



My Enemy is My Messiah and Savior: A Theological Analysis of Interpersonal Dialogue Between Jesus and The Samaritan Woman in John 4:1-42

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ABSTRACT

Research on the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well has recently been carried out by many scholars. This article therefore discussed the interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, which enabled the Samaritan woman to change her attitude and welcome Jesus as the Messiah and Savior. The purpose of this research was to conduct a theological analysis of the change in the attitude of the Samaritan woman's hostility that was seen in her conversation with Jesus. Through the interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, there was a change in attitude towards Jesus with the outcome that Jesus was welcomed and recognized as the Messiah and Savior of the world. The research method used in writing this article was qualitative where the data was collected from books and articles for analysis. The result of the research is that the friendly and empathetic interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman changed her attitude toward Jesus. Jesus was no longer considered the enemy but the Messiah and Savior. This article seeks to challenge churches in Indonesia, especially churches in East Nusa Tenggara, to play a role in intensifying interpersonal dialogue as a form of dialogue to resolve ethnic problems that arise in society.

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INTRODUCTION

When there was enmity between the Samaritans and the Jews, the interpersonal dialogue between the two ethnicities was cut off. In the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, the woman said that Jesus was an enemy to be avoided. She was not friendly with Jesus, who was a Jew, because, at the time, there was still enmity between Jews and Samaritans. The conversation is a topic that is of great interest to scholars. This article focuses on the research found in three articles that specifically discuss Jesus' conversations with the Samaritan woman.

Livingstone Yao Torsu and Francis Brown have highlighted the ethnic issues raised by the Samaritan woman when she met Jesus at Jacob's Well. Ethnic issues created barriers between Samaritans and Jews, meaning that Jesus as a Jew and the Samaritan woman were prevented from being friends. According to Torsu and Brown, ethnocentrism can cause people to perceive their culture and ethnicity as superior to others. Such assumptions can hinder Christ's mission to all people.¹

¹ Livingstone Yao Torsu and Francis Brown, "Jesus and Ethnicity: A Theological Reflection on the Message of John 4: 1-24," *Pentecostalism, Charismaticism and Neo-Prophetic Movements Journal* 1, no. 3 (2020): 41–49.

However, Torsu and Brown note that in this conversation, Jesus ignored the issue of ethnicity. Instead, he spoke with the Samaritan woman in simple language that the woman could easily understand so that his message could reach the Samaritans. This attitude of Jesus is recommended by Torsu and Brown in order to prioritize efforts to preach the Good News to all ethnicities rather than promoting evangelism that limits the delivery of the Gospel to certain ethnicities.²

Cynthia Grech Sammut focused her research on the role of memory in Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman. According to Sammut, the conversation triggered various memories, both individually and collectively, of past experiences. Sammut connects those memories with Christian spirituality. According to Sammut, in Christianity, the role of memory has been noted, studied and reflected upon since the first centuries.³

In Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus caused the Samaritan woman to recall her past experiences regarding marriage, her experiences at Jacob's well, and the ongoing dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans. The presence of Jesus restored both the individual memory of the woman and the collective memory of the conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans and provided new experiences and better memories as He met the Samaritans.⁴ To show the connection to later Christian mission work, Sammut points to Augustine (354-430) and other church fathers who speak of the memory of God's saving work and Christ's sacrifice in the past.⁵

Another scholar, Meredith J. C. Warren, focuses her research on the mention of Jesus regarding the five husbands as a form of speech that humiliated the Samaritan woman. According to Warren, the comment was not meant as an insult to humiliate the Samaritan woman. After examining several texts in the Gospels, Warren argues that scholars are more focused on the inclusiveness of Jesus than on paying attention to the Samaritan woman. Furthermore, Warren points out that two verses are ignored by scholars, namely John 4:28 and 29, where the woman returns to the city and bears witness to the Samaritans about her encounter with Jesus. Her testimony was so convincing that many Samaritans believed because of the woman's testimony. They are not bothered by the private life of the woman.

Having evaluated the results of research conducted by Torsu and Brown, Sammut, and Warren, here this research provides a critical response. Torsu and Brown have provided an interesting analysis of the issue of ethnicity and at the same time invite readers to ignore ethnic boundaries to spread the Gospel to all ethnicities, as Jesus did in his conversation with the Samaritan woman. Sammut's research focusing on the role of memory in Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman has made a valuable theological contribution in relation to Jesus' efforts to replace the Samaritan woman's memory of the past with a new memory. He conveyed this new memory to the Samaritans so that they could come to believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world. Likewise, the research offered by Warren has made a valuable contribution by noting that Jesus' comment about the five husbands of the Samaritan woman is not a form of harassment.

