The Role of Communication Theology as a Space for Inter-Religious Dialogue Among Youth in Cirebon

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF

DIVINITY IN FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

DUTA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

YOGYAKARTA

JANUARY 2018

LEMBAR PENGESAHAN

Tesis dengan Judul:
The Role of Communication Theology as a Space for Inter-Religious Dialogue Among Youth in Cirebon

telah diajukan dan dipertahankan oleh

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dalam Ujian Tesis Program Studi Paskasarjana Teologi
Fakultas Teologi
Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana

dan dinyatakan DITERIMA untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar *Magister of Divinity* pada tanggal 11 Januari 2018

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Abstract

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Gloria Wilhelmina Verdina (52150004)

The source of distrust between people in a diverse society like Cirebon City is not merely from the religion itself but also other societal domains such as the economic situation, politics, social life, and culture. The level of issue complexity then increased as pre-existing inter-ethnic tensions are associated with inter-religious issues. In dealing with such predicament, this research presents how Communication Theology reveals problems that occur in inter-religious engagement between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestant and Cirebonese Muslim youth. It describes and analyses how these two communicate inter-religiously and discover the role of Communication Theology in creating a space for inter-religious dialogue among youth in Cirebon. It takes into account the Communication Accommodation Theory by Howard Giles and applies interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach. The first result of this research is the list of communication barriers between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims in which appeared firstly from the wrong perception of other's religion and ethnicity. Secondly, different degrees of accommodation in social problems created insensitive feelings of other's misery. Yet there is still a possibility of inter-religious dialogue between these two parties. The analysis and theological reflections further explain that human is a multi-dimensional in his relations with others. On this account, inter-religious conflicts between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestant and Cirebonese Muslims in Cirebon City cannot simply put the blame on certain theological understanding but needs to be seen as a part of a dynamic communication process.

Acknowledgements

The thesis entitled **The Role of Communication Theology as a Space for Inter-Religious Dialogue Among Youth in Cirebon** is the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Divinity in Faculty of Theology, Duta Wacana Christian University. It would not have been possible without the support of many people. I have been fortunate enough to find so many people, during the initial period of research and since, who have been prepared to help the making of this research. Each of the people I am about to thank made an essential contribution to the success of my thesis.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Kees de Jong and Robert Setio, Ph.D., my beloved thesis advisors. The ones who put a great concern, have a great enthusiasm, and guidance of ideas since the initial thesis-making process. The ones who always lift me up whenever I ran out of excitement. To Dr. Djoko Prasetyo, the examiner of the thesis, whose valuable insight and advice have made a significant impact on my thesis. I am grateful to all of the employees and lecturers at the Faculty of Theology, Duta Wacana Christian University, who has always been my support system and helped me in many different ways.

During the research making, I had been part of Bridging Gaps program held by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Protestantse Theologische Universiteit (PThU), the Netherlands, which provided general supervision and assistance of several chapters of my thesis. Therefore I shall always be indebted to the committee for their help, especially to Dr. G.M. Speelman as my caring-thoughtful supervisor. To the anonymous interviewees, Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestant and Cirebonese Muslims youngsters whose kindness, curiosity and courage have made this research possible.

Deepest appreciation and gratitude to my parents and my sister for giving me unstinting support, encouragement, and prayers throughout the entire thesis-making process. Thanks a million to Pdt. Setyowati, kak Gideon Jeffry Aswin Hartanto, Miss Ana, #Heidythechihuahua, Nopry Lestari, and Liliane Mojau-Tampake. I cannot thank God enough for I have been surrounded by encouraging and inspiring colleagues and friends. I owe particular debts of thanks to Vania

Sharleen for the countless midnight brewing-ideas conversations, priceless insights, constant patience, limitless prayers and unfading love.

People mentioned above bear no responsibility for errors in this thesis. Though this thesis is far from flawless, hopefully, it becomes a useful, even crucial resource for the reader to understand the importance of inclusive ethnicity, religious pluralism and multiple dimensions of the individual. It is to be hoped that this research could become a significant reference for future research either in theology, communication studies or in both contexts.

