

## Conference Paper

# Fostering Religious Exclusivism and Political Pluralism in Indonesia Through Interfaith-based Student Community

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## Abstract

Religious exclusivism in some degree generally makes religious people to be intolerant, hardly to respect the diversity, or in other words religious exclusivism has produced social/political exclusivism. This is the real problem in a multi-religious nation like Indonesia. This paper is to show that rather to depend absolutely on the state to solve the problem; the grass-root have to be taught and empowered to be able to celebrate and respect the diversity, or in other word to be social/political pluralism. The challenge is how religious exclusivism can be compatible with political pluralism? This is the key for solving the problem of religious intolerance. This paper chooses Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Indonesia, a relatively new interfaith-based student movement as a case study to show that in some degree religious exclusivism is compatible with social/political pluralism. This study is based on qualitative method, which data gathering is done through participant observation, interview and focus groups, as well as the documents. The findings show that the interfaith dialogue is the main means for peacebuilding among religions in YIPC. In conclusion, this study is significant to fill the gap about the effectiveness and impact of interfaith dialogue among youth. Here we found that interfaith relations in YIPC were able to make impact to those youth from social exclusivist to be social pluralist while they remained as religious exclusivists.

**Keywords:** Interfaith Dialogue, Interfaith Peacemaking, Political Pluralism, Religious Exclusivism, Student Movement

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia as a multi-cultural and multi-religion nation has been being tested by many horizontal conflicts. In general, in any nation, it is normal that diversity has two opposite sides: on one side it is beautiful, on the other side it is a potential for conflicts.

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David Smock, the Director of United States Institute of Peace says, "with regrettable frequency, religion is a factor in international conflict. Rarely is religion the principal cause of conflict, even when the opposing groups are differentiated by religious identity. But religion is nevertheless a contributing factor to conflict..."<sup>1</sup> [1].

One of the reasons that causing conflict is the spirit and attitude of intolerance and the most intolerant cases in Indonesia take place between Muslims and Christians. This intolerant attitude in some degree is related to the theology of religions and truth claim: exclusivism, inclusivism or pluralism. Those who hold religious exclusivism usually they express it in social/political exclusivism and intolerant attitude. In contrast, those who hold religious pluralism, express it in social/political pluralism and tolerant attitude. Therefore the key and challenge for peacebuilding and toleration among the religions is how to make religious exclusivism compatible to social/political pluralism.

Since 1990s, there are growing efforts for religious peacebuilding especially through interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. Scholars and activists agree that the youth has strategic role in making change. In Indonesia, the youth and tertiary students have been playing significant roles in the formation and development of Indonesia since the Nationalism Movement in 1908, the Youth Pledge for Indonesian Unity in 1928, the Independence Day in 1945, the fall of the Old Order in 1966 and the fall of the New Order in 1998. Today we can see that most of the government officers, politicians, NGO activists and even religious leaders are from the ranks of student activists. It is also true that the future of this nation is in the hands of its current students. It is not exaggerating to say "student today leader tomorrow" or student as "agent of change". The other concern is that growing number of youth in Indonesia that being recruited and involved in religious extremism and terrorism.

Among the studies about religious-based student movement as well as religious peacebuilding in Indonesia, little is known about the role of students in interfaith peacebuilding. While the exploration about the student's role in political arena are quite extensive. In that context, this research is to show the role of youth/students in fostering the compatibility of religious exclusivism and social/political pluralism as a key of interfaith peacemaking using a case study of Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Indonesia. YIPC is an emerging interfaith-based student community that has been involved in interfaith peacemaking among students in Indonesia since 2012. YIPC is also unique in the context of interfaith peacebuilding because they do not focus only on the activities but also on maintaining the community.

This study limits on the strengths, the successes, and hope of YIPC as an interfaith student community that emerged as a new means for religious peacemaking.