In summary, it is clear that Torsu and Brown focus on the issue of ethnicity, while Sammut focuses more on the role of memory, and Warren directs her attention to Jesus' mention of the woman's husbands. None of them have specifically discussed the interpersonal communication that allowed a change in the attitude and openness of the Samaritan woman and of all Samaritans, who previously saw Jesus as an enemy. Through this conversation, they all became more radically open and able to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

The main argument of this article is that, through a friendly and empathetic interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Jesus reopened the dialogue with Samaritans. The Samaritan woman changed her attitude because previously she saw Jesus as an enemy, but through friendly interpersonal dialogue, she stepped out of her safe zone and dared to openly welcome Jesus as the Messiah. She preached the Messiahship of Jesus to the Samaritans and invited them to welcome Jesus as their Savior and Messiah.

² Torsu and Brown, "Jesus and Ethnicity: A Theological Reflection on the Message of John 4: 1-24," 42.

³ Cynthia Grech Sammut, "Jesus Meets the Samaritan Woman: Discovering Christian Memory and Identity," *Melita Theologica: Journal of the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta* 67, no. 2 (2017): 217.

⁴ Sammut, "Jesus Meets the Samaritan Woman: Discovering Christian Memory and Identity," 217.

⁵ Sammut, "Jesus Meets the Samaritan Woman: Discovering Christian Memory and Identity," 218.

To explore this argument more deeply, this article will present the following aspects of this biblical passage. First, the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans caused the interpersonal dialogue between the two ethnicities to be interrupted. Second, Jesus re-opened an empathetic interpersonal dialogue with the Samaritan woman so that she changed her attitude and dared to reject the ethnic hatred of her countrymen and openly welcome Jesus as the Messiah. Third, the woman's invitation to the Samaritans to come to Jesus opened up opportunities for interpersonal dialogue with them so that more Samaritans would accept Him as the Savior of the world. The article focuses on providing strategies for the church to conduct interpersonal dialogue with various ethnicities and religions in Indonesia.

Enmity between Jews and Samaritans

Interpersonal dialogue between Samaritans and Jews was interrupted when hostility broke out after the people of Judah, who had been exiled to Babylon, returned to their homeland. Josephus, a Jewish historian, reports that the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans occurred in Nehemiah's time.⁶ This hostility is reflected in the wisdom books of the Jews. In these books, the Samaritans are seen as fools whom God hates, just as God hated the Edomites and the Philistines (Sir 50:25, 26). In addition, the Jews spread stories about the cruelty of the Samaritans towards the Jews. At the very least, there were some root causes for the hostility. The first cause was ethnic hostility. The feud has deep roots in history, from the time when many Jews returned from exile in Babylon.⁷ This hostility influenced the way the Jews viewed Samaritans. They considered Samaritans as pagans or sinners⁸ because they no longer had pure Jewish blood after having made mixed marriages with non-Jews.⁹ However, the Samaritans thought that they still kept the purity of their Jewish blood and were worthy to participate in building the temple in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they were rejected by the Jews.

Furthermore, a Samaritan synagogue was constructed in 400 BC on Mount Gerizim as a rival to the temple in Jerusalem but was destroyed in 128 BC by the Jews because the Jews claimed that the true place of worship was in the temple of God in Jerusalem. Hjelm pointedly stated that the Samaritans and the Jews were two separate peoples and they each had their place of worship.¹⁰ The construction of the temple widened the chasm of division between the two sides.¹¹ There are certain rites of passage shared between the Jews and the Samaritans, for example, circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, worship in the synagogue and the festive celebrations as set out in the Pentateuch.¹² But these resemblances could not ease the enmity between the two sides.

While they did share some religious beliefs in common, they also had differences. The Samaritans only recognized the Pentateuch, namely the five books of Moses, which is usually called the Samaritan canon, while the Jews recognized a canon consisting of the five books of Moses, the prophets (Neviim), and other writings (Ketuvim), for a total of 39 books.¹³ These differences gave rise to hatred and enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. The hatred and enmity continued until the time of Jesus. On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus himself was rejected by the Samaritans because he was a Jew (Luke 9:51-53). This refusal angered James and John, who asked Jesus' permission to pray for fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans. However, Jesus rebuked them and they went to another village (Luke 16:54, 55). Later, even though Jesus and His disciples had been rejected in Samaria,

⁶ Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (Wordsworth Editions, 2006).

