several religious based Garis Lucu followed the line of @NUgarislucu. In 2021 people could mention Muhammadiyin Garis Lucu/@MuhammadiyinGL (107.7 thousand followers), Komunitas Katolik Garis

¹⁷ Lelono, "Internet-Mediated Interreligious Dialogue A Study Case On@ KatolikG's Model of Dialogue."

¹⁸ Lelono, "Internet-Mediated Interreligious Dialogue A Study Case On@ KatolikG's Model of Dialogue."

Lucu/@KatolikG (137 thousand followers), Buddhis Garis Lucu (huruf d-nya 2)/@BuddhisGL (72.1 thousand followers), Koh Garis Lucu (58.2 thousand followers), and Kristen Protestan Garis Lucu/@ProtestanGL (33.9 thousand followers). My study focused on @KatolikG (A catholic based discussion on religion in the humour vibe) along with its Instagram and Facebook page. The finding is this:

Communication is not merely about transferring knowledge, but also ideas and agenda. In the context of interreligious relations in Indonesia, sometimes, there are hidden agendas of internet-mediated interreligious relations. The monologue way of communication builds a barrier among religious communities. The *Garis Lucu* social media platforms provide Indonesia with a method of interfaith dialogue. There are possibilities for people to debate, answer the question, or even support several ideas of living together in Indonesia.... In a world full of agendas, the agenda of interreligious harmony brought by @KatolikG could be one potential agenda for future interfaith dialogue. In a sense that they could influence many people from various religious backgrounds, @KatolikG could be a model of internet-mediated interreligious dialogue that strengthen the social cohesion among Indonesians. The three works that they are doing (doing daily dialogue, discussing sensitive issues, and doing social actions) are the works that are duplicable in many other interfaith dialogue works.

By doing three kind of works (doing daily dialogue, discussing sensitive issues, and doing social actions), they share the common ground. In the time of crisis, when people are trapping in the hyperreality built by such a community that politicize religions for personal benefits, this way of communication enable people to live in the new imagination of interreligious relation. These *Garis Lucu* community provide Indonesia with an alternative in maintaining its social cohesion.

Religious Based Social Service as Boundary Breaker

In 2024, we (as group) did a research on the global theme in Indonesian interreligious relation for years namely Christianization, a suspicion of proselytization process that happened in the way Indonesian Christians relate to their Muslim neighbourhood. The issue of Christianization is a significant factor that disrupts interfaith interactions in Indonesia. Relation between different religious groups are often obstructed by the wide spread assumption that any interfaith activities let by Christian – whether Protestant or Catholic are intended to convert

others. From the Government side, this is nationally well known. M. Zainuddin Daulay from the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama) mentions Christianization as a ghost in the Muslim-Christian relations.⁴

We did the research in two distinguished Christian based social organization that work in the field of disaster respond: Karina KAS belong to the Archdiocese of Semarang; and Yakkum Emergency Unit (YEU) belong to several Church in the PGI. Indeed, our suspicions is proven. Several times, people refused their social assistance due to their religious affiliation, especially in the society with Islam as its majority in number. Several problems emerge such as stopping the program, doing adaptation, and adjusting the agenda. In time of crisis, they mention that there are many Muslim people who support them, and gave them assistance. They even protect them from protest toward their social assistance. It is an intriguing situation since those who refuse them are coming from Islamic communities, but those who support them are also coming from the same religion. Following the idea of hyperreality, the normal situation is that Islam and Christian are totally in confrontation, but in reality, it is not proven.

In 2015, KARINA-KAS focus to empowering the elderly in Sleman and Gunungkidul, aiming to improve their welfare through better access to healthcare services, strengthening local cadres, providing facilities and encouraging social participation. The program is implemented in collaboration with local government and various stakeholders. However, in several hamlets in Karangasem, the project was rejected due to suspicions of Christianization, particularly by hamlet heads who did not attend the initial socialization. In contrast, those who understood the program supported it, as they found no such indication. KARINAKAS continued only the program in the place that accepted it but discontinued it in three that rejected. Nevertheless, cadres in the rejecting hamlets remained committed and attempted to sustain the program independently, recognizing its benefits.¹⁹

While in the context of YEU, during their humanitarian services, several challenges related to suspicion of Christianization occurred. In Lombok Island, the issue escalated into protes, including the removal of YEU and ACT Alliance because the letter T in the symbol of ACT alliance resembling a cross and seen as threatening