I acknowledge that every community, method and means are not perfect, there are also weaknesses, failures and threats. However, the weaknesses, failures and threats of YIPC are for further study and not covered in this dissertation. Therefore, the main respondents for the interview and focus group were those who stayed long enough in YIPC (one year and more) and had certain degree of commitment to get involved actively in YIPC (as facilitators). Other than interview and focus group, I also did participant observations in most of YIPC activities and also study the documents.

## 2. Religion and State/Power

To manage plurality and diversity is very challenging. In general, there are two choices of state that can be chosen: democratic or authoritarian. Among other factors, religion can be one of the cruelest and bloody cause of conflict. The history of religious conflict and violence has been very long and often also mixed with other factors. Indonesia is famous as a democratic nation with the largest Muslim population in the world. Indonesia is not a Muslim country nor Islamic state though since it was about to be founded in 1945 Indonesia many times experienced attempts from the Islamists group to change Indonesia to be an Islamic state. For instance, the attempt of Jakarta Charter that proposed by the Islamists during the preparation of the independence of Indonesia.

Indonesia has chosen to be a democratic state since its independence though also experienced under a rather authoritarian regime for quite some time. During the New Order Regime (1965 to 1998), before its fall, Islam (in particular the Islamist) has been suppressed rather strongly. For instance: the dismissal and banning of Masyumi party by the New Order Regime. After the fall of the New Order, it was hoped that Indonesia became more democratic which supposed to see and treat every citizen equally regardless of one's religion and ethnicity.

However, until today Indonesia is still struggling with the majority and minority issues. When it relates to religious matters, many times the state tends to be on side with the majority and discriminates the minorities as well as letting some intolerant treatment towards the minorities take place. One classic example is the discrimination towards local/indigenous religions, which not recognized as religion by the state. As the implication, those adherents do not have some rights equally like those adherents of the six state recognized religions. Ironically, those indigenous religions actually are the original religions of those tribes of Indonesia.

According to Johanes Banawiratma [2], interreligious relations in Indonesia are not limited to the individual and private sphere but also a communal encounter in the public domain. The problem of interreligious relation in Indonesia is related to axes of power. One of the axes is the state, which in many cases it shows that the state is part (even sources) of the problem rather than a power to solve it.

Religion and power has been always in dynamic from time to time in any nation (75 % of world population live in countries with high levels of government restriction of freedom of religion) including Indonesia. Religious intolerance occurs quite massively by both state and non-state actors. Miroslav Volf has addressed this issue in his latest book which I want to take some points that relevant for Indonesian context. Three important reflective questions raised by Volf regarding religion and power: i) Can religious adherents learn to respect other religious adherents while strenuously disagreeing with them? ii) Can religious adherents embrace freedom of religion and support pluralistic democracy? iii) Can democracies be “religion friendly” and therefore genuinely pluralistic?

According to Volf, both Christians and Muslims might be the most intolerant religious groups [3]. In fact, the most of religious conflicts take place between Christians and Muslims. What is portrayed globally is also what is seen in Indonesia. Setara Institute [4] reported 177 religious cases in 2014 spread all over Indonesia. Similarly CRCS UGM since 2008 recorded that majority of religious problems in Indonesia is between Muslims and Christians [5].

Making Christians and Muslims to be more tolerant and peaceful is very crucial in world peace today, as what Tony Blair says,

“... not only peaceful coexistence but active cooperation between Christians and Muslims—who together comprise about 55 % of the earth’s population—is necessary component in making the 21<sup>st</sup> century work more humanely and the earth a better place for all its inhabitants” [6].

This fact also that makes the new atheists are very sarcastic towards “Abrahamic religions” and accusing that religions as the source of violence and intolerance [7]. To expect tolerance from religions is impossible. Tolerance is achieved when people abandon religions. One of the reasons why Abrahamic religions tend to be intolerant is the truth claim, especially about salvation.

Back to religious intolerance and power, in the past—during the monarchy eras—intolerance happened because of the thought that political unity required religious unity. In the past Christianity became state religion for western kingdoms (Christendom) and Islam for Middle Eastern empires.

