Interreligious Dialogue Discourse
Among Indonesian University Students:
Prospect and Challenges

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Abstract

Indonesia is the home of 192 million Muslims, the biggest concentration of Muslims in the world.

This paper illustrates recent developments and challenges for interreligious dialogue in Indonesia, in the midst of escalating conflicts and the emergence of fanatic groups calling for religious war (*jihad*). Moreover it also depicts the prospective development of interreligious discourse at the University level, based on the religious knowledge and affinal / consanguinal relationships, as they were encountered in the recent research.

Introduction

Indonesia is among the most populated countries in the world, with 231,328,000 inhabitants. Out of this total number, Muslims form 88%, Protestants 5%, Roman Catholics 3%, Hindus 2%, Buddhists 1%,¹ and others 1%. That makes Indonesia the home of 192 million Muslims, the biggest concentration of Muslims in the world.

On the basis of its national philosophy and ideology (Pancasila or the five principles), Indonesia is also known as a very tolerant nation though it is composed of many and various ethnic, cultural and religious groups. However, in recent years, conflicts based on ethnic and religious issues have been widespread all over the country, from Jakarta to Ambon, from Poso (Sulawesi) to Kupang (Timor). These conflicts have claimed the lives of thousands and led to the internal migration of a huge number of its population, who carry with them a long enduring sense of psychological trauma. Religious and ethnic symbols and flags have often been raised by certain groups to extend and maintain the conflicts, which to some extent challenges the culture of tolerance and harmony as promoted by Pancasila, religions and other local cultural values.

This essay illustrates recent developments, prospects and challenges for interreligious dialogue in Indonesia, in the midst of escalating conflicts and the emergence of fanatic groups calling for religious war (*jihad*). Moreover it depicts the recently prospective development of interreligious discourse at the University level. It will be commence with a discussion of

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1| Data according to electronic database BPS: July 2002.

the phenomenon of the resurgence of radical Islam in Indonesia, such as Jama'ah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda networks with their terrorist agendas which threaten the tolerant culture of Indonesia.

Revival of Radical Islam in Indonesia

In the new millennium, we are witnessing a huge variety of religious resurgence which is known as 'revivalism', or 'rediscovery'. Revivalism implies a kind of collective turning point, a return to religion. Thus, the question is whether the increasing number of people performing their religious duties is a sign of religious revival or of religious discovery. As Jamhari highlights, in fact the religious feeling of modern people never disappeared, so when they returned to their religion, it was actually only a rediscovery of their 'lost faith'. (Jamhari 2003:5)

According to Jamhari, one salient trend in the religious revival is the strengthening of the so-called fundamentalist movements in almost all religions throughout the world. This can be seen in the emergence of militant Muslims in Iran and Lebanon, the increase of Zionist factions in Israel and the popularity of televangelists in America.

In Indonesia, the history of hard-line or radical Muslims can be traced back to the period soon after independence (August 17, 1945) up until the recent incident of the Bali Bombings. *Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia*[2] grew in three areas: West Java, Aceh, and Macassar. The movement began in West Java, and was then joined by supporters in Aceh and Macassar for different reasons. Their movements were united by a shared goal to implement shari'at as the main foundation of the Indonesian state.

In the early 1970s and 1980s the Islamic hard-line movements reappeared again in the form of *Komando Jihad*, Ali Imron, Terror Warman and others which declared war against communism in Indonesia. There were rumors that these groups were exploited by the Indonesian intelligence authorities in order to fight Communism. In the reformation era, these hard-line Muslims reappear in various shapes such as Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*),[3] *Lasykar Jihad*[4] and *Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia*.[5]

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[2] DI/TII headed by Katosuwiryo with his supporters moved from Central Java to West Java to continue their effort fighting the Dutch in Ciamis, Garut and Tasikmalaya. They refused the offer of the Indonesian Government to accept the Renville Agreement and declared the Shari'at law for their group and continued fighting for the Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesia as an Islamic State). This movement was abolished by the government when some of their leaders were killed and the rest were imprisoned.

[3] Habib Riziq Shihab is the leader. The group appeared as a pressure group in Jakarta to balance the University Student Movement which refused Habibi as the continuation of Suharto regime. The group which was known earlier as Pam Swakarsa (paramilitary group) tried to fight immorality in the society such as prostitution, nightclubs, etc. (Jamhari 2003:10)

[4] This group commenced in the beginning of year 2000 during the Ambon conflict and called for all Muslims to fight against Christians in Maluku. This movement has challenged the Christians to initiate a counter movement known as Lasykar Kristus (The troop of Christ).

