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HUMANITARIAN THEOLOGY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: GUS DUR AND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ON PEACE AND GLOBAL JUSTICE

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Abstract

This article examines the humanitarian thought of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) and Martin Luther King Jr. through a comparative analysis grounded in religious ethics, peacebuilding, and social justice. Both figures are widely recognized as religious leaders who translated faith-based commitments into concrete responses to injustice, yet they operated within distinct sociopolitical contexts and adopted different strategic approaches. This study employs qualitative library research and comparative content analysis to examine three analytical dimensions: theological foundations, core humanitarian principles, and the contexts in which those principles were implemented. The findings show that Gus Dur and King share a fundamental ethical convergence in treating religion as a public moral resource for defending human dignity, equality, and justice, as well as in rejecting violence as a legitimate means of social change. Gus Dur articulated humanitarian commitments through Islamic concepts such as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and *al-maqasid al-shari'ah*, emphasizing pluralism, dialogue, and institutional reform within a multi-religious society. King grounded his humanitarian vision in Christian theology, particularly *Imago Dei* and *agape*, and advanced disciplined nonviolent action as a moral and strategic response to racial segregation and structural injustice. The analysis also reveals a significant divergence in operational strategy. Gus Dur primarily pursued reform through engagement with political and religious institutions, while King mobilized mass participation and moral pressure from outside the state. Read together, their approaches offer a complementary framework for contemporary humanitarian practice that links civic resistance with institutional responsibility. The study contributes to scholarship on religion-based peacebuilding by demonstrating how shared ethical commitments can generate different strategies shaped by political opportunity, social structure, and conflict configuration.

Keywords: Humanitarian theology, Gus Dur, Martin Luther King Jr., peace, social justice

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A. Introduction

Humanity is a foundational social principle that protects human dignity and rights and continues to shape contemporary debates on social life (Elkahlout, 2025; Wirastho, 2017; Aldo et al., 2023). Its urgency becomes sharper in societies marked by deep diversity across ethnicity, religion, race, and social grouping (Sirry et al., 2024). As a

regulative framework, humanitarian norms help prevent avoidable suffering (Biersteker et al., 2021) and support social harmony (Ronisah, 2023). When humanitarian values are weakly internalized, the likelihood of intergroup conflict increases (Ramadani et al., 2023). In this sense, embedding humanitarian commitments in social and political life remains a practical condition for building peace and justice.

Within today's complex humanitarian challenges, the thought of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) and Martin Luther King Jr. offers an instructive lens. Both are widely recognized as religiously grounded advocates of human dignity, yet each worked in sharply different sociocultural settings and translated moral commitments into distinct strategies. Gus Dur addressed tensions in post–New Order Indonesia by emphasizing sociological pluralism, dialogue, and conflict management through engagement with state institutions (Z. Ridwan, 2024). King confronted racial segregation in the United States by developing a theology and practice of *agape* and disciplined nonviolent action that mobilized public pressure beyond formal political channels (Keita & Niambele, 2024).

Scholarship on each figure is extensive, but comparative work that places them in a single analytical frame remains limited. Studies of Gus Dur, including Fatah (2020), largely examine his religious humanism through Islamic universalism, cosmopolitanism, and the indigenization of Islam, without sustained engagement with humanitarian thinkers from other traditions. Studies of King, including Ngabalin (2020), foreground nonviolence and *agape* in the struggle against racism, yet rarely connect his approach to humanitarian advocacy in non-American contexts. Existing comparative research, such as Wandana et al. (2025) on Gus Dur and Nelson Mandela, demonstrates the promise of cross-context analysis, but it does not address the specific pairing of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr., two leaders rooted in Abrahamic traditions whose operational approaches diverged in important ways.