That is why by the end of Christendom era and the beginning of democracy era in the west, the state required clear separation from religion (Church). All citizens regardless their religious affiliations should have equal civic rights. All citizens should have freedom of religion as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 18: Freedom to choose, to embrace, to practice and also to change religion. Both Islam and Christianity agree that faith is a free act based on inner conviction and a coercive faith is not faith at all. However, once one religion mixed with power, religious freedom and tolerance are at stake, because one religion is put above other religions. Anything threatens this religion is considered as danger to the state. One example of the product of this state-religion tie is anti-blasphemy or anti-defamation law.

### 3. Exclusivism and Pluralism

Religious intolerance by the state is a result of religious exclusivism that ties with political exclusivism. Religious exclusivism believes that their religion is the way and truth, especially relates to salvation. According to Volf political exclusivism takes place when the state “is highly partial to one ideology or one religion and it employs coercive mechanism to exclude others from participating in public life... they are unforgiving of all heretics and schismatics, of blasphemers and apostates and of anyone who deviates from the conviction and practices that the single exclusivistic religion espouses and the state enforces” [3]. The result of the combination of religious exclusivism and political exclusivism is religious totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

One way to solve this problem is by the combination of religious pluralism with political pluralism. Religious pluralism believes that all religions are equally true. In extreme term “all religions are the same”. Volf describes political pluralism is a state with a condition in “which freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all people, irrespective of their faith or lack of it, and they all have equal voice in running the affairs of common public life. Consequently, the state is impartial with regard to major overarching interpretation of life rather than, as in political exclusivism, highly favoring one over all others” [3]. Those both combinations—religious exclusivism with political exclusivism and religious pluralism with political pluralism—are what commonly happen. Nevertheless, Volf argues that religious exclusivism is not necessary tied with political exclusivism and political pluralism only fits with religious pluralism. If those assumptions are true, then there is only little hope for the world because in fact religious exclusivism is held by majority of religious people and it is increasing.

Therefore, we should think that it is possible for religious exclusivism compatible with political pluralism. In fact it had occurred in the past, for instance Roger Williams of Rhode Island (1603 to 1683). Volf supports his argument by the Golden Rule that most religions have in principle, "in everything do to others as you would have them do to you". If all religions take the Golden Rule seriously, then it is possible that religious exclusivists practice political pluralism. Kelly Clark also supports that the fundamental beliefs of Abrahamic religions is tolerance that every exclusivist should take it seriously,

"... the Abrahamic traditions share some fundamental beliefs that are foundational to tolerance and respect of other faiths and other people. These beliefs not only can but also should motivate tolerance and respect for believers of other faiths" [7].

One of the most effective means to counter intolerance and violence arguably is by inter-religious dialogue in and for peace. Christians and Muslims who are considered as the most intolerant religious adherents actually have been involved in dialogue tremendously both locally and globally. Just to get a sense of it, when I searched "Christian-Muslim dialogue" in the internet, I got more than 13 500 000 sites! We should be happy about this, though we also hope that the dialogue will involve more the grass-root and youth as what have been done among the high-level leaders. Anyway, in general interfaith dialogue is also supported by both Christian and Muslim scholars [8].

#### 4. Interfaith-based Student Community

In our globalized world today, the combination of religious exclusivism and political pluralism is considered as the best choice. It will counter the assumption that religions as the source of intolerance, conflict and violence. Instead, it will strengthen that religions should be used as source of peace rather than violence, as Jaco Ciliers says

"Religion is one element of identity that can often contribute significantly to violence, it should not be seen as an ingredient that fuels the explosion of conflict into violence but rather as a foundation that can support efforts to build peace" [9].

In contrast to the new atheist that says the solution of religious intolerance and violence is by dismissing religion, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks says that it is almost impossible to happen because in fact religiosity is growing. Even Sacks predicts that demographically, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is going to be more religious than the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Therefore, we have to use religion to fight against violence. The solution, Sacks contends, is to match the violence with “a message of love as powerful as the message being delivered by the preachers of hate” [10].