⁷ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary Vol 1* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004), 599.

⁸ Keener, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary Vol 1*, 600.

⁹ Jonathan Bourgel, "John 4: 4-42: Defining a Modus Vivendi between Jews and the Samaritans," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 69, no. 1 (2018): 39-65.

¹⁰ Ingrid Hjelm, "What Do Samaritans and Jews Have in Common? Recent Trends in Samaritan Studies," *Currents in Biblical Research* 3, no. 1 (2004): 13.

¹¹ Jolynne Minnick, "A Samaritan Temple to Rival Jerusalem on Mount Gerizim," *Studia Antiqua* 16, no. 1 (2017): 21, 23.

¹² Gary N. Knoppers, "Parallel Torahs and Inner-Scriptural Interpretation: The Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs in Historical Perspective," *History* 354 (2011). Knoppers, conducted an in-depth study of the question, are the Jews and the Samaritan Pentateuch different or parallel? He came to the conclusion that the two Pentateuchs came from a common ancestor. Despite differences in the understanding and application of key texts in the Torah, the Pentateuch validates the claim that Jews and Samaritans are descended from the same ancestor, Jacob.

¹³ Ingrid Hjelm, "The Samaritan and Jewish Versions of the Pentateuch: A Survey," *Religions* 11, no. 2 (February 12, 2020): 11,85,1,2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11020085>.

according to John's report, he intentionally returned there. When the Pharisees heard that Jesus was baptizing more disciples than John, Jesus left Judea and returned to Galilee through Samaria. John clearly records that He "must" (εδει) pass through Samaria (NIV: "he had to go through Samaria"; RSV: "He had to pass through Samaria").

The Greek word εδει in the Gospel of John is used twice in John 3:14 and 4:4. In the first usage, Jesus compares the act of Moses raising the bronze serpent in the desert so that all the Israelites who saw it would be free from the bite of the serpent with the resurrection of the Son of Man. Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, the Son of Man must (εδει) be lifted up." In that comparison, the term used is εδει. The question is, why is the term εδει used in this text? Herman Ridderbos convincingly asserts that the word εδει is very important in this context because glorification cannot be applied to the bronze serpent exalted by Moses but only to the Son of Man.¹⁴

The second usage of εδει is in the story of Jesus' journey from Judea to Samaria. John reports that Jesus must (εδει) pass through Samaria. Jews could avoid Samaria when they travelled from Judea to Galilee, but Jesus had to (εδει) go through Samaria because there was an important purpose or a deep need that Jesus had to meet in Samaria, even though the Samaritans were not friendly with the Jews.¹⁵ In other words, Jesus ventured out of Judea, which was a safe zone for Him, and then He had to (εδει) enter enemy territory, namely Samaria, to carry out God's work.¹⁶ Then He went to Sichar, where Jacob's well was located. Because Jesus had traveled a long way, He was very tired and He sat by the well. At around noon, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. There was an interpersonal dialogue that took place in an intimate and empathetic manner between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

Bridging the Chasm: An Interpersonal Dialogue

Interpersonal dialogue is a form of communication in which the exchange of information between two people takes place simultaneously so that the interlocutor can immediately interpret and understand the news conveyed and respond.¹⁷ In this form of communication, both parties immediately act both as speakers and as listeners, so that verbal and non-verbal feedback occurs quickly and allows changes in the opinions, attitudes and beliefs of the communicant because the messages conveyed touch him or her personally.¹⁸ This research agrees with Christopher Naseri-Mutiti Naseri that friendly conversations are the basic elements of ecumenical Christian dialogue.¹⁹

Indeed, there were ethnic distinctions and differences in places of worship between the Samaritan women and Jesus, but they respected each other's uniqueness. Appreciation for uniqueness caused a change in the attitude of the woman towards Jesus so that she was open to the conversation. This example of interpersonal dialogue begins when Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a drink at Jacob's well. In the dialogue, there is verbal feedback that is fast enough to allow a change in the attitude of the woman. At the beginning of the conversation, the Samaritan woman was surprised that Jesus as a Jew spoke with a Samaritan to ask for a drink, even though Jews considered Samaritans unclean.²⁰ Therefore, the woman's response showed unkindness (v. 9). She refused Jesus' request for a drink because, apart from the ethnic enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, for her, Jesus was considered unclean. Nonetheless, Jesus did not want to get caught up in a conversation about ethnic enmity raised by the Samaritan woman.²¹

That enmity became a gulf and increased the hatred and enmity that already existed between the Samaritans and the Jews. Jesus ignored the issue of ethnic differences, but that does not mean that

¹⁴ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John, A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, Publ. Co., 1997), 110.

