

RELIGIOUSNESS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: A STUDY ON ROGER WILLIAMS' THOUGHT

Dewi Ulya Mailasari

STAIN Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia

dewiulya.stainkds@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper aims to reveal how religiousness is in the United States based on the ideas of Roger Williams. From various sources, there are three things that form the background of Roger Williams thinking. Those are when he was in England, where the seekers of truth burned alive in front of his house, the indication of churches dominating on the people's life and the using of their force on one's beliefs; his acquaintance with the Indians who taught him that anyone can say honestly without having to swear in the name of the holy book, and that anyone can help each other without having or within one belief. Religiousness in America in terms of the thinking of Roger Williams is that the people have freedom to show their belief through both deeds and symbols as long as it does not annoy the others. The good and tolerant deeds are actually needed in a multicultural society. Religiousness means someone more aware of his choice in choosing a belief; his worship to the Lord was not as something imposed because of the control of the authorities.

Keywords: *Secularism, State, Religion, Freedom*

A. Introduction

For centuries the intervention of cultures grew reciprocally. As a result of this process people now have mixed cultures and many intercultural conflicts. The United States is a great example of a pluralistic society made up of many different cultures and nationalities. It is a nation that is composed of people who came to America from around the world. In the early America, Its citizens came from Europe and a small number of African and Asian people who were oppressed in terms of religion, economic or social aspect. Tracing the history of the United States, we would be stunned to see that America was actually born as a religious country. In terms of religion, most of them were Puritans who wanted to purify their religion that had been tainted by the unscrupulous behavior of their previous religious leaders. So America was formed by ones who had strong religious spirit who wanted to build a society based on religious teachings. As the number of immigrants who came to America increased, in the hope of building a better life, and a hope for religion freely, Americans then faced with a new problem of a plurality. So when it proclaimed its independence from Britain in 1776, America began to form its first constitution in 1781. But the constitution did not guarantee the freedom of religion to all faiths. It was only in 1789 that A Bill Of Rights which prohibited the state to tamper with the five basic freedoms was born. The basic freedoms included the freedom of religion for everyone. Declaration of Rights (Bill of Rights) was the name for the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

B. About Religiousness

Talking about religiousness in America, the name of Roger Williams cannot be ignored. He had an important role in the history of the United States. He has known as the father of freedom of religion. He was the

first generation immigrant from England, was displaced due to religious factors, and then became a pastor that involved in many religion missions in the Indian community. The condition in the United States is similar to Indonesia in terms of its multicultural society. The majority of American is Protestant, and the Indonesian is Muslim. Religiosity is about how religious a person is at least seen from the aspect of how he practiced religious rituals, revisits religious doctrines, and using religious symbols. America is different from other countries, it is unique because it is a country of immigrants that came from many countries in the world, from Europe (mostly) , African , Asian , Arabic , Chinese. The Indian society is precisely the original American although they became less and less. Its multiculturalism makes America a unique country and also faces various challenges that are not easy because of its heterogeneity origin of its people. One of the challenges is about its religiousness life. Religion is something that is sacred, absolute, principle, and also sensitive so it is not easy to live with people with a different principle. When the different nationality, ethnicity, and race coincided with religious differences, social and economic position, then the potentiality for greater conflict may happen (Baidhawi, 2005: 1). Everybody wants to do his religious belief but in the way not annoying others, and to minimize the friction that may occur. So, this paper examines the thought of Roger Williams which focused on the religiousness ideas in a multicultural society of America. This paper will try to examine religiousness in America in the eyes of Roger Williams, which may be different from others in his era.

1. Religiousness

Religiousness or religiosity, in its broadest sense, is comprehensive sociological term used to refer to the numerous aspects of religious activity, dedication,

and belief (religious doctrine). In its narrowest sense, religiosity deals more with how religious a person is, and less with how a person is religious (in practicing certain rituals, retelling certain stories, revering certain symbols, or accepting certain doctrines about deities and after life).