Though religious intolerance and violence seems increasing in the last decade, in fact the effort for religious peacemaking and tolerance also have been growing tremendously. Katrien Hertog supports this fact:

“Since 2000...the emergence of a distinct field of study known as “religious peacebuilding”...has grown rapidly through an expanding body of literature, the dedication of scholars, the establishment of research centers and the organization of specific disciplines. At the same time, religious peacebuilding is also gaining international momentum as a movement from the local to the global level.... They increasingly develop an intentional, systematic and proactive approach to peacebuilding, often in cooperation with other religious or confessional organizations” [11].

However, this task to counter religious intolerance is not only of the state, rather should involve all segments of the nation especially the lay leaders and the grassroots. Among all those religious peacemaking efforts, I agree with what Rabbi Sacks and Susan Haywards say about the importance of young people to get involved. Sacks says, “It (message of peace) really has to speak to young people and we have to use the same social networking, the same technology as the extremists and we’ve got to do it as well and better than they do” [10]. Hayward based on her experiences in religious peacebuilding points out that one out of three future challenges for religious peacebuilding is the youth and women. She sees that the current efforts mostly targeted clerics, which is older men. She believes that “women and youth are important shapers of religious narratives and motivations that support violence and peace. Youth is particularly important, youth must also be mainstreamed into religious peacebuilding initiatives” [12].

The importance youth and students is also confirmed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia which conducted a research among students in seven State Universities in Indonesia. The research found out that at least there are four factors influencing student’s religious tolerance: personality, involvement in organization, religious education and education environment [13]. Nevertheless, little is known about initiatives for interfaith dialogue that taken among the students as well study about the contribution of students in interfaith dialogue for peacebuilding. In the rest of this paper, I will try to answer this problem with my research on Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Indonesia. I did a qualitative research by interview to 30 students, observations in some activities, as well as studied the documents.

#### 4.1. Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Indonesia

Tertiary student has been one important segment of the grass-root society. A relatively new phenomenon has emerged among the Indonesian student movement which works on interfaith-based community called Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC). YIPC believes that “to be religious is to be inter-religious”. Most of YIPC members hold exclusivist faith but they are pluralist in their social life. The more intensive they get involved in interfaith interaction and dialogue, the deeper faith they experience; which ultimately the stronger peaceful relation they build. They are able to accept the differences and diversities, therefore their exclusive faith is compatible with the social/political pluralism.

YIPC was formed in Yogyakarta - Indonesia on 12 July 2012 right after a Young Peacemaker Training for 25 students, Muslims and Christians. As its follow up, YIPC held its first Student Interfaith Peace Camp in November 2012, attended by 30 Christian and Muslim students. This camp later becomes the flagship program of YIPC which run twice a year in Yogyakarta and some other cities in Indonesia (Medan, Bandung, Surabaya) and becomes an entry point for students to be part of the community.

The content of Student Interfaith Peace Camp basically is peace education and interfaith dialogue. These two elements eventually become YIPC core business which inseparable like two sides of a coin. Its peace education is based on interfaith values, both the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur’an. While the interfaith dialogue is conducted for peacemaking purpose.

Most participants experience change when they join this Camp, especially from having negative prejudices— which are seeds of intolerance—to be more positive and tolerance towards other religion and religious group. There are some distinct interfaith activities in the Peace Camp as catalyst the change to take place such as sharing the prejudices, celebrating the diversity, conflict transformation, forgiveness and reconciliation, sharing each other faith, a common word dialogue, Scriptural reasoning and life sharing. Not many people/groups that use a common word and Scriptural reasoning in building peace between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia. In particular, Scriptural reasoning has become one of interfaith dialogue means that suggested and endorsed by “a common word” movement which accepted and supported by the majority of Muslims and Christians all over the world,

“For those who have been involved with interfaith dialogue and movements such as the Scriptural reasoning project, this is not a remarkable observation in and of itself. But it adds greater significance and influence to the Scriptural reasoning movement



when the Grand Mufti of Egypt and the Archbishop of Canterbury join with imams and priests to encourage their followers to read the Bible and the Qur'an together. Muslims and Christians learning to read their Scriptures in relation rather than in opposition and learning how the other communities understand their own texts could bear unimagined fruits for future generations, especially when they are encouraged to do so by the religious authorities whom they most respect. This emphasis upon the possibilities inherent to Scriptural reasoning indicates one of the important ways in which academics have played an important role in working together with religious leaders to shape the ACW initiative. One hopes that this encouragement will help a broader audience apply the tools of comparative Scriptural inquiry that the Scriptural reasoning movement has developed over the past fifteen years" [14].