[5] It commenced in Yogyakarta in August 2000 under the leadership (Amir) of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, one of the founders of an Islamic Pesantren, Ngruki in Surakarta.

In theological terms, the hard-line Islamic movements are known for their textual approach to understanding Islam. By focusing on the texts, they understand religion as it is, or as it is written in the verses of the holy book (*scripturalist approach*). A recent feature of radical Islam appears also in the form of Islamic Legal Statements (*Fatwa*) launched by the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (MUI). On the Seventh National Assembly of MUI held in Sari Pan Pacific Hotel, Jakarta, in July 2005 there were eleven *fatwas* which declared unlawful (*haram*) various things. These involve the declaration of the Jemaat Ahmadiyah and its followers as astray (*sesat*), the prohibition of female priests (*imam*), and the prohibition of secularism, liberalism, pluralism, interreligious marriage, interreligious heritage, the death sentence, euthanasia, sorcery and forecasting, and prayer led by a non-Muslim.

These controversial *fatwas* have raised a counter reaction from various groups of religious denominations, including KH Abdurrahman Wahid, the former resident and Leader of the largest Islamic Organisation Nahdatul Ulama; Ulil Abshar Abdallah, Dawam Rahardjo, Syafii Anwar, Djohan Effendy, and many others. For Gus Dur (KH Abdurrahman Wahid), these fatwas imply a statement that a majority of Indonesian citizens are astray (*sesat*). For Dawam Rahardjo, the Indonesian Muslim Scholar Association (MUI) is not worthy to be followed. He even questioned why Muslims cannot respond yes (*amin*) to a prayer led by a Christian which addresses God with the same issues such as salvation (*salamat*), prosperity (*rezeki*) and goodness (*kebaikan*) as does the Muslim prayer. That is why they call for the Indonesian Government to neglect the fatwas, stop funding MUI and even to ban such an organization. (*Jawa Pos*, 30 July 2005, p. 3)

With the resurgence of various groups of hard-line Muslims with negative social and political impacts in the forms of potential and real conflicts and violence, the picture of a plural and tolerant Islam is often overshadowed by militant Muslim movements. Indonesia has often been labeled as a state of violence and terrorism or the '*nest of terrorism*'. (Jamhari 2003:24-25)

The question is whether there is a general tendency towards radicalism in Indonesia or whether these are just the actions of a small group of Indonesian Muslims. We should be aware that although the followers of radical Islam are a small group, they are militant and are thus capable of acting in ways different to the behaviour of mainstream society. They are still influential in political debate throughout the whole country and are struggling to implement the shari'at in Indonesia.

However, as long as the two big Islamic organisations in the country (NU and Muhammadiyah) are not disturbed, the radical Muslims will be controlled. Both Islamic organisations (NU and Muhammadiyah) will continue to play an important role in influencing and determining the development of a type of Islam in Indonesia which is open minded and tolerant. Such a tendency will be continuously supported by the new trends in development, especially among the Islamic University students (IAIN, etc) which are struggling for the modernization of Islam and Indonesia. (Jabali F. & Jamhari 2002:146-148)

New Religious Discourse Among the IAIN Students

Nowadays, there are a variety of Islamic schools of thought spread throughout Indonesia. Some are sufistic in character. Others are traditional, revivalist, modernist and post-modernist. We are witnessing that in the midst of radicalism, there is a significant change in the viewpoints of Islamic Scholars who are struggling to understand and to reactualize the Islamic doctrines into their social reality as they are expressed in discourses among various IAIN (State Islamic Institute) in Indonesia.

Intellectual dynamism in various IAIN has been encouraged and initiated by Harun Nasution, Mukti Ali (graduated from McGill University, Montreal/Canada) and Nurcholis Madjid (graduated from Chicago University). A promising phenomenon is the new religious discourses which are promoted among the IAIN nowadays. The main focus of this Islamic discourse concerned with the issues of human rights, social justice, pluralism, gender equity, civil society and democratization. (Jabali & Jamhari 2002:146-147)

In the context of promoting interreligious dialogue characterised by mutual respect and mutual understanding, Syafiq Hasyim highlighted the following:

> the Islamic society has to willingly leave behind the quality and character of its religious superiority, but not to be inferior vis a vis the other. The West (European) on one aspect has to be fair and democratic to give opportunity for the pre-industrial countries to develop and get access into sciences and technologies; ... desacralisation of politics is another important aspect. ... By desacralisation we can protect the exploitation of religions for the political aims ... Religions, of course have to provide solutions for the existential problems of human beings. (Jabali & Jamhari 2002:148-149; cfr. Syafiq Hasyim, "Islam dan Tantangan Komunikasi Global" in *Media Indonesia* 1996)

We have at least five indicators supported by empirical proofs that point to the special role of IAIN in the promotion of the Intellectualism and Islamic Interreligious discourse in Indonesia. These five indicators are the great variety of religious (Islamic) discourse, the increase of numbers of Muslim scholars with PhD and MA degrees, the increasing number in the publication of articles in newspapers, scientific journals and books, the existence of various study groups. And last but not least, the presence of various Islamic Centres. The role and the influence of IAIN is expressed through a style of Islamic discourse which is more open minded and inclusive. (Jabali & Jamhari 2002:163)

Institutional and Individual Concern for Interreligious Dialogue

It has long been inherent in national programmes that interreligious dialogue is a crucial factor in national development. The founding fathers laid down the convention that Indonesia is not an Islamic but a Pancasila state which takes into account the peaceful coexis-

tence of various religions within the state. At the national, provincial and district levels, the government has set up the Religious Department, which functions as a formal mechanism which aims to enhance interreligious tolerance and harmony.

At the same time, religious leaders and institutions have tried their best to implement the national programmes among their followers and encourage them to embrace a more inclusive theology which leads to a certain respect for other religious ideas and ways of life. In this regard there should be mention of the Indonesian Bishops Conference with a commission that promotes 'relationship among religious beliefs' (*Hubungan Antaragama dan Kepercayaan*), and the work of some non-governmental organisations and religious research centres such as Aditya Wacana Research Centre in Malang, STFK Ledalero Research Office in Maumere, Rahima Women Centre (Jakarta), Mitra Perempuan Women's Crisis Centre (Jakarta) and the Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia (Institut DIAN/Interfidei in Yogyakarta), all of which promote research and discussion on religious issues, and create mutual respect and mutual help for people from different religions. The purpose of all these institutions and centres is to create a society which is dynamic, harmonious, and peaceful; and also to establish cooperation between people from different religions in order to improve the common welfare.

Apart from these national and religious institutions, we should mention several individual Muslim and Christian leaders who have promoted a new way of looking at other religions, such as Komarudin Hidayat and Jamhari Makruf (IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta), Abdurrahman Wahid (Nahdatul Ulama), Syarifuddin Gomang (Muhammadiyah University, Kupang) and many others. These national and religious figures acknowledge that all religions should act as a beacon for peace and not as a drum for holy war (*jihad*).

At the national level, several religious conferences have been held in Java and elsewhere to promote religious tolerance. I would like to highlight two different meetings held at the provincial and district levels of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), where I was personally actively involved. The first was held in Asrama Haji (the boarding house), Kupang, in January 2002. The second was in the Major Seminary (Ledalero) in December 2002. These two meetings have successfully gathered together religious leaders from all over the province and islands. Through these encounters we have learnt to know and to address each other as brothers and sisters. We have shared our living and religious experiences, both good and bad, peaceful and antagonistic, and tried to work out some preventive action for potential conflicts throughout the country by means of academic seminars and publications (cfr. Tule 2003).

In these two meetings we discussed an interesting topic: 'Managing a strategic interreligious tolerance in the cultural context of NTT'. In relation to the first meeting in Kupang,

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6| Dr. Jamhari is the executive director of the Jakarta-based Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), and a lecturer at Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic Institute. In 2001 he conducted a research study on Islam and Democracy in Indonesia. The Indonesian experience with democracy showed that Islam and democracy could cope well together and that democracy really worked in the most populous Muslim country. He even went further to express the view that interreligious dialogue and tolerance are still popular among the Liberal Muslims as expressed through *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (Liberal Muslim Network).