Yogyakarta, 11 January 2018

Gloria Wilhelmina Verdina

Research Originality Statement

I, Gloria Wilhelmina Verdina, certify that the data in my thesis entitled "The Role of Communication Theology as a Space for Inter-Religious Dialogue Among Youth in Cirebon" is authentic. If in the future, the manuscript is proven to be a result of plagiarism, I am willing to accept sanction and cancellation of my Master of Divinity Degree at Faculty of Theology, Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta.
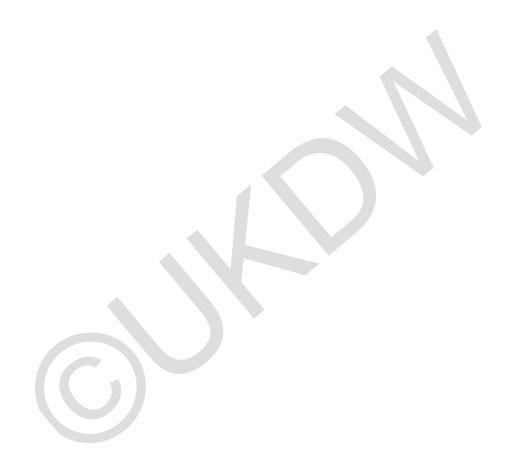
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The source of distrust between people in a diverse society like Cirebon City is not merely from the religion itself but also other societal domains such as the economic situation, politics, social life, and culture. The level of issue complexity then increased as pre-existing inter-ethnic tensions are associated with inter-religious issues. In dealing with such predicament, this research presents how Communication Theology reveals problems that occur in inter-religious engagement between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestant and Cirebonese Muslim youth. It describes and analyses how these two communicate inter-religiously and discover the role of Communication Theology in creating a space for inter-religious dialogue among youth in Cirebon. It takes into account the Communication Accommodation Theory by Howard Giles and applies interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach. The first result of this research is the list of communication barriers between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims in which appeared firstly from the wrong perception of other's religion and ethnicity. Secondly, different degrees of accommodation in social problems created insensitive feelings of other's misery. Yet there is still a possibility of inter-religious dialogue between these two parties. The analysis and theological reflections further explain that human is a multi-dimensional in his relations with others. On this account, inter-religious conflicts between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestant and Cirebonese Muslims in Cirebon City cannot simply put the blame on certain theological understanding but needs to be seen as a part of a dynamic communication process.

I. Introduction

1. Background

1.1 Religious Violences in Indonesia: Islamic Hardliners and Aggressive Evangelism

Indonesia was attacked by several bombing terrors related to a radical religious identity in recent years. On 13th November 2016, a bomb exploded in a Protestant Church in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, killing a toddler and wounding three other children. A black t-shirt worn by the bomber, Juhanda, that read "Jihad Way of Life" drew public attention. Juhanda, who was convicted of committing an act of terrorism linked to Islamic State (IS), has brought a radical religious identity through his t-shirt. Another bombing terror as a result of radicalism and categorized as terrorism previously occurred in Surakarta, Central Java on July 2016. In August, the congregation of a Catholic church in Medan, North Sumatra prevented a teenager from detonating a bomb. Police said the teen was obsessed with the IS terrorist group.[1] Even worse, radicalization and the willingness to die "in the name of Islam," apparently has raised among youth in Indonesia.[2] This facts need to be considered seriously as some Indonesians have returned from fighting in Syria (joined Islamic State) and created small terrorist cells back home.[3]

Cirebon once had a suicide bombing at a police mosque on 2011, wounding 30 people including the local police chief. Muhammad Syarif, the bomber, was a member of Islamic hardliners in Cirebon, GAPAS (Anti-Misdirection Movement and Anti-Cult Movement). The term "member" refers to the active participation by M. Syarif in GAPAS[4] violent protests against unregistered