Based on 30 YIPC facilitators in Medan, Bandung, Yogyakarta and Surabaya that I interviewed in the first half of year 2016, I found out that YIPC members and facilitators are rather diverse in their socio-religious background. They came from different families, societies, organizations, denominations, schools and religious activities. Most of the Muslim respondents come from family that considered devoted in their religiosity. They were taught to read the Qur'an since very young at Quran Education Centre (*Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an*). They lived in a homogenous religious society especially those who come from village. They went to schools that were also homogenous. They went to Islamic primary school, Islamic Boarding School (*pesantren*) for secondary school or high school. Some of them went to State School, but there were very few non-Muslim students at the school, only one or two Christians. Some of them when they were in high school were active in Islamic Spiritual group (*Kerohanian Islam*), a student group that at some level is influenced by the Tarbiyah movement. Some of them also went to Islamic University which practically 100 % Muslim. Others went to State University or other private universities. Though there are a number of Christians on campus, most of them did not make friends with them and tended to have Muslims as their close friends. Some of them also joined Islamic student groups which in general do not interact with other religious groups. Therefore, Most of those Muslim students had no close relation, even no relation at all with someone from other religion (*i.e* Christian) until they joined Student Interfaith Peace Camp.

Their strong identity as Muslims was strengthened by the teaching of their parents and also religious teaching that they heard. Since they were still little kids, some parents had taught them not to be friend with Christians rather to avoid them. They had been influenced by ingroup-outgroup identity since they were very young, so they all had have some negative prejudices about Christians at some levels. This fact

shows that actually these young people have had seed of intolerance or socio-religious exclusivism since they were very young. If it is rooted deep in extreme ideology and grow in a conducive environment, what kind of fruits that will be produced can easily be predicted.

In that kind of situation, it is interesting to know why they joined Student Interfaith Peace Camp at the first place. Most of them joined the Peace Camp because of their friends or seniors on campus. As a new (junior) students, students normally were looking for a community. They will try to get involved in many organizations. One of YIPC facilitators is involved in six organizations at the same time. Some are in religious-based organizations, some are in non-religious-based organizations. When they got the flyer or read the poster of Student Interfaith Peace Camp through social media, somehow they were interested. They gave positive response because they were motivated by their curiosity about Christians, or because they had no experience in interfaith activity before. "Interfaith" was something new for them that made them to try. For some senior students, they were interested to have non-Muslim friends, interested to learn about religion and peace in the midst of conflicts and violence and looking for a new community outside of campus because YIPC is inter-campus community.

They came to the Student Interfaith Peace Camp with their curiosity but also some negative prejudices towards Christians and Christianity that they had before. Therefore Student Interfaith Peace Camp became the most impressive experience, especially for them that never had interfaith experience before. Not only because it was their new experience, but also because during this Peace Camp most of them experienced a transformation of their prejudices as well as having a non-Muslim friends. The teaching environment of Student Interfaith Peace Camp was very conducive for life transformation.

They were transformed from negative to be more positive perception towards "the other". Some main prejudices that have been hindering them to befriend with Christians had reduced or cleared. They got Christian friends and new community that considered like a new family. They could share, talk and discuss openly and honestly in peaceful interaction. Reconciliation by asking and giving forgiveness one another between Muslims and Christians in the last day of the Peace Camp had been a memorable moments for most of them. Even for those facilitators when they joined Peace Camp for the second or third time as facilitators, it was still very impressive to see the reconciliation took place.