This article addresses that gap by offering a focused comparative analysis of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr. through three analytical units: theological foundations, core humanitarian principles, and the contexts in which those principles were implemented. It examines how shared religious commitments can generate convergent ethical claims while producing different strategies shaped by political opportunity, social structure, and the configuration of conflict. The analysis also clarifies how their ideas speak to contemporary humanitarian problems, including intolerance, racism, and

structural injustice, and it proposes a comparative framework that can support further research in humanitarian studies, peacebuilding, and religion-based conflict resolution.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach in the form of library research (Sukardi, 2011). Qualitative inquiry is appropriate because it allows the study to produce descriptive, interpretive accounts that capture meanings and arguments in depth (Moleong, 2007). Data were collected through document-based techniques by examining written sources that are relevant to the theme of humanity, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other scholarly publications (Arikunto, 2010). The materials consist of primary sources containing the original ideas of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr., as well as secondary sources in the form of academic studies that interpret, contextualize, and critique their thought.

The analysis applies content analysis within a comparative orientation (Basrowi, 2008). The comparative procedure was organized around three units of analysis: (1) theological foundations, (2) core principles and strategies of humanitarian struggle, and (3) the sociopolitical contexts in which those principles were implemented. Each unit was examined through concrete comparison criteria, including the religious sources and moral vocabulary each figure draws upon, the dominant approach used to address conflict and injustice, and the types of real-world cases and interventions emphasized in their practice.

The analytical process followed three stages to ensure coherence and depth. The first stage was descriptive mapping, in which each figure's ideas were organized according to the three units of analysis. The second stage was critical comparison, which placed the two frameworks side by side to identify convergences and divergences in concepts and strategic orientation. The third stage was synthesis, which integrated the comparative findings into a coherent analytical framework for understanding religion-based humanitarian strategies across distinct contexts.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Gus Dur: Theological Foundations, Humanitarian Principles, and Practical Interventions

Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) was born on September 7, 1940, in Denanyar, Jombang, East Java. He came from a prominent Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) family: his father

was KH. Wahid Hasyim, and his grandfather was KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of NU (Dwijayanto & Afif, 2020; Musa, 2010). His early education developed within Indonesia's pesantren tradition, including Pesantren Tambakberas in Jombang, where he combined religious studies with engagement in Western thought, a formative basis for his later intellectual breadth (Barton, 2003). He continued his studies at Al-Azhar University in Cairo (1964–1966) and the University of Baghdad (1966–1970), experiences that shaped his view that Islamic interpretation must remain responsive to historical change. He later strengthened his language skills and intellectual exposure in Europe (1970–1971) (Santalia, 2015; Rifai, 2010). After returning to Indonesia, he became active as a columnist, then served as Chairman of PBNU and later as Indonesia's fourth President in October 1999 (Zainiyati et al., 2021). Across these roles, he became known as a progressive Muslim thinker and public humanist with sustained advocacy for minorities, combining pesantren ethics, global horizons, and an explicit commitment to siding with those placed at the margins (Masdar, 1999).

Gus Dur's humanitarian theology is anchored in core Islamic moral commitments. He treated Islam as a social ethic that defends basic human rights and human dignity (Ahmad, 2010). He framed Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, a vision of mercy for all creation that carries moral responsibility toward fellow human beings, reinforced through prophetic teachings that emphasize compassion for life on earth (Nababan et al., 2023). His religious orientation is often described through NU's normative ethics, including moderation (*tawasuth*), balance (*tawazun*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*al-i'tidal*), and equality (*al-musawah*) (N. K. Ridwan, 2021). These principles support an understanding of Islam as a universal mercy (Zainuri & Al-Hakim, 2021). In his view, humanitarian struggle represents one of the most concrete expressions of faith because religious commitments become meaningful through justice-oriented action in social life.

Gus Dur also linked humanitarian commitments to *al-maqasid al-shari'ah*, arguing that Islam safeguards human rights, democratic life, tolerance, and interreligious harmony (Siswanto & Fakhruddin, 2022). Religion, in this view, carries a comprehensive moral horizon that demands justice, defense of ordinary people, and protection for minorities (Wahid, 2025). His public reasoning frequently drew on Qur'anic principles that affirm human diversity as a reality meant for mutual recognition (Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13) and warn against fragmentation by urging collective commitment to God's guidance

(Q.S. Ali Imran: 103) (Wahid, 2024). This approach shows a substantive reading of Islam that prioritizes universal aims of the law, such as protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*), justice (*'adl*), and public benefit (*maslahah 'ammah*), rather than a rigid formalism. Within this interpretive frame, Islam functions as a living social ethic capable of unifying diverse communities and resisting domination within plural societies.