I am interested in what has been claimed by Prof. Dr. Komarudin Hidayat, a Professor in the Philosophy of Religion at the Faculty of Ushuluddin IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta. In his paper, entitled *"Ketika Agama Menyejarah"* (When Religions become historical), he argues that:

> viewing both from its normative teaching of the Qur'an, the long history of Islamic golden age and from its objective challenges in the national and global levels, all the respective religious adherents, especially those who feel as majority – either in Europe or in Indonesia – should excavate their religious doctrines which contribute to humanistic efforts, justice, and democracy while promoting an inclusivistic view of religion, especially in the midst of pluralistic societies. (Komaruddin 2001 : 27)

He goes further, when quoting a document of the Second Vatican Council, that views the Catholic Church as an institution which longs for peace and tolerance, he writes:

> Compared to Islam, the new doctrine of the Church in 1965 (Vatican II), the inclusive concept is explicitly adopted, that salvation, love and forgiveness from God can be obtained by Muslims and other believers who worship the One God, who will judge the human beings on the last day. (Komaruddin 2001: 26-27; cfr. *Lumen Gentium* no. 16)

Reminiscent of such a claim, I came across a collection of papers edited by the Saint Egidius Community of Rome, entitled *Religioni in Dialogo per La Pace* (Religions in Dialogue for Peace, 1991). This publication has been one step among various efforts in the international religious dialogue promoted by Pope John Paul II towards peace, held in Assisi (1986), in Rome (1987 and 1988), in Warsaw (1989), in Bari (1990), and in Malta (1991), to pray for worldwide peace. The theme of this edited book is 'Religion is delicious food and bread for our lives'. It emphasises that dialogue, regardless of its immediate success or failure, has always been necessary for peace. However, we are still coping with a paradoxical reality which forms the title of a paper by Jacob Neusner, one of the authors, in the same book: "Talking about peace, but still waging war: Paradox of religions".

Neusner's paradox is relevant today when we are coping with social conflicts which are manipulated by provocateurs to be seen in the time of religious war (*jihad*), such as in Ambon and Poso. Though few Muslims still consider *jihad* as 'protecting oneself with physical tools and power' and 'the propagation of Islamic faith with sword' (small *jihad* or *jihad al-saghir*), in the context of faith, *jihad* refers also to a certain spiritual injunction which is great and praiseworthy (big *jihad* or *jihad al-akbar*). In this understanding it refers to 'an effort' and

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7| In my personal experience, there are Muslims who still perceive *jihad* as spiritual effort (*jihad al-akbar*) expressed through their social concern which goes beyond religious boundaries. As a Catholic priest I am grateful to my progenitor house-group (wife-giving group) represented by Haji Abdul Hamid Nura in Maundai (Keo) who provided a chasuble and another set of liturgical vestments to be used on my ordination day (14 June 1984). I am grateful to Haji Pua Djombu and a Muslim community in Pulau Ende who welcomed me and twenty-five other seminarians to live among them for a week in 1991. We, as Catholics, are also grateful to Muslims in Larantuka (East Flores) who have actively participated in securing the procession of *Semana Santa* (the Holy Week Procession) every year. We are grateful to Muslims in Keo (Central

'struggle' to live up to one's faith with a total submission to God the Greatest (*Allahu Akbar*). This very Islamic submission is expressed through various ways including simplicity of life which is devoted and pious (*taqwa*), performing ablution (*wudhu*) to free oneself from sins and mistakes, fasting (*sawm*) to gain self-control, and giving donations (*zakat*) to express social concern beyond religious boundaries.

Though nowadays religions have been manipulated by certain groups to be a source of violence and conflict in Indonesia and elsewhere, we still witness that religions can be transformed as means for the creation of a peaceful society. In the current atmosphere of conflict, in which people are dominated by materialism and fanaticism, religion can still be a delicious food and living bread to fulfill humanity's basic needs. Religions can indeed be a determinant factor for peaceful and productive coexistence if dialogue is encouraged for mutual understanding and cooperation. To achieve this aim, all religious believers should live their lives in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Training Youth for Interreligious Dialogue

Everybody is optimistic that our youth will be able to change our future, including the quality and methods of interreligious dialogue. That is why we are concerned to educate them with new values and patterns of religious life which are open, transformative and inclusive. The examples drawn from St. Paul Major Seminary (Ledalero), Wydia Sasana School of Philosophy in Malang (East Java), the Catechetical School in Ruteng (Flores) and the Theological Faculty of Christian University Artha Wacana[8] in Kupang are worthy to be mentioned here because in these centers students are introduced to a basic knowledge of Islam. Similarly, the students of Pesantren Tarbiyah Modern Walisongo, Ende, have even employed two SVD priest-candidates since 1997 as teachers who were placed in charge of running the santri's boarding-house.