¹⁵ Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John, A Theological Commentary*, 120.

¹⁶ John Barton and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (OUP Oxford, 2001), 196.

¹⁷ J.A. DeVito, *Komunikasi Antar Manusia* (Jakarta: Profesional Books, 2022), 9.

¹⁸ DeVito, *Komunikasi Antar Manusia*, 10.

¹⁹ Christopher N. Naseri, *The Encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan Women in John 4:1-42: A Model for Christian Ecumenical Dialogue* (Calabar: Departement of Religious and Cultural Studies, University of Calabar, 2015).

²⁰ Andreas J Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 73.

²¹ Torsu and Brown, "Jesus and Ethnicity: A Theological Reflection on the Message of John 4: 1-24," 42,43.

He does not respect ethnic differences because differences are something natural. For Jesus, what prompted Him to go through Samaria was to carry out His mission for the Samaritans. Jesus began to bridge the gap by asking the woman for water. Jesus said to the woman: "Give me a drink." Hearing Jesus' request, the woman felt strange and wondered why Jesus, a Jew, asked to drink from her as a Samaritan. The woman said, "Why are you, a Jew, asking me for a drink, a Samaritan? For Jews do not associate with Samaritans" (John 4:9).

The phrase: "How come you are a Jew (σὺ Ἰουδαῖος) asking for a drink from [I] a Samaritan woman (γυναικὸς οὐσης) implied ethnic issues that caused the woman to refuse to give Jesus a drink as a Jew. The Jews saw themselves as being superior because they inherited the purity of Jewish blood from Abraham as their forefather while the Samaritans were looked down upon because their Jewish blood was no longer pure because the Samaritans had intermarried with Gentiles. The Samaritans saw themselves as purely Jewish.²² However, through an interpersonal dialogue with the Samaritan woman as well as a friendly and empathetic conversation, Jesus bridged the gap, by offering the woman the water that He gives. Everyone who drinks the water from Jacob's well will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water He gives will no longer be thirsty.

At first, the woman did not understand what Jesus meant by living water, so her attention was still focused on the water from Jacob's well.²³ Perhaps she did not take it seriously. Her ignorance was reflected in her words to Jesus, that the well was deep so Jesus had difficulty getting water from the well. However, Jesus made a clear distinction between the water in Jacob's well and the water He gave. The difference is that everyone who drinks water from Jacob's well will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that Jesus gives will never be thirsty again. In fact, the water that Jesus gave will become a wellspring within each person that continues to spring up to eternal life (vv. 13, 14).

In the Bible, the term water (ὕδωρ) has several meanings, namely, as the word of God (Isa. 55:10-11), as wisdom (Proverbs 16:22), as a gushing source of life, or as the Spirit of God (Isa. 44 :3-4). The idea of living water being as clear as crystal was demonstrated by an angel of the Lord for John. The water of life flows out of the throne of God and the throne of the Lamb (Rev 22:1).²⁴ From Jesus' explanation of the water from Jacob's well and the water He gave, there is an understanding that He, who was conversing with the Samaritan woman, was greater than Jacob because those who drink water from Jacob's well will be thirsty again, but those who drink the water that Jesus gave will never thirst again.

Even though Jesus had explained the difference between the water from Jacob's well and the water Jesus gave, the woman's attention was still focused on the water she needed from the well, because it was to take that water that she came to the well. Indeed, Jesus' offer regarding the meaning of living water attracted the woman so much that she said to Jesus, "Lord, give me that water so that I will not be thirsty and will not have to come here again to draw water." The woman's request for water that Jesus gave (v. 15) illustrates her interest in Jesus' offer of living water. However, at this stage of the dialogue, the woman's understanding is still literal and only focuses on her comfort, wanting to avoid having to come to the well to fetch water.²⁵