2. Multicultural Society

Before talking about the multicultural society, it is necessary to know what multiculturalism is. As an *ism* or ideology, multiculturalism is a view that every culture has a value and an equal footing with every other culture, so that every culture has the right to get a place as other cultures (Baidhowy, 2005: 4). Multi-cultural society is a society characterized by cultural pluralism—as in the cases of the United States and post-war Britain. As an ideal, multiculturalism celebrates cultural variety (for example linguistic and religious diversity), and may be contrasted with the assimilationist ideal assumed in many early studies of race, ethnicity, and immigration. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1088-multiculturalsociety.html>

In a society made up of various groups of people, then each society surely creates its own culture. Culture has existed long before human communities were isolated from each other. Then they interacted and began to adapt to different environments and cultures. Multicultural society that we understand today is that people from different cultures coexist permanently with each other. There are some benefits and also some challenges related to the presence of a multicultural society.

When several cultures exist within one society (multiculturalism), this is a situation that may evolve in many different ways. Important benefits can be

reaped from cultural diversity such as enhanced gastronomy, increased cross-cultural competencies, mental flexibility and tolerance in the population, artistic blossoming, social and political innovations, economical growth factors and much more. It can accelerate the emergence of a multicultural society such progressive ideas from around the world. One other advantage is the access to the needs, skills, and knowledge systems or new art. This requires coexistence between groups with one another, mutual adaptation.

However, it may also present important challenges, such as discrimination, conflicts and a feeling of alienation – especially if the human tendency to spoil perfectly good opportunities is given free rein. This leads to the need for societies that include different cultures to make certain choices concerning how they wish to respond to this situation: the stakes are high, and indecision represents too great a risk. Traditionally, multicultural societies have chosen between three models, namely, segregation, assimilation and integration.

Proponents of the integration model, also called multiculturalism, consider that cultural minorities are allowed, and to some extent expected and encouraged, to keep their distinctive traits (values, worldview, habits, and so on), as long as they adapt to a common and more or less minimal framework of norms and values that guarantee a well-functioning society (e.g. democracy, respect for human dignity through the observance of human rights, tolerance). In other words, integration as a model for multicultural societies spots respect for cultural differences as a central value.

The integration model has had a lot of influence

in the UK, where cultural diversity is far from being a new phenomenon and where it has been seen as a way of promoting social peace through respect for the different populations' cultural differences. After the 1960s, integration has also been an influential model in the US and Canada. Australia and New Zealand also seem to have adopted it to some extent, at least as far as their native populations are concerned. As far as imagery is concerned, integration is represented by the Salad Bowl metaphor: like a salad, society is composed of a large variety of elements that are all the more delicious because they keep their specificity. In Canada, one often talks about the cultural mosaic – a whole composed of distinct parts.

In this context, it happens that people from a majority culture experience a feeling of alienation – as if they were foreigners in their own country. However, considering that it is highly unlikely that cultural diversity will disappear anytime soon (and that it is debatable whether culturally homogenous societies ever were the norm), the most potent criticism towards the integration model seems to be that it too easily may develop into some sort of spontaneous segregation – different communities living side by side without communicating in any productive manner at all. This may lead to tensions: if cultures don't communicate, they cease to understand each other (<http://ndla.no/en/node/89615>).

For the negative assess the presence of strangers or foreign peoples often bring a potential threat to the lives and property of indigenous people. The foreigners are often considered to ignore habits and local morality, including beliefs and sacred rituals, because they do not have the participation and bond with truth and authority of the local tradition. If the

gap between majority and minority is not too wide, then the assimilation process can work well, but if the gap is too much then it can tempt newcomers to remain bound to the culture of origin. Faced with this, the tolerant behavior becomes very necessary in a pluralistic society.

Multiculturalism essentially requires the interaction between cultures in a pluralistic society that lived close to each other. There is no single person who can fully insulate.

3. American Religion and Culture in the life of Williams

In *An Outline of American History*, it is said that the most impelling single motive which induced emigrants to leave their European homelands was the desire for greater economic opportunity. This was frequently reinforced by other significant considerations such as a yearning for religious freedom, a determination to escape political oppression, or the lure of adventure (p.7-8).