Such Islamic practices on Flores have led to the question, raised in a national conference of Muhammadiyah in Java, of whether they are incompatible with true Muhammadiyah. However, in response to such criticism, Drs. Jafar Haji Abdullah, the Director of the Muhammadiyah School in Ende, explained that:

> SMU Muhammadiyah Ende holds the national view and wants to provide the same opportunities for all to gain access to a sufficient education, as having been prac-

Flores) who have celebrated 'the circumcision of children' (*khitanan*) with the involvement of their non-Muslim relatives, because they are aware that *khitanan* is not only a religious event but also a cultural one, such as took place on July 20, 2003 the circumcision of Rian Abu Bakar Husein, the son of my cousin Abu Bakar Husein in Nangaroro (Keo). There were about two thousand Muslims and non-Muslims who attended. Besides a religious explanation of the event given by Kiyai Drs. Abdurrahman, who is also a District Commander of the Indonesian Army, I myself was in charge of giving a welcoming speech on behalf of Abu Bakar Husein's family.

8| Between the Theological Faculty of Artha Wacana Christian University and the School of Philosophy (STFK) Ledalero, since 1980s there has been an exchange programme of lecturers and students every year as realization of the Ecumenical Dialogue between Churches.

ticed in the past, when Muhammadiyah did not exist yet on Flores, that nearly all the Muslim leaders on Flores were educated in qualified Catholic schools (interview December 4, 1997).[9]

All these examples are evidence that direct interreligious dialogue is a reality among the young generation of Flores (NTT) and Indonesia, where they are in contact with each other, and both give and take from each other in their lives and education.

Interreligious Discourse and Recent Research on the University Campus

Many people are optimistic that our young generation will be able to create a new future, including in the quality and methods of interreligious dialogue. That is why, it is urgent to educate them with new values and methods in fulfilling their religions in a more inclusive and transformative way.

However, I would further argue that there is no real dialogue without also doing research on the culture (Tule 1994, 2001); and on this reality lies the crucial role of the political and religious leaders, scientists and researchers. Our failure to learn from historical and cultural experiences has prevented us from preserving the cultural values of dialogue, tolerance, harmony and civility. Hans Kung in a 1992 publication emphasises that,

> There is no peace among nations without peace among religions; there is no peace among religions without interreligious dialogue; there is no dialogue without doing research on the theological basis. (Kung 1992:171)

Various research studies on religions and cultures that I have made between 1991 and 2001 in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province, especially in the Keo society of Central Flores, clearly indicate that the consanguinal and affinal kinship as well as the cultural values of the locals, such as 'land-siblingship' based on their clan land, their association into a house-group and around their cultural monuments, all contribute significantly to their harmonious and tolerant way of life (1994).

The evidence from Keo society shows that some ritual houses and source-houses are made up of members from various religious denominations such as Muslims, Christians and Local Believers. Though each of the monotheistic believers is longing for their house of God such as *ekklesia* (Gereja) and '*dar al-Islam*' or '*Bait Allah*' in their worldly and heavenly lives,

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9| The Director of SMU Muhammadiyah Ende mentions that in December 1997, out of the total number of 499 students, 230 were Catholics and 3 Protestants (= 47% are Christians). The other informants, Ibrahim Made Gili and Mrs. Salma Umar from SMU Mutma'inah, explained that out of 192 students, 68 were Catholics and 7 Protestants (=30% Christians). Further information on this issue is available in Philipus Tule 2000, "Religious Conflicts and a Culture of Tolerance: Paving the Way for Reconciliation in Indonesia', in *Antropologi Indonesia*, vol. 63, Sept - Dec., pp. 92-108.

yet they are also still dwelling in the house of their ancestors which always unites them in the common undertaking of various rituals.[10]

Recent research done in 2004 – 2005 among the University Students in Indonesia (both among the Christian and Islamic Universities)[11] proves another promising prospect in Interreligious Dialogue. This promising prospect is based on the following indicators:

The Interreligious Dialogue and Knowledge about the Others' Religion

It is assumed that the knowledge of one's own religion and the religion of others contributes to the spirit of tolerance and the inter-religious dialogue. Religious knowledge, both about other religions and one's own, has been taken as one criterion to measure religious tolerance and fanaticism (Tule 2004: 229 – 230; cfr. Stark and Glock 1968: 253 - 261). The result of this research shows that the knowledge of the university students about each other's religion is quite high. The following table (Table 1) shows the knowledge of the respondents about other's religion.