In the next part of the interpersonal dialogue, Jesus asks the woman to go and call her husband. For this request of Jesus, Wright, quoted by Morris, interprets Jesus' words allegorically by saying that the woman's five husbands refer to the five gods worshipped by the Samaritans as a form of religious adultery.²⁶ But Wright's view is difficult to defend. It is true that 2 Kings 17:24 states that there were five nations included by the Assyrian empire from Babylon. The same number is mentioned by Josephus, and each nation brought its own god (Ant. 9:288), but he does not say that there were five idols.²⁷ Therefore, this research agrees with Beasley-Murray that the five husbands of the Samaritan woman are not allegorical because in 2 Kings 17:30-31, seven images of gods are worshipped and the

²² Etienne Nodet, *A Search for the Origin of Judaism From Joshua to Mishnah* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 122.

²³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 242.

²⁴ John Behr, *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel, A Prologue to Theology* (Oxford: University Press, 2019), 145.

²⁵ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 242.

²⁶ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 243.

²⁷ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 265.

seven idols are worshipped together, not one by one, unlike the five husbands of the Samaritan woman whom she married and divorced one by one.²⁸ So, the five husbands that Jesus mentions are not allegorical. It is a fact that the woman had five husbands and the man who lived with her was not her legal husband.

Disclosure of the husbands of the woman is more of a method or tactic that Jesus uses to expose the sin of the woman and at the same time introduce His identity as the Messiah. It is true that the woman immediately denied that she had no husband, but Jesus exposed her promiscuity to prove that He was omniscient. He knew of the woman's abnormal marital history. The woman's realization is reflected in her words: "Lord, it is clear to me now that You are a prophet." From the woman's words, it can be seen that there is a shift in the focus of attention from the woman to Jesus, with an acknowledgement that Jesus is a prophet and messenger from God who conveys revelations from God to humans. However, the woman tries to direct Jesus' attention to the question of the correct place of worship (v. 20) because the two places of worship, namely Jerusalem and Gerizim, are believed to be symbols of God's presence.

However, according to John, Jesus wants to end any belief that limits the presence of God to certain places of worship as symbols of His presence, by proclaiming the fact that God can be present wherever God wants. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: "Believe in me, woman" (πίστευέ μοι γύναι, v. 21). These words of Jesus are a form of self-expression as well as a command sentence (πίστευέ) to draw the woman's attention from her attachment to a place of worship as a symbol of God's presence and lead her to his identity as the Messiah. Self-identity as the Messiah, according to John, commands supreme authority, because in him, God reveals God's self. Jesus also said, "A time will come when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem". The moment Jesus is referring to here points to His death and resurrection.²⁹ These words of Jesus are a prophecy regarding the replacement of worship from that which is tied to a certain place to the worship that takes place in the spirit. The substitution is evident in the use of the preposition "in" (ἐν) in verses 20-21, which is applied to worship in Jerusalem and Gerizim, and is changed to worship "in the spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι, v. 23).³⁰

Jesus' words are also a message that there will be no more attachment to worship in certain places that are considered more sacred. Wherever people worship God, God is present there with them because God is Spirit. God is never tied to a particular place but is present wherever people worship Him.³¹ Thus, the most important thing is no longer worship in certain places that are considered sacred, but fellowship with God in spirit. With the appearance of Jesus, the time for such worship has now come, "because the Father wants such worshipers". To further convince the woman, Jesus emphasized that "God is Spirit, and those who worship [God] must worship in spirit and in truth." Those words of Jesus moved the woman's heart so that she revealed what she knew about the Messiah: "I know that the Messiah will come, who is also called Christ when he comes, he will tell us all things" (v. 25). Responding to the woman's words, Jesus declared, "I am he who is speaking to you" (v. 26). In the Gospel of John, the phrase "I Am He" (ἐγώ) refers to Jesus as divine, more than a prophet, and even greater than Jacob and Moses.³²

The Messiah is Savior of the World: A Proclamation of Jesus

This self-revelation of Jesus brings His interpersonal dialogue with the Samaritan woman to a climax when Jesus declares, "I am He" (ἐγώ). The statement of Jesus' true identity surprised the woman because the person with whom she was speaking was the expected Messiah. The shock prompted her

²⁸ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John, Biblical Commentary* (, vol. 36 (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1984), 243.

²⁹ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 223.