Concurrently, during the religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a body of men and women called Puritans sought to reform the Established Church of England from within. Essentially, their program called for the more complete *protestantization* of the national church, particularly insofar as church responsibility for individual conduct was concerned. Their reformist ideas threatened to divide the people and to undermine royal authority by destroying the unity of the state church. A radical sect known as Separatists believed the Established Church could never be reformed to their liking. During the reign of James I, a small group of these—humble country folk—left for Leyden, Holland, where they were allowed to practice their religion as they wished. Some years later, a part of this Leyden congregation

decided to emigrate to the new world where, in 1620, they founded the “Pilgrim” colony of New Plymouth (ibid, 8)

So, after Charles I ascended the throne in 1625, Puritan leaders in England were subjected to what they viewed as increasing persecution. Several ministers, who were no longer allowed to preach, gathered their folks about them and followed the Pilgrims to America. Unlike the earlier emigrants, however, this second group, which establishes Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, included many persons of substantial wealth and position (ibid, p.8)

In 1607, the first permanent British colony was established in Jamestown in the Chesapeake Bay region by the Virginia Company, a joint stock company that received a charter from King James I and sold shares to raise funds. The colonists, led by Captain John Smith, settled at the mouth of the James River. Early years were difficult; the colonists faced conflicts with natives, starvation, and difficulties finding stable sources of food and support. Experiments with tobacco proved successful and the exportable commodity became Virginia’s main source of revenue, providing many of its landowning gentry a comfortable lifestyle throughout the next century and beyond. Half of the settlers in the southern colonies came to America as indentured servants—laborers working on four- to seven-year contracts to repay an agency or person for passage across the Atlantic. Once free of their contract, they were given a small tract of land in the colony. The exception to this rule was African slaves.

Lord Baltimore of England founded the colony of Maryland. He was Catholic and drew up a charter allowing the establishment of churches of all religions. By the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Virginia

and Maryland had established a strong economic and social structure; they were agrarian societies with expansive farmlands along the region's rivers. The planters of the tidewater region, using abundant slave labor, had large houses, an aristocratic way of life, and a desire to follow the art and culture of Europe. Less wealthy German and Scots-Irish immigrants settled inland, populating the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia as well as the Appalachian Mountains. Those on the frontier built small cabins and cultivated corn and wheat.

The Mid-Atlantic region was the second area of North America to be settled by European immigrants. In 1609, the Dutch East India Company sent Henry Hudson to explore the area (New York City on the present day) and the river north. His claims led to the establishment of a colony named New Netherlands. Its capital, New Amsterdam, looked like a Dutch town, with its winding streets, canals, brick houses, and gabled roofs. The Dutch focused on the fur trade, exchanging European-made metal utensils with the local Iroquois who controlled the industry. To finance settlement, rich Dutch gentlemen who agreed to transport fifty people to America received enormous estates along the Hudson. These "patrobons" ruled their lands like feudal lords, and grew immensely wealthy from the labor and crops of the tenant farmers who settled on their land (www.metmuseum.org). In 1664, the British took control of New Netherlands and the name of the territory was changed to New York. The Dutch settlers were able to retain their properties and worship as they please. The Colonial Dutch style of art and life remained pervasive in New York throughout the eighteenth century (ibid).

But the Puritans were not the only colonists

driven by religious motives. Dissatisfaction with the lot of the Quakers in England led William Penn in 1611 to undertake the founding of Pennsylvania. William Penn was a wealthy Quaker and friend of King Charles II of England, received a large tract of land west of the Delaware River. Penn encouraged other European religious dissenters to emigrate by promising them religious freedom. Quakers, Amish, Baptists, and Mennonites settled along the Delaware River. The middle colonies remained more tolerant of nonconformity than New England and the South. Pennsylvania grew rapidly. German farmers, mostly from the Rhine region, settled in the countryside of Pennsylvania, establishing prosperous farms and the industries of weaving, shoemaking, and cabinetmaking. In the early eighteenth century, large numbers of Scots-Irish also settled in the rural areas of Pennsylvania, supporting themselves with hunting and farming. By 1685, Pennsylvania's population was almost 9,000. Within a hundred years, its main city, Philadelphia, had 30,000 inhabitants.