Table 1. Knowledge about others' Religion

Respondents	Low (0-25%)	Medium (26-50 %)	High (51-100%)	Total
The knowledge of the Christian respondents about Islam:				
1. STFK Ledalero	11 %	7 %	82 %	100 %
2. Widya Mandira Kupang	12 %	16 %	78 %	100 %
3. University of Flores	28 %	14 %	58 %	100 %
4. Artha Wacana Kupang	28 %	15 %	57 %	100 %
5. STPM Ende	28 %	16 %	56 %	100 %
6. Muhamadyah Kupang	28 %	17 %	55 %	100 %
Total A	**22 %**	**14 %**	**64 %**	**100 %**

10| See the book edited by Philipus Tule in 1994 entitled *Agama-Agama Kerbat Dalam Semesta* [Religions are Kin in the World] and his book, 'Longing for the house of God, Dwelling in the house of the ancestors: Local Belief, Christianity and Islam Among the Keo of Central Flores' (Friebourg, 2004). Among the rites of buffalo sacrifices carried out among the Keo, the biggest one was held in Sawu (Ma'uponggo) in 10 – 12 September 2002 with the slaughtering of 22 buffaloes. From several *ngapi* (or source-houses) there are some Muslims who actively collaborated with their Christian relatives in pursuing the rite.

11| The data was collected from 958 students (557 Christians and 401 Moslems) from ten universities and colleges in Java, Timor, and Flores.

The knowledge of the Moslem respondents about Christianity				
1. Muhamadyah Kupang	26 %	13 %	61 %	100 %
2. University of Flores	24 %	17 %	59 %	100 %
3. UNJ Ciputat Jakarta	32 %	12 %	56 %	100 %
4. Muhamadyah Malang	41 %	14 %	45 %	100 %
Total B	31 %	14 %	55%	100 %
The knowledge of the respondents about other's religion (Total A + B)	26 %	14 %	60 %	100 %

Sixty percent (60 %) of respondents have a high score in their knowledge about each other's religion, 14 % have a medium score, and 26 % respondents have a low score.[12] This level of knowledge corresponds with their attitudes toward interreligious dialogue and tolerance, as will be shown later. The high score of knowledge about others' religion is followed by high agreement on interreligious dialogue and the spirit of tolerance.

If the knowledge of the Christian and Islamic students is compared (see table 1), it is found out that the knowledge of the Christian students about Islamic doctrines is higher (64 %) than the knowledge of Islamic students about Christian doctrines (55 %). This can be easily understood because the respondents of the Christian universities and colleges such as STFK Ledalero, Catholic University of Widya Mandira in Kupang, Christian University of Artha Wacana in Kupang, University, and STPM in Ende – Flores are introduced to a basic knowledge of Islam. Meanwhile the knowledge of Islamic students towards Christian doctrines that mostly comes from the Mumahadyah students in Kupang – Timor and Flores University of Flores in Ende – Flores, where the majority of the students are Christian is relatively high (61 % from Muhamadyah and 59 % from University of Flores – see table 1). This is because the Islamic students from these universities mingle with the Christian majority. We believe that their mingling with the Christians in Kupang and Ende help them to understand more about the Christian doctrines.

Interreligious Dialogue and Consanguinal and Affinal Kinship

The consanguinal and affinal kinship among the respondents can be seen in the following table:

12| The score is high when a respondent gives a correct answer from 51% - 100 %, medium from 26 – 50 % and low from 0-25 correct answers.

Table 2. Consanguinal and Affinal Kinship

Respondents	%
The Moslem Respondents who have Christian kinship	
1. Muhamadyah Kupang	56 %
2. University of Flores	50 %
3. Muhamadyah Malang	17 %
4. UNJ Ciputat Jakarta	06 %
Total A	32 %
The Christian Respondents who have Moslem kinship	
1. Muhamadyah Kupang	61 %
2. University of Flores	47 %
3. Widya Mandira Kupang	47 %
4. Artha Wacana Kupang	38 %
5. STPM Ende	35 %
6. STFK Ledalero	31 %
Total B	43 %
Total respondents who have relatives from another religion (Total A + B)	**37.5 %**

In general, the number of the respondents who have consanguinal kinship and affinal kinship is 37.5 % (see table 2). The majority of respondents that have consanguinal and affinal kinship usually come from an area where the population is largely a mixture of Christians and Moslems, like those who come from the three universities in Kupang compared to the area where the population is mostly Christians as in Flores or mostly Moslems as in Java. The Islamic respondents of Muhamadyah University in Kupang, for example, have more consanguinal and affinal kinship (56 %) with a Christian than the Islamic respondents from State University of Ciputat Jakarta (06 %) or from Muhamadyah University in Malang East Java (17 %) where the majority of the population is Moslem (see table 2).