¹⁹ Lelono et al., "Imaginary Boundaries of Christianization in Indonesia," 10–11.

to Islamic faith (aqidah). But, their good relation with Nahdatul Ulama community enable them to still continue their project. It is said,

We remain present and help earthquake victims in other areas by approaching an influential Ustad and the manager of an Islamic Boarding School who has affiliation with Nahdatul Ulama, the biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia that has a good connection with us in many areas in Indonesia. Due to the support of the Ustad, who in a grand recitation delivered YEU's projects and gave assurances that there was no Christianization, YEU's presence and projects were well received.²⁰

The imaginary boundaries constructed by media and amplified by certain groups do not necessarily reflect the reality experienced by all communities. In practice, these divisions are neither absolute nor universally accepted. This is evident in the work of YEU and KARINAKAS, which cannot be regarded as a failure in carrying out social and humanitarian mission. On the contrary, there have been numerous instances where their initiatives were welcomed and positively received by local communities.

DISCUSSION

Jean Baudrillard's theoretical framework on *simulacra*, *simulacrum*, and *hyperreality* provides a critical lens to understand the dynamics of religious politicization and interreligious relations in contemporary Indonesia. Baudrillard argues that in postmodern society, representations no longer merely reflect reality; instead, they produce and replace it.

A *simulacrum* refers to a representation that no longer has a direct reference to an original reality. It stands on its own, functioning as if it were real. When such representations are continuously reproduced and circulated, they form *simulacra* -a system of signs, narratives, and images that construct a perceived reality. At an advanced stage, this process result in what Baudrillard calls *hyperreality*, a condition in which the boundary between reality and representation collapses, and the simulated becomes more real than reality itself.

In the Indonesian context, the politicization of religion – especially during the general election of 2014 and 2019, as well as the Jakarta gubernatorial election – can

²⁰ YEU Volunteers, "Focus Group Discussion on Christianization Issue in YEU Social Project," June 25, 2024, Zoom Meeting; Lelono et al., "Imaginary Boundaries of Christianization in Indonesia," 13.

be understood as the production of simulacra. Narratives such as the rejection of leaders based on religious differences, or construction of binary opposition like “Muslim vs Christian” are not merely reflections of social reality. Rather, they are symbolic construction amplified through social media and algorithm-driven communication. These narratives are repeated, reinforced and normalized eventually forming a dominant perception that Indonesian society is sharply divided along religious lines.

Similarly, the issue of “Christianization” operates as simulacrum. It functions as a widely believed representation of threat, particularly within Muslim-Christian relations, despite the lack of consistent empirical evidence in many real-life interactions. As shown in the case of KARINA-KAS and YEU, suspicions of proselytization sometimes lead to rejection of humanitarian programs. However, these suspicions often coexist with contrasting reality, where members of the same Muslim communities offer support, protection and collaboration. This indicates that the narrative of “Christianization” is not a stable or universally experienced reality, but rather a constructed image sustained through discourse and collective imagination.

These conditions illustrate the emergence of hyperreality in interreligious relations. Social media, along with its algorithmic structures, intensifies polarized representations such as “totally Muslim vs totally Christian” or “us vs them.” These simplified and antagonistic images become more influential than the complex, lived reality of everyday coexistence. As a result, many individuals perceive interreligious relations as inherently conflictual, even though empirical findings reveal ongoing practices of cooperation, negotiation and mutual support.

In the context of this hyperreal, alternative form of social engagement – such as those initiated by *Garis Lucu* communities, including *Katolik Garis Lucu* – appears as attempts to disrupt dominant simulacra. By employing humour, encouraging dialogue, and addressing sensitive issues in obtainable ways, these communities create spaces for social interaction that challenge monologist and polarized narratives. Their activities – daily dialogue, engagement with sensitive topics, and social action – offer a counter imagination of interreligious relations, one that emphasizes coexistence rather than social division.

In conclusion, the empirical realities presented in this study indicate that these perception of clear-cut interreligious conflict in Indonesia do not correspond to lived

experiences. Instead, Indonesian society continues to exhibit forms of social cohesion and interreligious cooperation, suggesting that the hyperreality of division coexists with, and often vague a more complex and hopeful reality of living together.