How about the Christians? Though their background of social environment is rather different with Muslims, basically the impact is rather similar. What makes the Christians to join Student Interfaith Peace Camp? In reality, it is harder to get Christians than Muslims student to participate in a Peace Camp. One of the reasons probably the mental block that so thick. To study this phenomenon a different research is needed. Nevertheless, most Christian facilitators who joined Student Interfaith Peace Camp actually had some interfaith interaction with Muslim students before they joined Student Interfaith Peace Camp. It is something normal since Muslims are majority in Indonesia, therefore the probability to find a Christian homogenous community in Indonesia is very low. Even in some Christian schools, there are quite a number of Muslim students. Most of the Christians joined Student Interfaith Peace Camp because of friends and seniors who invited them and also supported by their curiosity about this interfaith community. Though they had some interaction with Muslims before, these Christians still have many prejudices and seed of intolerance, because they are very rare to discuss religious things with their friends.

#### 4.2. The effectiveness of interfaith relation and dialogue among students

According Leonard Swidler, the general goal of dialogue is for each side to learn and to change accordingly [15]. Therefore, we will find whether or not any dialogue is effective if we can notice what the participants learn and change. Of course in this case, the change that we expect is in the context of peacebuilding. From my interview, I found out that all of 30 participants had experienced changes in various level and aspects when they joined Student Interfaith Peace Camp and also some other activities of YIPC. They changed in their cognitive, affective, as well as psychomotoric aspects. Because of the space limit in this paper, I will limit my findings based on my observation of Student Interfaith Peace Camp which all of YIPC members, including all my respondents, had participated.

Firstly, change in cognitive aspect is the most important and the earliest need before it continues to affective and psychomotoric. Swidler says, "In the "Dialogue of Head" we mentally reach out to "the other" to learn from those who think differently from us...This enlarged understanding is very important, because how we understand the world determines how we act in the world" [15]. By discussing peace values as well as "a common word" based on each religious teaching as early as possible in Student Interfaith Peace Camp, participants were challenged to change in their worldview

towards other religion. Especially in the session of "Prejudice" they were urged to think that every prejudice needs to be clarified directly to the "victims". Most of prejudices in the list both from Christians and Muslims were clarified in the sessions of "Knowing Christian and Muslim faith" as well as "Reconciliation".

Prejudice is very crucial in influencing one's attitude to others. Most Christians may have prejudice that Islam is teaching violence, terrorism and intolerance. Through Student Interfaith Peace Camp and YIPC, they start to open their mind that actually not all Muslims like that, and they also find that in the Qur'an there are many teachings about peace and tolerance. Likewise, many Muslim participants that have no Christian friends, even no interaction with Christians before because they always lived among Muslim communities. Many Muslims have prejudices towards Christians such as Christians are infidel (*kafir*), worshipping three Gods [Trinity: God is three consubstantial persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit], the Bible is corrupted, etc. These polemic verses many times used by some group to justify intolerant acts toward other groups. It could be seed for extremism and terrorism too. Clarifying the misconceptions directly is a good practice in pluralist society.

Another thing is the Holy Books. Many of them, either Muslim or Christian, experienced for the first time to see, touch and read another Holy Book. Through Scriptural reasoning every morning in the camp, they were encouraged to learn good values from both Scriptures. In Scriptural reasoning, they practiced what Volf says as "double vision" [16] that is to learn to see from here and from there. By learning to view from other perspective and not only from their own perspective, helped them to break down their prejudices. Three days of togetherness in the camp was also added the dynamic that they can freely share and discuss many prejudices that they had. Therefore, for all participants the camp became very impressive experience because their experience of change in their cognitive aspect.