New England was the third region to be settled. Religious dissenters actively sought to reform the Church of England. A group of these "Separatists" (later known as "Pilgrims") left England for Holland, then looked to the English land claims for a settlement where they could establish their own religious experiment. Their ship, the *Mayflower*, landed in Plymouth. A larger and more prosperous group of 900 Puritans, led by the lawyer John Winthrop, emigrated in 1630. The Massachusetts Bay Colony, centered in Boston, ruled itself rather than be governed by company directors in England. Most of the settlers came over as whole families, and tried to re-create, as closely as possible, their lives in England.

The first New Englanders built towns of tightly clustered houses and small gardens. Homes were two-room dwellings (one room upstairs, one down) anchored by a single fireplace and chimney (Hart House). Few settlers were able to take more than a chest or box with them across the Atlantic Ocean, so nearly all the furnishings for their new life were made by hand with local materials. Immigrant craftsmen continued to make furniture that carried on the decorative tradition of their homeland. By the 1700s, many villages had grown into thriving communities and houses had commonly doubled in size and accommodation.

Education was very important to the early colonists. From the very beginning, institutions of learning were established in New England, from town-subsidized grammar schools to universities. The first emigrants to New England brought books with them and continued to import printed materials directly from London, including works of history, classical literature, science, and theology, as well as volumes of pattern books for silversmiths and furniture makers, and prints that were copied for needlework patterns (David Jaffee in www.metmuseum.org).

The kind of government that the seventeenth-century Puritans wanted, as their aims grew clear, was a theocracy: a Holy Commonwealth governed by God or God's representatives. The clergy were the representatives. They were men of vigorous intellect, deeply learned in theology, Hebrew and Greek. Church and state being closely united, the clergy guided the magistrates. Together they determined to see to it that the welfare of their Christian society was not to be subverted. They have given up much to come to America and they proposed to have and keep the sort of colony they wanted. There was no leisure class; work,

diligence, and thrift were regarded as godly virtues (Foerster, 1962:3-4).

The early New Englanders were not rationalists, because they found human reason, unaided, an inadequate guide. They were not romanticists, because they deeply distrusted emotional desire and private intuition. They were not realists, because they held ordinary, or matter-of-fact, or scientific reality to be something on the surface of life, not at its heart. To the Puritans the Bible was a complete body of laws, bringing the spiritual life into relation not only with theology and ethics but all knowledge and all conduct.

Not all the English emigrants adhered to the Puritan lifestyle. When Massachusetts banished the young minister Roger Williams for his unorthodox views, he purchased land from the Narragansett Indians in the area around Providence, Rhode Island. This colony instituted the separation of church and state and freedom of religion (www.metmuseum.org). At the same time, other areas were settled along the Maine and New Hampshire coasts and the Connecticut River valley.

Catherine L. Albanese said that religious liberty and democratic equality were important ideals for social life even in many colonies with religious establishments. New England Puritans, although they tried to keep Quakers and other dissenters away, had come to the New World in order to enjoy religious liberty for themselves (Albanese, 1992: 402).

Although many of the colonists had migrated to America in search of religious freedom for themselves, they were unwilling to extend this freedom to other peoples. In most of the colonies, there were religious qualifications for voting and landholding. In Massachusetts, particularly, there was strong religious

intolerance. It is to the credit of colonial America that the following important steps were taken toward achieving freedom of worship:

1. Rhode Island. In 1636, Roger Williams and his followers, driven by religious intolerance from Massachusetts, founded the colony of Rhode Island. Here Williams provided complete religious freedom for all people. He prohibited an established church, that is, an official state church supported by government taxes. This idea of separation of church and state was later incorporated in the Constitution of the United States.
2. Maryland. In 1649, Maryland, which was founded originally by Lord Baltimore as a refuge for Catholics, passed an Act of Toleration granting religious freedom to all Christian sects.
3. Pennsylvania. In 1681, William Penn founded Pennsylvania as a haven for Quakers. The following year, he granted religious freedom to all colonists, no matter what their religion, so long as they believed in God. Penn also prohibited the establishment of any official church in his colony (Gordon, 1960:4).