NEW THEOLOGICAL APPROACH OF SOCIETY

The message of Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti* indicate that in order to maintain good social relation, people should cultivate the culture of Encounter. He explained this culture as,

In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat. This illusion, unmindful of the great fraternal values, leads to "a sort of cynicism. For that is the temptation we face if we go down the road of disenchantment and disappointment... Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes".²¹

Furthermore, by promoting this culture of encounter, Francis encouraged us to be passionate about meeting others, looking for points of contact, building bridge and planning any project that involve everyone. He hoped that this culture be a style of life of people in this era, with the help of media resources.²² When he spoke about Artificial Intelligence, Francis also notice on the theme of relationship as a noble value of humanity:

Human beings are "ordered by their very nature to interpersonal communion," possessing the capacity to know one another, to give themselves in love, and to enter into communion with others. Accordingly, human intelligence is not an isolated faculty but is exercised in relationships, finding its fullest expression in dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity. We learn with others, and we learn through others. The relational orientation of the human person is ultimately grounded in the eternal self-giving of the Triune God, whose love is revealed in creation and redemption. The human person is

²¹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (Le vie della Cristianità, 2020), Art 30.

²² Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 216.

“called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life.” This vocation to communion with God is necessarily tied to the call to communion with others. Love of God cannot be separated from love for one’s neighbor (cf. 1 Jn. 4:20; Mt. 22:37-39). By the grace of sharing God’s life, Christians are also called to imitate Christ’s outpouring gift (cf. 2 Cor. 9:8-11; Eph. 5:1-2) by following his command to “love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34). Love and service, echoing the divine life of self-giving, transcend self-interest to respond more fully to the human vocation (cf. 1 Jn. 2:9). Even more sublime than knowing many things is the commitment to care for one another, for if “I understand all mysteries and all knowledge [...] but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2).²³

Indeed, the development of the digital era and artificial intelligence has enabled new forms of separation at the level of ideas and perceptions. However, human beings retain the capacity to think critically, to explore reality more deeply and to ground their shared life in the principle of compassion. What is presented by the media as hyperreality does not necessarily correspond to actual reality. Rather it is a constructed representation that can – and should – be critically examined.

In this regard, such representations may be approached in a manner similar to how we question generalized claim in everyday life – such as the notion that not every brand of soy sauce is ‘number one’ or that every shampoo is the ‘best.’ This analogy resonates with Jean Baudrillard’s early use of ideal type to illustrate how signs and symbols can create exaggerated or misleading perception of reality.

Therefore, it is important to recognize that is often taken as reality may, in fact, be open to questioning and reinterpretation. Through critical reflection and deeper inquiry, individuals and communities can reassess such construction, clarify their meanings, and move toward a more grounded and authentic understanding of reality.

CONCLUSION: COEXISTENCE AS WAY OF LIFE – A CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

The digital era and Artificial intelligence are not merely part of human division, but also part of maintaining human cohesion. Answering the big question, “*What does it mean to be human?*”, these research findings enable us to think critically on looking at what people called as reality. In the time when reality exists among realities, critical thinking become the tool to live safely. It seems that the hyperrealities built by AI and

²³ Pope Francis, *Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence* (Paulist Press, 2025), Art 18-20.

social media in many cases leave us with no choice. However, as human beings, we have both the opportunity and the ability to make choices: to believe or not; to have question or not; to maintain the critical stance or not.

The relation between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia does not shape only with the idea of *Christianization* (or *Islamization* in another perspective) that coined the notion of interreligious suspicion, but also with collaboration and living hand in hand in supporting one another. It means communal background enable them not to looking at the Christians from single perspective as other, but from several perspective that include the idea of sharing identity from different angle.²⁴ The study shows that opportunities for meaningful interaction and cooperation across religious differences continue to exist. Although suspicion and prejudice still persist, many communities demonstrate a readiness to engage positively when interactions are carried out with openness and sensitivity.

Therefore, rather than allowing the imagination of divisions between Christianity and Islam deepen, our society should have an eagerness to have reasons in strengthening humanitarian encounters. Precisely in these fragile and contested situation, genuine dialogue, trust-building, and solidarity can emerge. By continuing to foster such encounters, both internet-mediated interreligious dialogue and humanitarian work can play a crucial role in bridging divides and nurturing a more inclusive and cooperative society.

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²⁴ Lelono et al., "Imaginary Boundaries of Christianization in Indonesia," 22–24.

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