³⁰ Benny Thettayil, *In Spirit and Truth: An Exegetical Study of John 4: 19-26 and a Theological Investigation of the Replacement Theme in the Fourth Gospel*, vol. 46 (Peeters Publishers, 2007), 162; Samuel Benyamin Hakh, "Perjamuan Kudus Virtual Di Rumah Anggota Jemaat: Analisis Alkitabiah Tentang Kehadiran Allah Berdasarkan Yohanes 4: 21-24," *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 5, no. 2 (2021): 470.

³¹ Kenneth Mtata, "Space and Place in the Gospel of John" (University of KwaZulu Natal, 2009),199.

<https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/c72cea64-52d0-4e99-8f39-d99ba7a318b1/content>.

³² Behr, *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel, A Prologue to Theology*, 247.

to leave her jar and go into the city. The act of “leaving the jar” (τὴν ὑδρίαν) indicates a change in attitude that has occurred within the woman.³³ She went to invite the people of Samaria to see the Messiah whom she had just met. The action of the Samaritan woman revealed an attitude that dared to go against the flow because while the Samaritans still hated the Jews, the woman dared to break out of the ethnic hatred that had been maintained for generations, and out of her safe zone. She then went into the city to invite the people of Samaria to come and meet the Messiah, who was a Jew.

The Samaritan woman's invitation, “Come and see,” has a double meaning. On the one hand, the invitation was an impetus for the Samaritan to investigate and be eyewitnesses of what she had found in Jesus, the Messiah.³⁴ On the other hand, the invitation was a breakthrough against the ethnic hatred between Samaritans and Jews, because she ignored the ethnic hatred and invited Samaritans to meet Jesus who was a Jew. The woman's invitation received a warm response from the inhabitants of Samaria, so many people came to meet Jesus. It turned out that the Samaritans not only came to see who Jesus was but also believed in him. In this connection, it is clear that the Samaritan woman played the role of an evangelist who brought the good news to the people of Samaria. It is not clear how many Samaritans came to Jesus and heard His words and believed, but John's sentence shows that there were indeed many people who came to meet Jesus.³⁵

Those who believed even asked Jesus to stay with them. The request proved that the faith of the Samaritans allowed them to be willing to leave the ethnic hatred they had and build a friendship with the Messiah who was a Jew. However, from the Jewish side, the request to live with the Samaritans was an invitation to be avoided because it was contrary to Jewish tradition, as stated by Peter in his meeting with Cornelius (Acts 10:28). Living with non-Jews was unlawful (*athemitos*)³⁶ because it would defile their status as God's chosen people. However, Jesus abandoned tradition and stayed with the Samaritans for two days, as clearly recorded by John (v. 40). Jesus' action of staying with the Samaritans proves that, while the Jews avoided dialogue with the Samaritans, Jesus dared to break through ethnic barriers to dialogue with Samaritans.³⁷ Two days was sufficient time for Jesus to have a dialogue with the Samaritans, who came to Him to hear His words.

John does not describe explicitly the form of the conversation between Jesus and the inhabitants of Samaria who came to Him and believed. Nevertheless, it is likely that, just like the friendly interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, for those two days Jesus engaged in friendly interpersonal dialogue with the Samaritans who came to Him. Hence, more Samaritans believed because of His words. The Samaritans' belief was evident from the words of those who came to Jesus: “We believe, but no longer because of what you say, for we ourselves have heard him” (v. 42). These words show that the Samaritan who came to Jesus were no longer dependent on the woman's preaching. It was the woman who had invited them to come to Jesus, but they became eyewitnesses, directly heard the words of Jesus, and had a true understanding of who the Messiah was.³⁸ The Samaritans' understanding was revealed in their own words, describing him as truly the “Savior of the world” (σωτὴρ κόσμου, v. 42). The phrase, “He truly is” the Savior of the world is a statement proving that what the Samaritan woman told them was true.

It is interesting that in the confession of the Samaritans, they did not refer to Jesus as the Messiah or the Taheb they were waiting for, but they recognized Jesus as the Savior of the world (σωτὴρ κόσμου).³⁹ The term σωτὴρ was used widely in the Greek-Roman world, both for gods and for Roman emperors, heroes, and philosophers. Zeus, Asclepius, Isis, and Serapis were worshipped as saviors. Roman emperors from Julius Caesar to Hadrian were addressed as saviors. Vespasian and his son Titus were also welcomed and hailed as saviors. Philo once called God the savior of the world. But in the first century, the full use of the title “Savior of the world” was applied to Roman emperors,

³³ Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John, A Theological Commentary*, 127.