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[1] Yenni Kwok, "A Terrorist Attack at an Indonesian Church Has Killed a Toddler and Wounded Three Others"*, The Jakarta Post*, 2016; Ganug Nugroho Adi, "Surakarta Bomber Hid in Chicken Coop Before Attack: Police"*, The Jakarta Post*, 2016; The Jakarta Post, "Creeping Intolerance"*, The Jakarta Post*, 2016

[2] In 2016, a survey of level of tolerance and terrorism among Indonesian youth in Jakarta and Bandung, West Java, shows that 61.6% students are tolerant, 35.7% passive intolerant, 2.4% active intolerant / radical, and 0.3% latent terrorist. It is based on Setara Institute, "Percobaan Bom Bunuh Diri: Virus Radikal dan Terorisme Menyusup ke Generasi Muda"*, Setara Institute*, 2016

[3] Noor Huda Ismail, "Commentary: Why Did Terror Hit Jakarta's Streets - and What Happens Next?"*, Jakarta Globe*, 2016

[4] GAPAS is an organization that openly perform resistance actions head to head against the deviant sects, misdirection, Ahmadiyah and also Christians. They declared themselves as a movement that guide Cirebon City from misdirection and cult. Reference from Halili & Bonar Tigor Naipospos, "From Stagnation to Pick the New Hopes: The Condition of Freedom of Religion / Belief in Indonesia 2014", Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2015, p. 82

Christian churches and places of immorality, like karaoke bars.[5] Later, Sigit Qurdowi as the mastermind behind the Cirebon bomb attack, was killed in a police raid in Sukoharjo, Central Java. He was allegedly as the commander of Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) Laskar Hisbah, a radical group founded by Abu Bakar Bashir.[6]

Groups of Islamic hardliners in Cirebon such as FPI (Front Pembela Islam) and GAPAS are well known as its intolerant acts such as forcing closure of a church or buildings that are used for worship services. In 2006, a radio station called Suara Gratia was attacked by FPI and various anti-apostasy organizations for sponsoring programs to convert Muslims to Christianity.[7] On May 2011, the Gratia building was attacked by GAPAS due to the Easter celebration inside it.[8] The member ssaid that they already had the permits from the authorities, however, the service then was forced to stop and the police did nothing to stop such violence. In August 2016, Almanar, one of Islam hardliner groups, forced to stop the service in Gratia building. Andi Mulya, the head of Almanar said that the building is not legally and purposely built for a service. Therefore it is considered illegal to do service inside it.[9] It becomes more interesting in knowing the fact that Andi Mulya was the head of GAPAS.[10]

Recent intolerant act by hardliners against a Christian community in Cirebon happened on October 27th, 2016. A Spiritual Revival Worship (Kebaktian Kebangunan Rohani - KKR) addressed for children, teens and adults by Rev. Stephen Tong, was forced to cancel by Almanar. Despite all the permit from the authorities, Almanar protested and claimed the event as "illegal" because it was held at a public facility (a grocery store). Nevertheless, the service for children and youth was managed to held out against the pressure. However, in order to avoid further attack, the committee then decided to move the adult service to a church.[11]

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[5] Aubrey, Belford, "Indonesia's Islamic Vigilantes"*, The New York Times*, 19 May 2011
[6] Farouk Arnaz, "2 Suspects With Alleged Links to JAT , Cirebon Bombing Killed in Raid*", Jakarta Globe*, 14th May 2011
[7] International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: 'Christianization' and Tolerance", *Asia Briefing* No. 114, 24 November 2010, p. 3
[8] Mathias Hariyadi, "Cirebon: Muslim Extremists Disrupt Christian Services as Police Looks On"*, 19 May 2011
[9] Roy, "Diduga Dijadikan Tempat Ibadah Ormas Almanar Geruduk Gedung Gratia"*, 2 August 2016
[10] Iskandar, "KBNU Cirebon Kecam Aksi Unjukrasa Almanar Terhadap Ponpes Nurul Quran"*, 28 February 2015
[11] The story reported by Almanar through its website http://majelisilmualmanar.blogspot.co.id/2016/10/almanar-gagalkan-acara-kebaktian-liar.html was quite different compare to the real situation, based on personal interview with a former Chairman of Council of Churches in Indonesia - Cirebon region, Rev. Em. Sugeng Daryadi, 26 January 2017