This consanguinal and affinal kinship corresponds with the attitude to Inter-Religious Dialog and Tolerance. The high score of consanguinal and affinal kinship is followed by the high score with regard to attitude towards dialogue and tolerance. The respondents from Muhamadyah University, for example, who have high consanguinal and affinal relationship (56 % of Moslems and 61 %) of Christians – table 4) are tolerant or very tolerant (100 %) compared to the respondents from State University of Ciputat Jakarta whose 84 % respondents are tolerant or very tolerant (see table 4). Therefore, this research supports the previous study by Philipus Tule, (1994) that consanguinal and affinal kinship correlates with interreligious Dialogue.

The positive attitudes towards Interreligious Dialogue seem to be also related to relationships in the neighborhood. Table 3 shows the relationship of the respondents to their neighborhood.

Table 3. Relationship to the Neighborhood

Respondents	%
The Moslem Respondents who have Christian Neighbours	
1. University of Flores	97 %
2. Muhamadyah Kupang	96 %
3. Muhamadyah Malang	75 %
4. UNJ Ciputat Jakarta	54 %
T o t a l A	80 %
The Christian Respondents who have Moslem Neighbours	
1. Muhamadyah Kupang	97 %
2. Artha Wacana Kupang	96 %
3. University of Flores	94 %
4. STPM Ende	91 %
5. Widya Mandira Kupang	86 %
6. STFK Ledalero	83 %
T o t a l B	91 %
Total respondents who have neighbour from another religion (Total A + B)	86 %

The majority of the respondents of this study (86 %) have neighbors from other religions. Comparison from one university to another shows that the respondents who have more neighbors from other religions are more positive in their attitudes towards other religions. This is true in the cases of Christian respondents from Muhamadyah in Kupang, Artha Wacana in Kupang, University of Flores in Ende, and STPM in Ende. In these universities more than 90 respondents have neighbors from other religions and their attitude towards Inter-Religious Dialogue is tolerant or very tolerant (98 %). This is also true of the Islamic respondents from State University of Ciputat Jakarta and Muhamadyah University in Malang where the low rate of neighbourhood to other religions is followed by a low rate of tolerance.

Quality of Interreligious Dialogue and the Spirit of Tolerance

Interreligious dialogue here means a kind of friendship, contact, communication, and any other interactions that help to promote understanding among people from different reli-

gions. In order to know their attitudes towards inter-religious dialogue and tolerance the respondents of this study were asked to assess or evaluate how tolerance and the quality of the interreligious dialogue are enacted in their areas. The result of this research shows that the majority of the respondents (94 % Islamic respondents and 96 % Christian respondents) argued that the quality of inter-religious dialogue in their area is tolerant or very tolerant as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Quality of Interreligious Dialogue Among the University Students

Respondents	Fanatic	Tolerant	Very Tolerant	Total
Quality of interreligious dialogue among Christian respondents:				
1. University of Flores	12 %	43 %	45 %	100 %
2. STPM Ende	4 %	62 %	34 %	100 %
3. Artha Wacana Kupang	00 %	72 %	28 %	100 %
4. Muhamadyah Kupang	00 %	72 %	28 %	100 %
5. STFK Ledalero	00 %	78 %	22 %	100 %
6. Widya Mandira Kupang	6 %	88 %	6 %	100 %
Total A	4 %	69 %	27 %	**100 %**
Quality of interreligious dialogue among Moslem respondents:				
1. University of Flores	0 %	44 %	56 %	100 %
2. Muhamadyah Kupang	2 %	70 %	28 %	100 %
3.. Muhamadyah Malang	5 %	74 %	21 %	100 %
4. UNJ Ciputat Jakarta	16 %	70 %	14 %	100 %
Total B	6 %	64 %	30 %	**100 %**
The Quality of interreligious dialogue among all respondents (A + B)	5 %	66 %	29 %	**100 %**

As was said earlier, the spirit of tolerance and the quality of interreligious dialogue is related to the level of consanguinal and affinal kinship to people of another religion and the knowledge about each other's religion. When the respondents were asked which is more influential in promoting the atmosphere of tolerance and the quality of interreligious dialogue in Indonesia, fifty four percent (54 %) of the respondents said that the good quality of interreligious dialogue is due to consanguinal and affinal kinship, forty percent (40 %) of respondents said it is because of the knowledge about each other's religion, and only six percent (6 %) of respondents said that it is because of the government's role. (Not shown in the table).