Secondly, their experiences in Student Interfaith Peace Camp, both in understanding as well as direct relation to other participants, changed them gradually from their social exclusivism to be social pluralism. According to the respondents, their faith have been deepened during the camp because of the knowledge they learn, both through the sessions, discussion and Scriptural reasoning. Therefore it is true that through their interfaith relations, they become more religious, or in other words they become more exclusive in their faith. But on the other hand, their religious exclusivism was not producing social exclusivism rather social pluralism as argued by Volf. Through Student Interfaith Peace Camp, every participant was convinced that faith, both Islam and Christian faith, are teaching peace and respecting diversity because all are creations

of the One God. All human being is equal before God. Diversity is God's creativity. Moreover in "a common word" they all believed that "loving God and loving neighbor" are the core teaching of both Islam and Christian faith. Interfaith relation and dialogue is effective to change people from social exclusivism to social pluralism even though they become more exclusivist in their faith.

Thirdly, salience and meaning are two important factors in forming group identity as what Karina Korostelina says [17]. Religion is one of the most salience factor of group identity. Through their experience of openness and togetherness in Student Interfaith Peace Camp, all of the respondents found YIPC as a new family where they could share freely. Along with the change from social exclusivism—which very much based on their own religious identity—to social pluralism—which is based more on social pluralism as fellow human beings created by the One God—their salience and meaning factor also had changed. Before they had only one group identity as Muslim or Christian. Now, they had a new group identity as a family (community) of Muslim and Christian that living under one roof. As Indonesian citizens, they theoretically understand that they live together with those are of different faiths. In YIPC they not only understand that theory but they experienced it in the real sense.

In practice, it was also showed by some Muslim respondents when they heard some negative prejudices from their fellow Muslims about Christian faith, they gave explanation and clarification. Some Christians also did likewise. They did not see "the other" excluded from their life, but part of their life. At the same time, their religious identity was also not removed. Volf says this as by the symbol of "embrace" when they open the arms as invitation to the other, close the arms as togetherness (not I and you but we) and then open the arms again as a symbol of respecting the uniqueness of each person [16]. This "embrace" was practiced in the Peace Camp part of reconciliation, after clarifying all the prejudices and forgiving each other. Living in community is one important key in building peace in interfaith context. Commonly interfaith dialogue is held by encountering two religious group in an interfaith dialogue event. After the event, each of group also go back to their own group. Their experience only in one event and most likely their own group identity is still quite strong. Conversely in YIPC, though every participant come from their own religious group, they become one community in YIPC. Dialogue is not only an event, but also become a relation of life journey together.

These experiences are the process that continuously and gradually change their worldview bit by bit, which later also impacting their behavior to be more tolerant and respect to each other. Changing students today is very important for the future since

they are the leaders of tomorrow. If we can help the students to be more tolerant (social pluralist) with strong religious conviction (religious exclusivist) then we can have a hope for peaceful relation among religions in the future. Learning from YIPC as a case study, we find out that interfaith dialogue among the students/youth is very effective in changing participants.

#### 4.3. Contribution of YIPC (Students) for interfaith peace building

Having discussed the impact of interfaith dialogue and relation among students, now I will discuss the role and contribution of students (i.e. YIPC) in interfaith dialogue for peacebuilding.

Firstly, the existence of YIPC is one breakthrough in interfaith dialogue and student movement. As I mentioned above, little is known if any student movement has been involved in interfaith dialogue initiative, though most people who involved in interfaith dialogue agree that the involvement of youth is very important. In my previous study on religious-based student movement, it is hardly to find a study about the involvement of religious-based student movement in interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding. There were programs on interfaith dialogue but initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs not the students themselves, for instance: *Kemah Pemuda Lintas Agama* (Inter-religious Youth Camp).

The presence of YIPC is like a new wave in student movement because YIPC is concerned and involved in interfaith peacemaking, particularly Christian-Muslim relation as its main purpose. This kind of student organization is still uncommon in Indonesia. Therefore, by its presence, YIPC has given significant contribution in the dynamic of interfaith relation in Indonesia. It is like an answer of a long-waiting hope.