Bombing terror in which closely linked to radical religious identity and intolerant acts by fundamentalist groups have created an uncomfortable situation for minorities in plural societies like Cirebon. Cirebon, quite well known as a melting pot, has a population of 304,313 people consisting of Muslims 248,692, and the rest are Protestants, Catholics, Hindu, Buddhist, Khong hu Cu and indigenous beliefs.[12] Based on 2013 reports, there are 267 mosques, 22 churches, 1 *pura*, 5 *vihara* and 1 klenteng in Cirebon City.[13]

However, the issues of religious violences against minorities, for some cases, correlate with the aggressive evangelism in which derived from the fundamental thinking of Christians. Research entitled *Revamping Pentecostal Evangelism: Appropriating Walter J. Hollenweger's Radical Proposal* by T. Richie stated that Pentecostal is often thought for its aggressive evangelism. As the Christian Church endeavours to be faithful to its evangelistic mission, increasingly intense problems arise in international (also local) contexts of cultural diversity and religious plurality hence frequently experience negative encounters.[14]

Many has stated that West Java is one of the fastest growing areas for evangelical Christianity, although no one is quite sure why. Perhaps the migration and urbanization became the factor (societal domains) which boosts the number of Christians.[15] This is interesting as West Java is one of the provinces with the highest incidence of discrimination and social hostility against religious minorities. It is also a province with the highest number of government restrictions relating to religious minorities. West Java has been reported as a center of radical Islam where violence was often carried out in the name of religion[16] and at the same time, the evangelical *Christianization* campaign, especially Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, are active in Muslim majority provinces (West Java), recording a pronounced Christian population growth.[17]

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[12] Badan Pusat Statistik Cirebon Kota, "Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Kota Cirebon 2005-2025"

[13] Badan Pusat Statistik Cirebon Kota, "Profil Kota Cirebon 2014", p. 141

[14] Tony Richie, "Revamping Pentecostal Evangelism: Appropriating Walter J. Hollenweger's Radical Proposal"*, International Review of Mission*, Volume 96, Issue 382-382, 10 July 2007, p. 343-354

[15] Chaider S. Bamualim, "Negotiating Islamisation and resistance: a study of religions, politics and social change in West Java from the early 20th Century to the present", 2015

[16] Munaim Sirry, "Restriction on Religion Lead to More Violence, not Less"*, The Jakarta Post*, 13 November 2015

[17] International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: 'Christianization' and Tolerance", *Asia Briefing* No. 114, 24 November 2010, p. 3

In November 2010, ICG (International Crisis Group) reported an intense christianization in West Java. 'Christianization' is a term that generally refers both to Christian efforts to convert Muslims and the alleged growing influence of Christianity in Muslims. Islamists use 'christianization' as a justification for mass mobilization and vigilante attacks.[18] Many Muslims suspected that christian social projects are a media for Christianization.[19] ICG reports a controversial festival organised by Mahanaim Foundation (Yayasan Mahanaim). This foundation is part of a network of Pentecostal organizations across Java run by a family of ethnic Chinese Origin. One of the family members of the foundation, Nani Susanty, founded a branch of Doa Ecclesia in Cirebon and preaches over a radio station called Suara Gratia, which was attacked by FPI and various anti-apostasy organizations for sponsoring programs to convert Muslim to Christianity.[20]