In theory, the church and state were separate. Actually they were one, all institutions being subordinated to religion. Soon, a system of government, theocratic and authoritarian, evolved. For years the clergy and conservative laymen attempted to maintain conformity. But they did not succeed, however, in binding the mind of every citizen or curbing the tongue of the inspired zealot. Such a rebel was Roger Williams (*An Outline of American History*: 11)

Roger Williams (c. 1603 – between January and March 1683) was an English Protestant theologian who was an early proponent of freedom and the separation of church and state. In 1636, he began the colony of Providence Plantation, which provided a refuge for religious minorities.

Williams started the first Baptist church in America, the First Baptist Church of Providence. He was a student of Native American languages and an advocate for fair dealings with Native Americans. Williams was arguably the first abolitionist in North America, having organized the first attempt to prohibit slavery in any of the original thirteen colonies.

C. Roger Williams' Thought on Religiousness

There are some backgrounds that formed Roger Williams' idea on secularism. The following are his life phases that influenced the idea of separation between state and religion:

1. From Church of England to Puritan (Separatist) Phase

Roger Williams was born in London on December 21, 1603, the year that Queen Elizabeth I died. His father, James Williams (1562–1620), was a merchant tailor in Smithfield, England; his mother was Alice Pemberton (1564–1635), although his birth record was destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666 when St. Sepulchre's Church burned. The Williams family lived beside the open area called Smithfield, near the sheep-pen section on its western edge. In this large field markets were held, fairs took place and there were other festivities as well — such as the burning of religious heretics.

He was about eight years old when the last person ever burned in London for his religious opinions met his death at Smithfield, just a few yards away from where the child lived. The doomed heretic, Bartholomew Legate, was a preacher for the Seekers, forerunners of the Quakers. They sought religious truth on their own and did not feel compelled to accept any dogma simply because some church said it was true. It was a dangerous position to take. The Church of England court tried Bartholomew Legate on charges of heresy and then handed him over to the state

to carry out the death sentence. On the orders of the new king, James I, this Seeker was burned to death at Smithfield, right in front of the Williams home. This must have made a strong impression on this gifted child: church and state had colluded in order to deliver a brave man to a horrible death. As Roger Williams wrote later, from that time onwards, he too adopted the position of the Seekers who refused to bow to the state church and insisted on trying to find their own way (www.users.erols.com). From a young age his goal became “a Libertie of searching after Gods most holy mind and pleasure”. In his mind, Churchmen, of course, never stained their hands with blood.

At the age of 11, Williams had a spiritual-conversion experience of which his father disapproved. As a boy Williams was apprenticed with Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634), the famous jurist. Under Coke’s patronage, Williams was educated at Charterhouse and also at Pembroke College, Cambridge (B.A., 1627). He seemed to have a gift for languages, and early acquired familiarity with Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Dutch, and French. Some years later, Williams tutored John Milton in Dutch in exchange for refresher lessons in Hebrew (*ibid*).

Although Williams took holy orders in the Church of England in connection with his studies, he became a Puritan at Cambridge, and thus ruined his chance for preferment in the Anglican Church. After graduating from Cambridge, Williams became the chaplain to a Puritan gentleman, Sir William Masham. Williams also married Mary Barnard (1609–76) on December 15, 1629, at the Church of High Laver, Essex, England. They ultimately had six children, all born in America: Mary, Freeborn, Providence, Mercy, Daniel and Joseph.

Williams knew Puritan leaders planned to migrate to the New World. While he did not join the first wave in the summer of 1630, before the year ended, he decided he

could not remain in England under Archbishop William Laud's rigorous (and High church) administration. Williams regarded the Church of England as corrupt and false; by the time he and his wife boarded the *Lyon* in early December, he had arrived at the Separatist position.