Secondly, the model of interfaith-based community is also quite new in interfaith dialogue movement. In his exploration of some interfaith dialogue initiatives by civil societies (NGOs), Suhadi lists there are three NGOs that focus on interfaith dialogue: DIAN/Interfidei, ICRP and eLaleM [18]. The uniqueness of YIPC is that it is a student movement not NGO. That is why YIPC in a relatively young has been existed in four cities and pioneering in other 4 cities. Because it is not an NGO, YIPC does not require an office, full time staff and equipment that also require not a little funding. To run their agendas and activities, YIPC is not dependent to funding from outside. Of course its sustainability is always at stake like any other student movements. YIPC uses some social media to build its community both in local and national level: facebook group, Whatsapp group and also some community building activities.

Thirdly, YIPC is also a friendly community for students from various backgrounds and affiliations. This plurality of YIPC has been a place for training for every members to celebrate and respect diversity. Though many of YIPC members have exclusive faith, YIPC is not a social exclusive community. By joining YIPC did not change them be a religious pluralist either. Even in some cases for those who first joined YIPC consider do not have deep religious understanding, by joining YIPC they are growing and deepening their faith. Nevertheless, normally gradually they will change to be a social pluralist. YIPC always build relation as wide as possible with other organizations. YIPC is social pluralist movement. Therefore YIPC is a place to foster religious pluralism and social/political pluralism as what argued by Volf [3].

Most of Muslim-Christian relation problems are because of negative prejudices from both sides. Volf says, prejudices are the distortions towards other faith because of our limitation. Lack of interaction in daily life may grow the prejudices become some actions. Therefore, what YIPC is doing to put Muslims and Christians together in one community and to have dialogue regularly is very effective to change the prejudices.

There are many times conflicts occurred among the members with different views but they always tried to remind each other about the peace values that have been learnt in the Peace Camp. YIPC also has a Whatsapp group that meant for theological dialogue which also open to discuss different interpretations not only between Muslims and Christians, but even intrafaith diversity. Though YIPC has a weekly regular dialogue and Scriptural reasoning, but the dialogue regularly takes place every day in many kinds of areas. According to Johanes Banawiratma, there are seven moments of levels of dialogue, which can be considered as areas of dialogue: i) daily life, ii) social ethics, iii) religious tradition, iv) faith, v) theology, vi) action, vii) intrafaith [19]. In YIPC context, based on my interview and observation, all of seven areas of dialogue are experienced by its members though in different level of involvement. To experience all of seven-areas of dialogue, it is hard if they are not in one community. Therefore, community is one significant element to build an interfaith relation for peacebuilding.

Finally, YIPC's strength is the students or young generation. They are in a period of searching a community (peer group) and also identity. The fact that many young people including tertiary students were recruited by the extremist and terrorist group, showed that they are still in searching for identity and group. Therefore, it is very crucial to influence and recruit them for a positive purpose as early as possible so that they are able to refuse the negative influence whenever it comes. It is always better to prevent rather than to fix. When they practice social pluralism while they still young, they will be agent of change that can influence bigger society (the nation) in the future.

YIPC has played a very strategic role in interfaith relations: to prepare social pluralist students today is important to a political pluralist nation in the future.

From 2015, YIPC started to go international as well. Every year during the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, YIPC went to neighboring countries in South East Asia like Malaysia and Singapore to hold some dialogue with the Malaysians and Singaporeans to foster religious harmony in the region. In 2016 YIPC also held Young Interfaith Peacemaker International Camp which participated by six countries. If it is growing that it is not possible that YIPC can be a significant interfaith community in Southeast Asia and even globally. Therefore we cannot underscore the role of students in this area.

## 5. Conclusions

YIPC is a new phenomenon in student movement which based on interfaith and focus on religious peacemaking. As long as there is intolerance and conflict in the world peace, religious peacemaking is still crucial. Youth and students should take part in this effort. In YIPC, two different religious communities are able to respect each other's faith, share each other's faith and live in peace through dialogue and mutual interaction in many aspects. It is very intense interaction so that change of worldview could take place.

YIPC at some level has been successful to be a means of worldview transformation to be peacemaker. YIPC model can be one way to prevent extremism and socio-political exclusivism. Train the young people in a diverse community like YIPC, so that they will be social pluralist and respect the diversity. Hopefully they can last long and make bigger impact.

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