The fear of "Christianization" and aggressive evangelism produced higher level of resistance towards each other. Another research entitled *A Contribution of the Theological Considerations of Paul Knitter to Shape a New Vision on Inter-religious Dialogue in Cirebon,* argues that the pentecostal movement in Cirebon is hesitated to join inter-religious dialogue and tend to broadening the existed inter-religious gaps.[21]

1.2 Inter-religious Issues as Socio-theological Problem

For Islamic hardliners, Christians are a thread to their religion (especially the *Christianization*). On 2011, the head of MUI Cirebon, KH. Sholihin Uzer in a forum, asked Muslims to stop the arrogance of Christians whom continuously try to get a church's building permit in an 'unacceptable way,' refused to follow the rules. Inappropriate behaviour done by Christians has triggered Muslims (Islamic hardliners) to stop Christians in any way. Anarchy is considered legal

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[18] International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: 'Christianization' and Tolerance", *Asia Briefing* No. 114, 24 November 2010, p. 1

[19] Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Persepsi Muslim Terhadap Aksi-Aksi Sosial Kristiani", *Gema Teologi* Vol. 32 No 1, 2008

[20] International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: 'Christianization' and Tolerance", *Asia Briefing* No. 114, 24 November 2010, p. 3

[21] Theofillia B. Verdina, "Sumbangan Pemikiran Paul F. Knitter Bagi Cara Pandang Baru Umat Kristen di Kota Cirebon dalam Kaitan dengan Dialog Antar Agama di Kota Cirebon", 2014

in this particular case. He added that the domination of Christians in economic, education, and politics need to be ended soon, if only all Muslims in Cirebon gathered together.[22]

In other words, inter-religious issues are no longer merely a theological problem but also social interaction problem. It is important to think that the source of distrust between people is not only from the religion itself but also include other societal domains such as the economical situation, politics, social life and culture. Since religion and societal domains directly and indirectly influence each other, inter-religious violences cannot be justified as rooted only from religious ideas and beliefs. It is very likely to argue into an understanding that religious group members often feel threatened by members of other religious traditions in terms of these societal issues in Indonesia.[23]

It is no longer merely about debating the 'truth claims' but also problems of economic ethics that happened between Christians and Muslims from local to national scope. As Wijaya stated, "While the Christian fundamentalist-neo-Pentecostal groups tend to take existing market economy for granted, feeling free to employ its strategy and culture, the Islamic ones struggle for an alternative, designed according to the system operated in the early period of the development of Islam." Although this is something that Islamic fundamentalist has been fighting for, it is not fully supported by wider Islamic community. Hence, business relations on the field such as in marketplace are not really affected by religious affiliation.[24] But still, this ethical problem connected to theological problems in Christians and Muslims relations could stimulate a non-accommodation climate which lead to intergroup conflict.[25]

The strong representation of ethnic Chinese in the evangelical movement in Indonesia could make them a target in communities related to ongoing Muslim and Christian fundamentalist competition movements. As previously mentioned before, societal domains such as economics,

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[22] Ibnu Hasyim, "Ulama Cirebon: Bersatu Hadapi Arogansi Kristen"*,* 11 November 2011
[23] Handi Hadiwitanto, "Religion and Generalised Trust: an Empirical-Theological Study Among University Students in Indonesia"*,* 2016, Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co, p. 221-231
[24] Yahya Wijaya, "The Economic Ethics of Christian and Islamic Fundamentalism*",* in Heidi Hadshell & C. Stückelberger, "Overcoming Fundamentalism: Ethical Responses from Five Continents", *globethics.net* Series No. 2, 2009, Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana University Press, p. 147
[25] Threats in economic domain (economical gaps) and ethnicity which impacted Christian-Muslims relations is elaborated by Handi Hadiwitanto, "Religion and Generalised Trust: an Empirical-Theological Study Among University Students in Indonesia"*,* 2016, Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co, p. 3-13

politics, social life and culture including ethnicity, affected inter-religious relations. There were anti-Chinese riots on 1963, 1974, 1998,[26] and therefore ethnicity is a very sensitive issue. Especially since Indonesia has been through of anti-Chinese violence in the 1998 chaotic riots that led to President Soeharto's resignation. In spite of the fall of the New Order, prejudice and discrimination addressed to Chinese descent continued to be engaged by the societies and the discourse surrounding them used for religious and political groups benefits.[27]