Another strand in the thought of Roger Williams was what was known as "Separatism". This was a logical extension of the Protestant Reformation. Like other Protestants, the Anglicans of the English Church had broken away from the Catholic Church which they felt had become corrupted and no longer represented the "pure" form of the early church. Soon the Puritans, in turn, broke away from the Church of England, to "purify" it, in turn.

However, tampering with a state church was a highly political thing to attempt. It seemed more prudent to conduct this religious experiment overseas, and a group of Puritans managed to get a charter from King Charles I to found the Colony of Massachusetts a good safe distance away. This allowed them to separate from the English Church in all but name. In the New World they were under no bishop and each congregation ran its own affairs. They had to be quiet about it, of course, since the Church of England was increasingly hostile to Puritanism and what King Charles had given, he could also take away (Hall, 1997: 24). The last thing the Colony of Massachusetts needed was an open separatist like Roger Williams who advocated a public break with the Church of England.

2. From Puritan (Separatist) to Seekers Phase

Almost immediately upon the Williams' arrival at Boston on February 5, 1631, the Boston church invited Rev. Williams to become its Teacher minister, to officiate while Rev. John Wilson returned to England to fetch his wife. However, Williams declined the position on grounds that it was "...an unseparated church." In addition, Williams asserted that civil magistrates must not punish any sort of

“...breach of the first table [of the Ten Commandments],” such as idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, false worship, and blasphemy—and that individuals should be free to follow their own convictions in religious matters. These three principles became central to Williams’ subsequent career: separatism, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state.

As a separatist, Williams considered the Church of England irredeemably corrupt, and believed that one must completely separate from it to establish a new church for the true and pure worship of God. Williams believed that soul liberty and freedom of conscience were gifts from God, and thought freedom of religion a natural right, which demanded that church and state be separated. Williams was the first to use the phrase “wall of separation” to describe the ideal relationship of church and state, calling for a high wall to separate the “Garden of Christ” from the “Wilderness of the World.” His search for the true church eventually carried him out of Congregationalism, the Baptists, and any visible church. From 1639 forward, Williams waited for Christ to send a new apostle to reestablish the church, labeling himself as a “witness” to Christianity until that time. However, Williams’ religious freedom concept may have influenced the prohibition against foundations of the religion clauses in the United States Constitution, and the First Amendment—though the founders used quite different language. Years later, in 1802, Thomas Jefferson used the “wall of separation” phrase in a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, echoing Roger Williams.

Meanwhile, the Salem church was much more inclined to Separatism, and invited Williams to become their Teacher. When the leaders in Boston learned of this, they vigorously protested, and Salem withdrew its offer. As the summer of 1631 ended, Williams moved to Plymouth colony where he was welcomed, and informally assisted

the minister there. He regularly preached and according to Governor Bradford, “his teachings were well approved.”

After a time, Williams decided that the Plymouth church was not sufficiently separated from the Church of England. Soon the Massachusetts authorities encountered further problems with the young Puritan preacher. Not content to challenge the legitimacy of the English Church, he even began to question the purity of the Puritan one and finally decided that he must separate from that, as well.

The impulse of separation was a natural extension of the perception of spiritual stain and impurity, and Puritans saw stain everywhere. Central to Puritan ecclesiology was the line of demarcation between the godly and ungodly, the holy and the profane (Hall, 1997:23).

In the 17th century this drive to avoid spiritual impurity led to a series of further separations, as churches separated from the churches which had them separated from Rome.

However, one of the remarkable things about Roger Williams is that unlike others, he did not set himself up as the leader of some new and purer church — even though his status as the founder of a new colony would have let him assume that role, like so many others. Instead, he remained true to his Seeker beliefs, unwilling to impose some new orthodoxy, even in the name of spiritual purity. Thus he didn’t separate in order to found a new church, but in order to keep any church from impeding people’s earnest search to learn God’s will.