From this theological base, Gus Dur advanced pluralism and dialogue as practical pathways toward peace and justice. For him, pluralism did not mean theological leveling across religions. It referred to a sociological commitment to building civic harmony among different religious communities without dissolving their doctrinal boundaries. He treated the capacity to manage difference as a safeguard against conflict and disintegration in a multi-religious nation (Setiawan, 2017). His frequently cited remark, "God does not need to be defended," expressed a critique of religious fanaticism that seeks legitimacy for violence. The moral task, in his framing, lies in protecting human dignity and advancing social justice rather than projecting religious loyalty through hostility (Faishal, 2025). Religion should operate as a source of compassion and social cohesion rather than as a tool for hatred and coercion.

Gus Dur's emphasis on dialogue also rested on Islamic legal reasoning about means and ends. He argued that if cooperation across communities is necessary for realizing moral obligations, then the conditions that make such cooperation possible acquire normative weight. Dialogue becomes a practical requirement for building shared commitments and reducing the likelihood of religious conflict. He connected this reasoning to Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:13, which affirms human plurality and directs communities toward mutual recognition rather than division (Wahid, 2006). In this sense, dialogue was not treated as a symbolic gesture. It was framed as a disciplined civic practice that allows interreligious cooperation on humanitarian problems while preserving confessional integrity.

His stance became especially visible in his criticism of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) when it issued a fatwa that condemned religious pluralism. Gus Dur argued that Indonesia is not founded on a single religion and that no religious authority should claim the power to monopolize civic truth in a plural state. He saw pluralism as a sociological necessity for Indonesia and warned that narrow religious views could harm the nation's collective life (Rachman, 2010). Through this position, he worked to reduce

religious hostility because hostility tends to reproduce enmity and social fracture (Setiawan, 2017). In conflict settings, he favored dialogue anchored in trust-building between the state and citizens. His approach included public education on tolerance in multicultural regions and direct engagement grounded in contextual knowledge of conflict dynamics. Studies of his approach highlight his efforts in Papua, where he used dialogue and personal engagement as a de-escalatory strategy (Nihaya & Muzaki, 2021). In this perspective, dialogue functions as both a method of dispute settlement and a pathway for rebuilding social trust (Rosidi, 2023).

Gus Dur's humanitarian commitments also took institutional form through concrete policies and interventions. During his presidency, he initiated reforms that expanded civic space for Chinese Indonesians. He promoted legal and administrative reforms that restored public space for Confucian practice and Chinese cultural expression, including revoking Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 and issuing Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 (Afiyanto, 2019). These actions carried symbolic and legal weight early in the Reformasi period by addressing historical injustice and affirming equal citizenship.

His approach to Papua likewise reflected a human-centered political imagination. On January 1, 2000, he publicly apologized for human rights violations experienced by Papuans and approved the use of "Papua" as a preferred name in place of "Irian Jaya," as a sign of respect for collective identity. He appointed Freddy Numberi, then Governor of Irian Jaya, as a minister, supported the Second Papua People's Congress through funding, and permitted the Morning Star flag to be displayed alongside the Indonesian flag as a cultural symbol rather than a gesture of rebellion (Hakim & Anjani, 2022). These steps show a consistent logic in Gus Dur's practice: durable peace is more likely to emerge from recognition, justice, and dialogue than from repression.

2. Martin Luther King Jr.: Theological Foundations, Humanitarian Principles, and the Civil Rights Movement (revised)

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, into a devout African American Baptist family. His father, Martin Luther King Sr., and his grandfather were both pastors, a background that shaped his early religious formation and social awareness (Wellem, 1996; Kumar, 2021). King's intellectual promise appeared early. He entered Morehouse College at age fifteen and later earned a bachelor's degree

in sociology in 1948. He continued his theological training at Crozer Theological Seminary, completing a Bachelor of Divinity in 1951, and then earned a PhD in systematic theology from Boston University in 1955 (Andriansyah, 2021; Kumar, 2021). In 1954, at age twenty-five, he became pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, a role that placed him at the center of organized resistance to segregation (Andriansyah, 2021).