Despite the differences of what is Pentecostalism, Charismaticism and conservative Evangelism, they all have successfully attract people from the business and professional sectors. Wijaya explained that many conservative-evangelical churches are related to the ethnic Chinese business community. In depicting Asian business culture, Backman, as quoted by Wijaya, notes the massive formation of fundamentalist congregations done by ethnic Chinese business people.[28] In a context where American preachers such as Oral Roberts, Benny Hinn, and Tong Brothers have achieved an international reputation it is easy enough for Pentecostalism to be seen as foreign import.[29] In Indonesia - as well as Malaysia - the association between Chinese and Pentecostal is heavily freighted, for not only does Christianity carry the baggage of European colonialism, but resentment towards Chinese economic dominance has at times resulted in violence.[30] Indeed, Chinese Indonesians are only 3% of the population but are strongly influential, controlling most of the Indonesia wealth and commerce.[31]

The dominance of Chinese-Indonesian in controlling the economical situation and tendency to be seen as foreign import also becoming a problem in Cirebon. It is undeniable that although Chinese-Indonesians are very few compared to the whole population of Cirebon City, it

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[26] Thomas Santoso, "Kerusuhan Sosial di Indonesia. Telaah Sosiologis-Historis Perusakan Tempat Ibadah", in Paul Tahalele, Frans Parera and Thomas Santoso (eds), "*I*ndonesia di Persimpangan Kekuasaan. Dominasi Kekerasan Atas Dialog Publik", Jakarta: The GO-East Institute, 2000, p. 109-127
[27] Jemma Elizabeth Purdey, "Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996-1999", *PhD thesis*, University of Melbourne, 2002, p. 185
[28] Yahya Wijaya, "The Economic Ethics of Christian and Islamic Fundamentalism", in Heidi Hadshell & C. Stückelberger, "Overcoming Fundamentalism: Ethical Responses from Five Continents", *globethics.net* Series No. 2, 2009, Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana University Press, p. 132-133
[29] Barbara Watson Andaya, "Contextualizing the Global: Exploring the Roots of Pentecostalism in Malaysia and Indonesia", 2009, p. 2, also read "Gereja Kharismatik dan Gerakan Politik Cina Menguasai Indonesia" from http://www.voa-islam.com/read/opini/2014/02/23/29209/gereja-kharismatik-dan-gerakan-politik-cina-menguasai-indonesia/#sthash.F70jXixL.dpbs, 2014, accessed on 30 September 2016
[30] Ibid
[31] World Population Review, "Indonesia Population", retrieved from http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/indonesia-population/, accessed on 26 January 2017

dominated the economic sector and generally makes up a large part of the economic elite.[32] In sum, since the first Chinese Indonesian church in north of Cirebon was established by Dutch Christian missionaries, there is a huge gap in educational level as most of the students who attended the school were Chinese Indonesians.[33] In addition to that, Chinese-Indonesian was considered as superior to native Indonesian due to social classes created during Dutch colonialism. This kind of situation successfully created social jealousy in society.[34] Although Sunan Gunung Jati (Syech Syarief Hidayatullah) who spread Islam in the region of Cirebon in the 16th has married Ong Tien (China's emperor daughter) and successfully created a connection between Chinese culture, traditions of Cirebon palace and Islam,[35] the social jealousy towards Chinese-Indonesian up to this time still exists and bring negative impact on inter-religious relations.