3. The phase of his social’s encounter with Indians

Williams intended to become a missionary to the Native Americans and set out to learn their language. He studied their language, customs, religion, family life and other aspects of their world. He thus came to see their point of view and developed a deep appreciation of them as people, which later caused him to question the colony’s legal basis

for acquiring land, and thus led to controversy and eventual exile. Having learned their language and customs, Williams ultimately gave up the idea of being a missionary and never baptized a single Indian. The Puritans criticized his failure to Christianize them, but Williams eventually arrived at the place in his own thinking that no valid church existed. He said he could have baptized the whole country, but it would have been hypocritical and false.

Yet without this crucial experience Williams could not likely have made the bold leap and founded a colony where everyone enjoyed complete religious freedom. In the 17th century it was assumed that a common religion was necessary to ensure social peace. This was the lesson that Europe had drawn from that century's devastating religious wars. Furthermore, to ensure the authority of the state, this common religion should be a state church; in other words, all subjects must follow the religion of their rulers. Otherwise, it was feared, they might try to topple the king and install a ruler of their own faith. This had indeed been attempted when Roger Williams was a baby: the Gunpowder Plot was an attempt to bring back a Catholic king. This plot, though foiled, inspired religious oppression of Catholics and created a vicious circle of suspicion and disaffection that was only ended by the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829.

However, Roger Williams knew that this tragic cycle of exclusion was totally unnecessary. People didn't need a common church — or even any church at all — to live in harmony with their neighbors. He had experienced something that his contemporaries believed to be impossible, for he had lived among the Indians of Rhode Island, the Narragansett, and even written a book about their language. He knew at first hand that people could tell the truth without swearing on the Bible could help their fellows without any religious duty to do so and could keep the peace without oaths of allegiance to a divinely-

appointed ruler.

Roger Williams had gone among the Indians to teach them Christianity but, true to his Seeker beliefs, he had remained open-minded. He let the Indians teach him a lesson that he could learn nowhere else: that church and state need not be linked.

He gives three reasons for this. He recoiled from the prospect of an insincere profession of faith made due to fear or expediency: "Forced worship stinks in God's nostrils." He also warned of the worldly influence on the church through state sponsorship, which made it "national" and "ceremonial." And finally, alluding to the "flames about religion" which he had witnessed in England, he affirms that "there is no prudent Christian way of preserving peace in the world but by permission of differing consciences" (www.worldpolicy.newschool.edu).

4. The phase of Settlement of Providence

When Roger Williams was exiled from Massachusetts in 1636 he and a few companions founded a little settlement. There church and state were completely separate and they underlined their religious motives for doing this by naming it "Providence". It was a small settlement overlooking the tidal Providence River. On the river bank they built their timber-framed cottages, the wattle-and-daub walls protected from the rain by the deep eaves of thatched roofs. Behind the cottages, in a field which rose to the foot of the bluffs, they planted multicolored Indian corn.

Life in the new settlement proved a struggle. In fact, the next year, when the Governor of Massachusetts paid a visit to the impetuous young preacher, he was so touched by their poverty that he pressed a gold piece into Mrs. Williams' hand. The hamlet was small, mosquito-infested, pig-ridden, dirt-laned, isolated, insecure and poor. Yet at that time it was perhaps the freest place on earth (Covey, 1966: 134).

In the spring of 1636, Williams and a number of his followers from Salem began a new settlement on land that Williams had bought from Massasoit, but Plymouth authorities asserted that he was still within their land grant and warned that they might be forced to extradite him to Massachusetts. They urged Williams to cross the Seekonk River, as that territory lay beyond any charter. The outcasts rowed over to Narragansett territory, and bought land from Canonicus and Miantonomi, chief sachems of the Narragansetts. Williams and twelve “loving friends” then established what Williams called “Providence”, because they felt that God’s Providence had brought him there. (Williams would later name his third child, the first born in his new settlement, “Providence” as well.)