King's public leadership crystallized during the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–1956, which lasted 381 days. He was chosen to lead the Montgomery Improvement Association and helped sustain a disciplined campaign that fused theological conviction with public action (Kumar, 2021). His method of nonviolent direct action drew practical inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi (Narasi, 2008). He later became a founding figure and president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) from 1957 to 1968, where his preaching, organizing, and moral leadership expanded the civil rights movement into a national and global reference point for justice-oriented reform (Napierała, 2024; Kumar, 2021).

The humanitarian character of King's thought is inseparable from his Christian theology. He treated faith as a public ethic that must respond to oppression with moral clarity and practical responsibility. His activism was framed as an imitation of the ministry of Jesus Christ, whose message and practice embodied peace, compassion, and the moral demands of the Kingdom of God (Pranoto, 2024). Scriptural imperatives such as loving one's neighbor and loving one's enemy (Matthew 5:43–45) functioned in King's work as binding ethical claims rather than pious ideals (King Jr., 2019). In this view, living faith takes recognizable form in solidarity with those who suffer injustice.

In sermons such as *The American Dream*, King argued that the founders of the United States were strongly shaped by biblical values (Timothy Keller, 2010). He repeatedly appealed to the prophetic tradition, including Amos 5:24, to insist that authentic religious commitment requires justice in social life, not merely private devotion (Kriswibowo & Amtiran, 2024). A further premise in his theology was human dignity grounded in the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, the belief that every person bears the image of God. This conviction supported his rejection of segregation and racial domination as violations of sacred human worth (King Jr., 2010). His idea of an "inescapable network of mutuality" followed from this stance: harm done to one group ultimately distorts the

moral life of the whole society, making justice a shared responsibility rather than a sectional demand.

From these theological foundations, King articulated *agape* as the moral center of humanitarian struggle. In Christian ethical discourse, *agape* refers to divine love that expresses itself through concrete responsibility rather than sentiment (Wantoro, 2021). King described *agape* as God's love at work within the human heart (King Jr., 2022), a love that sustains forgiveness and active defense of the oppressed (Baidowi, 2015). He also portrayed it as an embracing, unconditional love directed toward all persons, grounded in the sacred worth of human beings (King Jr., 2013; King Jr., 2010). For King, *agape* provided a moral logic capable of confronting injustice without reproducing hatred.

King insisted that *agape* must take operational form through nonviolent action. Nonviolence, in his framework, was not passivity. It was a disciplined mode of struggle aimed at moral transformation and reconciliation (Bassey & Edwin, 2020). He emphasized practical commitments that shaped this approach: a capacity to forgive, recognition that moral worth is not erased even in an adversary, and an effort to win understanding and friendship rather than to humiliate an opponent (King Jr., 2019). Violence was rejected on ethical grounds because it destroys human dignity and deepens cycles of retaliation. In that spirit, he argued that no cause, however noble, can justify the killing of another human being (Bassey & Edwin, 2020; King Jr., 2019). His aim was not only policy change but also the moral repair of social relationships through redemption and reconciliation.

This ethical framework guided King's concrete political practice. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he framed the struggle as a challenge to the deeper structure of injustice rather than a narrow dispute over transportation. As he put it, the conflict was not truly about buses; it was an attack on the roots of injustice and human hostility toward one another (King Jr., 2019). The same orientation shaped later campaigns. In April 1963, King led peaceful demonstrations in Birmingham demanding equal rights. The movement faced severe repression, including violence directed at children, yet its disciplined nonviolence widened public sympathy and international attention. These efforts contributed to the Birmingham Agreement on May 10, 1963, which ended segregation in public facilities, and they strengthened the political momentum that led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 under the Kennedy and Johnson

administrations (Ngabalin, 2020). His nonviolent strategies were also expressed through boycotts, peaceful marches, and public speeches that intensified moral pressure and widened civic participation (Putri, 2015; Mardliyah et al., 2025).

