

Analysis of Community Knowledge on Disaster and the Effort to Construct A Disaster Theology

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Abstract. This paper explores local community knowledge on natural disaster, and aims to: 1) explaining community's response and strategy toward natural disaster based on their local knowledge; 2) to construct a disaster theology referring to theological understanding of the society about disaster based on their experience. This study is expected to contribute both to the development of knowledge on disaster management/risk reduction and as consideration for the stakeholders in policy decision making. Research for this paper was done in two areas in Ambon City, Maluku Province, namely *Negeri Batu Merah* and *Desa Galala*, which are prone to disaster and have had historical experience on it. The research using qualitative method with ethnoscience approach or paradigm, a particular knowledge systems of a community or society. The data collection was done through observation and indepth interview toward key informants from the study areas. Collected data were categorized, then presented by using descriptive-interpretative analysis. This research reveals that, first, community groups have particular knowledge about the disaster which sourced from their own experience as well as the experience of their ancestors in the past. The knowledge, which valuable for capacity building and adapt to natural disaster, has been handed down through generations. However, the knowledge is often disregarded by the people and the government, and replaced with scientific knowledge which is not yet well understood by the people. Second, the experience of the religious community is very important in constructing a disaster theology because, whether we realize or not, the religious people themselves interpret various disaster events, and reflect them to the certain religious teaching or scripture of their religion. This research finds that God's accompaniment is a basis for constructing a disaster theology based on disaster experience of people in Ambon.

Keywords: Disaster, Community Knowledge, Disaster Theology, God's Accompaniment