Williams wanted his settlement to be a haven for those “distressed of conscience,” and it soon attracted a collection of dissenters and otherwise-minded individuals. From the beginning, a majority vote of the heads of households governed the new settlement, but “only in civil things”. Newcomers could be also admitted to full citizenship by a majority vote. In August 1637, a new town agreement again restricted the government to “civil things.” In 1640, thirty-nine “freemen” (men who had full citizenship and voting rights) signed another agreement that declared their determination “...still to hold forth liberty of conscience.” Thus, Williams founded the first place in modern history where citizenship and religion were separate—that provided religious liberty and separation of church and state.

D. Conclusion

Roger Williams was a religious and pluralist person based on his idea that there should be a wall between church and state. In his opinion, by separating church and state, it would protect God from impure world and gave religious

freedom to all. No one could claim to have any monopoly on religious truth. Government never knew which religion was true, so they must protect the freedom of all religion. To preserve peace in the world was by permitting different conscience. Through his life, it could be known that his background had influenced the emergence of his idea of religiousness in America. Unpleasant experience as a child, seeing a Seeker who was sentenced to death in front of his house made Williams changed his view about the Church of England. Church should never stain their hands with blood and state did not have a right to ensure the spiritual values of its citizens. Avoiding corruption and arbitrariness of the Church of England, he moved toward the New World, America. There he found that the Puritan or Separatist itself in practice was the same as that in England, which imposed only real truth of his group. Then his encounter with the Indians brought a new view on him that people could live in harmony, though not in one or the same religion. The idea of separation of state and religion implied that the state should not interfere the religious affairs of its citizens. Religiousness in a multicultural society like in America was that the society was a religious society which had the freedom to seek the ultimate truth of God by them. People had to communicate with other society or sects, learn from others to search for the truth along his life and doing that without intimidation and intervention from the authorities or the State. The State allowed any diversity of its citizens; they did not use religious symbols in managing government. Once the State uses certain religious symbols, it was feared there would be the imposition of the current ruling power for the reasons of religion. Although the majority in America was Christians, they were not fanatic because religion was a private room between he himself and God. There are no religion symbols in public areas. It won't reduce its piousness in front of God. Roger Williams

placed religious as private and didn't make its followers to be fanatic because he thought that who knew the truth was only God. His thought on the religiousness among American people has been believed as the unity tool for American's multicultural society up till now.

REFERENCES

- Albanese, Catherine L. 2002. *America Religions and Religion*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- An Outline of American History*
- Baidhaw, Zakiyuddin. 2005. *Pendidikan Agama Berwawasan Multikultural*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Cobb, Sanford H. Cobb. 1902. *The Rise of Religious Liberty in America: A History*. Available online at http://www.archive.org/stream/riseofreligiou00cobb/riseofreligiou00cobb_djvu.txt.
- Covey, Cyclone. 1996. *The Gentle Radical: Roger Williams*. New York: The MacMillian Co., cover leaf. Available at: <http://users.erols.com/igoddard/roger.htm>.
- Foerster, Norman. 1962. *Image of America*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Gordon, Irving L. 1960. *Reviewing American History*. New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc.
- Hall, Timothy L. 1997. *Separating Church and State: Roger Williams and Religious Liberty*. University of Illinois Press.
- Jaffee, David. 2000. Religion and Culture in North America, 1600–1700. *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/recu/hd_recu.htm (October 2004)
- Praja, Juhaya S. 2008. *Aliran-aliran Filsafat dan Etika*. Jakarta : Kencana.

Hornby. 2004. *Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English*.

Williams, Roger. *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution* (1644).
Available at [http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/
bdorse1/41docs/31-wil.html](http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/bdorse1/41docs/31-wil.html)

Williams, Roger. "Letter to Major John Wilson and [Connecticut]
Governor Thomas Prentice", Providence, 22 June 1670.

[http://www.worldpolicy.newschool.edu/globalrights/religion/
Williams-forcedworship.html](http://www.worldpolicy.newschool.edu/globalrights/religion/Williams-forcedworship.html)

[http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_
id=1551&kb_header_id=8611](http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=1551&kb_header_id=8611)