The positive attitude towards the atmosphere of tolerance and interreligious dialogue is also supported by some other facts, such as:

- Ninety three percent (93 %) of Christian respondents and seventy eight percent (78 %) of Islamic respondents can accept that people from other religions can become his or her partner in work places or schools. It seems that in this respect Christians are more willing and open than their Moslem counterparts.

- Ninety one percent (91 %) of Christian respondents and seventy four (74 %) Islamic respondents agree that they can live side by side in their neighbourhood. However, there is still uneasiness when the neighbour is a person from another religion. The tendency shows that the closer the person from another religion lives to his or her neighbourhood the willingness to accept this person slightly decreases.

- Forty five percent (45 %) of Christian respondents and thirty nine percent (39 %) of Islamic respondents agree with the inter-religious marriage between Moslems and Christians. Though the percentage is low, it still significantly indicates the quality of inter-religious dialogue because generally each religion officially discourages or forbids her members to marry people from other religions.

Challenges

The finding of this study suggests that the spirit of tolerance and the quality of interreligious dialogue is related to consanguinal and affinal kinship, the knowledge of each other religions, and the level and frequency of cohabitation. Therefore we would like to suggest that:

- The students in each level of education should be given the basic information about other religions. That is, they should have a sufficient knowledge about other religions.

- The mingling of the students from different religions in the universities should be supported by a good curriculum which promotes interreligious dialogue.

- The discourse on interreligious dialogue among the students in the universities should be promoted through permanent contact and cooperation among the student's religious-based organizations such as HMI, PMKI, and so forth.

- The attitude toward interreligious marriage should be more open. We might not want to encourage people to enter interreligious marriage but at least we should not hinder them if they wish to marry a person from another religion

Religious Conflict

This study finds that the majority of university students experience a spirit of tolerance and a quality of interreligious dialogue in the university setting. On the other hand, there is still a question of why religious conflict is prevalent in Indonesia? The respondents of this study argue that most of the conflict in Indonesia that is seemingly based on religion is actually related to social, economic, and political issues. Religion is used as a vehicle to pursue the economic and political interest of the elite groups like the army, government officials, and businessmen. This supports the study by Bernard Raho which shows that the conflict in some parts of Indonesia such as occurred in Aceh, Papua, Kalimantan, Poso, and different places in Java is caused by different factors, but mostly because of the dysfunction of certain institutions and the competition of political elites in order to gain economic and political power (2002:121-164).

Another perspective with which to view the root of religious conflict in Indonesia can be traced from the theory of *"roots of violence in Indonesia"*. (Colombijn & Lindblad 2002:11) According to this theory, the continuing violence and conflict in Indonesia from the colonization era until today follows "the genealogy frame" of a family. The pattern of the conflict and violence in a certain place follows the pattern of past conflict and violence that is inherited from one generation to another. (Nordholt 2002: 34-61)

Concluding Remarks

Interreligious dialogue, tolerance and a harmonious society must form the basis of the ideal community so longed for by Indonesians. The state and religious institutions have struggled to turn this dream into reality, although conflicts continue to threaten since a few fanatic religious believers such as *Jemaah Islamiyah* and Al Qaeda networks still prefer to wage a war and brandish guns on behalf of the Holy (God). However, we remain optimistic for the progress of interreligious dialogue in Indonesia since we have many people of good will, people with strong ideals who are longing for dialogue on the basis of their faith, hope and love for God and for their neighbours, both in the grass-roots societies and on the University campus.

These people of good will must not be trapped within rigid systems and methods of inter-religious dialogue. From our view and experience, the promotion of dialogue which is too systematized can be sterile and unsuccessful. The systems and methods of dialogue are not the aims but the means to assist the believers to communicate better, to live and die in a more human environment, having hope, faith and love for one another in a more spiritual way.

That is why our efforts to promote dialogue nowadays should lead people to proceed beyond a mere system and method, and learn more about their own personalities and those of others. Then they can confidently invite other believers to witness their belief in action, because faith without good work (*amal*) and love is death. Here, St. James has led the way: "Show me your faith without works of love!" (James 2,20).

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