King's influence reached a symbolic peak in his 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., where he projected a vision of racial reconciliation and equal dignity. The speech became a lasting emblem of a struggle grounded in moral courage rather than coercion (Ngabalin, 2020). His commitment to peace and justice was recognized internationally through the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, reinforcing his legacy as a leader who pursued structural change while holding fast to the moral discipline of nonviolence (Hutagalung & Isa, 2021). In King's own terms, Christ provided the goal and Gandhi provided the tactic, and the destination he named was the *Beloved Community*: a social order shaped by justice, reconciliation, and human dignity rather than domination (King Jr., 2019).

3. Comparative Analysis of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr.: Convergences and Divergences in Humanitarian Thought

This section compares the humanitarian thought of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr. by placing their theological foundations, operational principles, and practical interventions in direct conversation. The comparison shows a shared ethical center grounded in religion, alongside major differences produced by the sociopolitical conditions each figure confronted.

At the level of ethical foundations, both leaders treated religion as a source of public morality rather than a private doctrine, and both used it to defend human dignity and equality. Gus Dur read Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and connected humanitarian commitments to *al-maqasid al-shari'ah*, framing the protection of human rights, tolerance, and social justice as central to religious responsibility (Siswanto & Fakhruddin, 2022; Nababan et al., 2023). King grounded his humanitarian vision in Christian theology, particularly the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, which casts every person as bearing sacred worth and makes racial domination incompatible with faith (King Jr., 2010; Pranoto, 2024). In both frameworks, religion functions as an ethical demand to confront injustice in concrete social life.

From these foundations followed a shared refusal to legitimate violence as a means of achieving justice. Gus Dur's remark that "God does not need to be defended" expressed a sharp critique of religious fanaticism and the use of religion to authorize harm against others, redirecting religious devotion toward protection of human dignity and social justice (Faishal, 2025). King's rejection of violence was equally categorical because it contradicts *agape* and degrades the humanity of both victim and perpetrator. He argued that no cause, however noble, can justify killing another human being (Bassey & Edwin, 2020; King Jr., 2019). In this sense, Gus Dur's dialogical pluralism and King's disciplined nonviolence can be read as parallel moral strategies aimed at ending cycles of retaliation and sustaining peace through respect for human dignity.

The most significant differences appear when their ideas are read against the contexts and structures of conflict they faced. Gus Dur worked in post–New Order Indonesia, a multiethnic and multireligious society where threats to peace often emerged as fragmentation through horizontal conflict among communities and vertical conflict between the state and regions. His strategic concerns therefore included management of diversity, resistance to religious discrimination, and efforts to address separatist tensions through recognition and dialogue, including policies that expanded civic space for Chinese Indonesians and a human-centered approach to Papua (Afiyanto, 2019; Hakim & Anjani, 2022). King operated in a society that presented itself as democratic yet institutionalized racial hierarchy through segregation. The central injustice he confronted was a legal and social system that excluded African Americans from equal civil and political rights, making the struggle for desegregation and voting rights the primary strategic front (Ngabalin, 2020).

These different contexts shaped their modes of action. Gus Dur carried authority as a national political actor, serving as President and as a senior leader within NU. His work therefore leaned toward institutional engagement and reform from within, expressed through policy change, formal dialogue, and elite negotiation. This is visible in legal and administrative reforms that restored public space for Confucian practice and Chinese cultural expression and in his dialogical approach to conflict mediation (Nihaya & Muzaki, 2021; Rosidi, 2023). King, by contrast, acted as a leader of civil society and depended on public mobilization. His approach built moral pressure from beyond formal power through organized nonviolent campaigns, including boycotts, marches, and mass

demonstrations designed to reshape public conscience and compel legal change (Bassey & Edwin, 2020; Mardliyah et al., 2025). Put differently, Gus Dur's struggle often took the form of reformist intervention within the state, while King's struggle relied on disciplined collective action that exerted pressure upon the state.

Taken as a whole, the comparison suggests that shared religious commitments can generate strong ethical convergence while producing sharply different strategic orientations. Gus Dur's approach shows how a dialogical and inclusive public ethic can be translated into institutional reform and conflict management within a plural society. King's approach shows how *agape* can become a rigorous ethic of nonviolence that mobilizes civic power against entrenched structural injustice. Their differences do not weaken the comparison. They clarify how humanitarian action shaped by religion is mediated by political opportunity, social structure, and the configuration of conflict itself.