³⁴ Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John, A Theological Commentary*, 622.

³⁵ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 252.

³⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sacra Pagina: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 5 (Liturgical Press, 2017), 190.

³⁷ Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 598.

³⁸ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John. A Literary and Theological Commentary*, 225.

³⁹ Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John, A Theological Commentary*, 131.

from Julius Caesar to Hadrian and subsequent emperors.⁴⁰ The use of the same title in full was applied by the believing Samaritan to Jesus to confirm His identity. The identity of Jesus is not only as a Savior Messiah who comes from among the Jews, but the Savior of the world, a universal Savior who is not only the Savior for the Jews but the Savior for both Jews and Gentiles.⁴¹

Interpersonal Dialogue of the Church with Various Ethnicities and Religions in Indonesia, especially in East Nusa Tenggara

Looking at Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, it is evident that the friendly and empathetic interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman had the power to allow the Samaritan woman to open up more and more. Then she was guided by Jesus slowly toward knowing his identity as the Messiah. The belief in the identity of Jesus prompted the woman to leave her jar and go to the city of Samaria to invite the Samaritans to meet Jesus. The woman's invitation in fact enabled an interpersonal dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritans who came to Him. What is interesting is that, for the sake of dialogue with the Samaritans, Jesus was willing to stay with them for two days so that they understood and confessed that Jesus was the Savior of the world.

The model of interpersonal dialogue that is friendly and empathetic as carried out by Jesus needs to be applied by churches, especially churches in Indonesia. In Indonesia, many ethnic groups embrace the many religions in Indonesia, namely, Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The ethnic and religious differences between these religions can, on the one hand, complement each other, but on the other hand, they can create enmity between ethnic and religious groups in Indonesia. Indeed, the third precept of Pancasila as the basis of the state emphasizes unity, but ethnic and religious differences can be politicized, causing conflicts between ethnicities and religions. A concrete example is the conflict between religions that occurred in Ambon in 1998. That conflict was resolved by the parties involved together with the government of Indonesia. But churches need to continue to promote that type of interpersonal dialogue. In this connection, this researcher borrows Bosch's words when he says that dialogue was intended as 'a dialogue in a meeting of hearts rather than of minds'.⁴² This type of dialogue willingly accepts the coexistence of different faiths. One also witnesses his deepest convictions while listening to those of his neighbours. Without a commitment to one's convictions and the authentic presence of neighbours, dialogue becomes arrogant and worthless.

CONCLUSION

The interpersonal dialogue from heart to heart can be realized through dialogue in daily life because members of different ethnic and religious communities live together in one environment. So, in everyday life, encounters between people of different ethnicities and religions are unavoidable. These encounters can occur in community activities such as mutual cooperation efforts for cleaning the local environment and sewers, or when carrying out activities in celebration of holidays such as National Independence Day. Community activities are carried out without discriminating against ethnic and religious identities. The model of interpersonal dialogue can also be done through live-in activities together, such as the East Java Christian Church (GKJW) of Malang, which regularly holds live-ins together with followers of other religions. Church leaders have invited Muslim leaders to participate in live-ins several times with Christian leaders for dialogue. They build relationships on an ongoing basis, hold workshops on certain themes, cooperate in people's economic development, and act persuasively as early as possible if there are ethnic, racial and religious issues. They build an understanding of solidarity among community members, especially among youth, parents, religious leaders, teachers, and intellectuals, by holding joint social actions.⁴³ These activities will further

⁴⁰ Craig R Koester, "'The Savior of the World' (John 4: 42)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 4 (1990): 665–80.

⁴¹ Koester, "The Savior of the World (John 4:42)", 4,5.

⁴² Davis J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission, Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 483.

⁴³ Jaspert Slob & Elga J. Sarapung (editors), *Hubungan Islam dan Kristen, Hasil Lokakarya dan Refleksi Pengalaman Pertukaran enam gereja dalam rangka Kemitraan gereja-gereja Protestan di Indonesia dan gereja Protestan di Negeri Belanda* (Jakarta: GPI, 2009), 63,64.

strengthen the relationship between religious communities and tribes in Indonesia so that they can quickly overcome the violence provoked by certain groups in society. Therefore, churches in Indonesia, especially in East Nusa Tenggara, are challenged to intensify interpersonal dialogue to enable the creation of a harmonious and peaceful life together.

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