4. Relevance of Gus Dur's and Martin Luther King Jr.'s Humanitarian Thought for Contemporary Global Peace and Justice

In a global context still marked by armed conflict, religious intolerance, racism, and structural inequality, the humanitarian ideas of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr. retain strong analytical and practical relevance. Their thought demonstrates how religious values, when interpreted through inclusive ethical lenses, can function as resources for peacebuilding rather than as instruments of exclusion.

Gus Dur's emphasis on pluralism as a sociological commitment and on dialogue as a method of conflict engagement is particularly relevant for societies characterized by deep religious and cultural diversity. In contexts where identity-based polarization threatens social cohesion, his approach highlights the importance of recognizing collective identities, protecting minority rights, and sustaining channels of dialogue between communities and state institutions. His experience shows that peace cannot be reduced to the absence of violence. It requires public recognition, legal equality, and moral respect as foundations for long-term stability. In contemporary settings marked by sectarian tension or post-authoritarian transitions, this model offers guidance for managing diversity without suppressing difference.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s articulation of *agape* and nonviolent action offers a complementary ethical and strategic resource. In situations where injustice is embedded

in legal systems or economic structures, his approach demonstrates how moral discipline and organized civic action can challenge domination without reproducing cycles of violence. Nonviolence, as King understood it, functions as a method for awakening moral consciousness and generating sustained public pressure while preserving human dignity on all sides. This logic remains visible in contemporary justice movements that seek change through collective action grounded in ethical restraint rather than coercion.

The strongest relevance of these two figures emerges when their approaches are read together. Global struggles for justice increasingly require both forms of engagement: moral pressure from civil society and responsive leadership within political institutions. King's model illustrates how grassroots mobilization can articulate demands, expose injustice, and shift public norms. Gus Dur's model illustrates how political authority can translate moral claims into institutional reform through policy, dialogue, and legal recognition. When combined, these approaches suggest a multi-level strategy for peacebuilding that links civic resistance to structural transformation.

At the same time, the application of their ideas faces real limitations. Dialogical and reform-oriented approaches such as Gus Dur's may lose effectiveness when confronted with actors who reject negotiation or deny basic political openness. Similarly, King's method of nonviolence presupposes at least minimal public space and the possibility of appealing to moral conscience, conditions that are not always present under authoritarian rule or in protracted armed conflict. These limits do not negate their relevance but underscore the need for contextual judgment when adapting humanitarian strategies.

Despite these constraints, the legacies of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr. affirm that religion, when oriented toward human dignity and justice, can operate as a unifying moral force. Their thought offers a normative guide and a strategic map for addressing contemporary humanitarian challenges by insisting that peace must be built through recognition, justice, and methods that do not erode the humanity they seek to defend.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the humanitarian thought of Gus Dur and Martin Luther King Jr., although shaped by distinct sociocultural contexts and religious traditions,

converges in a shared commitment to grounding justice, equality, and human dignity in religious ethics and in a principled rejection of violence as a means of social change. Both figures treated religion as a public moral resource that demands active engagement with injustice rather than withdrawal into doctrinal certainty. At the same time, their approaches diverged in operational strategy. Gus Dur emphasized dialogical, inclusive, and reform-oriented engagement from within political and religious institutions, while King mobilized disciplined nonviolent action and moral pressure from outside the state to confront institutionalized injustice.

The synthesis of these two models suggests a comprehensive framework for contemporary humanitarian practice. Sustainable peace and social justice are more likely to emerge when moral demands articulated by civil society are met by institutional courage and policy reform within structures of power. The comparative findings of this study contribute to scholarship by clarifying how universal religious values can be translated into distinct strategies depending on political opportunity, social structure, and the configuration of conflict.

Future research may extend this comparative approach by examining humanitarian figures from other religious or philosophical traditions, such as Mahatma Gandhi within Hindu ethics or Thich Nhat Hanh within Buddhist thought. Such studies could further test the universality of humanitarian principles while refining understanding of how ethical commitments are operationalized across diverse sociopolitical contexts. By deepening comparative inquiry, scholarship can continue to illuminate the role of religious and moral values in building peace and justice amid the complexities of the modern world.

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