In sum, level of complexity then increased as pre-existing inter-ethnic tensions in Indonesia are often associated with inter-religious issues.[36] Societal domains such as ethnicity, social jealousy and culture have made inter-religious issues are no longer dealing with only theological problems but are becoming more related to the problem of daily social interaction. Intolerance act correlates with ethnicity issues and religious affiliations are even rising on daily conversation.[37]

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[32] Darman, "Tionghoa Cirebon dari Tukang Becak Hingga Legislatif", 15 Februari 2012
[33] Melissa Crouch, "Law and Religion in Indonesia: Conflict and the Courts in West Java", 2014, New York: Routledge
[34] Fahmina Institute, "Menilik Komunitas Tionghoa Muslim Cirebon", 2015, see also Nurhadiantomo, "Hukum Reintegrasi Sosial (Telaah tentang Kerusuhan Massal yang Menimpa Kolektivitas Tionghoa, Menajamnya Konfigurasi Pemilahan Sosial "Pri-Nonpri" dan Hukum Keadilan Sosial)", 2002/2003, Semarang: Universitas Diponegoro, p. 6
[35] Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Jawa Barat, "History of Batik Mega Mendung", 26 Januari 2016
[36] Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Persepsi Muslim Terhadap Aksi-Aksi Sosial Kristiani", in *Gema Teologi* Vol. 32,1, (April 2008), and Setara Institute, "Dari Konflik Ambon hingga Pengusiran Ahmadiyah", retrieved from http://setara-institute.org/en/dari-konflik-ambon-hingga-pengusiran-ahmadiyah/, accessed on 4 February 2017
[37] Camelia Pasandaran, "Unfriend, unfollow: The Rise of Intolerance Unveiled in Social Media", *The Jakarta Post*, 2016

1.3. The Reluctancy to Involve in Inter-religious Dialogue in Cirebon

To encounter common negative stereotypes of Islam - such as terrorism, radicalism, violences-[38]

and to confront the negative perspective of *christianization* and social jealousy on Chinese-

Indonesian Christian Protestants, inter-religious dialogue is needed. Many religious leaders have

gathered together and created a forum of inter-religious dialogue in Cirebon particularly in terms

of *Dialogue of theology*[39] and *Dialog of religious experience.*

Dialogue of theology in Cirebon is often organized by Fahmina Institute[40] (through its workshop

and seminars) and PELITA (Pemuda Lintas Iman - interfaith group for young adults) through

monthly meeting in different places of worships for youth. The monthly meeting takes place in

place of worship such as Catholic church, Christian church, Vihara, Pura, Mosque and

Kelenteng. Meanwhile, the idea of *Dialogue of religious experience* among youth has been

developed by PELITA, through *Pesantren Lintas Iman* (Interfaith *Pesantren*) programme;[41]

PELITA, provides inter-religious dialogue and is open to anyone regardless their religions and

ethnicity. In terms of inter-religious it encourages youth to openly exchange their perspectives

about religions.[42] It is established on 2011, and it is acknowledged by UNESCO as an agent of

change in 'The Youth Programme' on 2013 due to their effort in maintaining inter-religious

harmony in Cirebon.

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[38] Aforementioned intolerant acts also created certain stereotypes about Muslims. It is hardly to deny that one of the reasons why many scholars and religious leaders promote "Islam as a peaceful religion," is due to the discrimination and other violations of religious freedom have done in the name of Islam by radical or Islamic hardliners, directed against others religions. References were taken from John L. Esposito, "Islam and Political Violence"*, in *Religions 2015*, No. 6, 2015, Hayati Aydin, "*I*slam: the Religion of Peace?" in *The Journal of Rotterdam Islamic and Social Sciences*, No. 1, Vol. 2, 2011, and in Cirebon context, Imbi Muhammad, "KH Makhtum Hannan: Pancasila dan Nilai Ajaran Islam"*, 23 January 2017 retrieved from http://fahmina.or.id/kh-makhtum-hannan-pancasila-dan-nilai-ajaran-islam/, accessed on 4 February 2017

[39] *Dialogue of theology* is a dialogue which is basically addressed for scholars and / or religious leaders. The purpose of this model is to listen to others and learn more about other's religions. *Dialogue of religious experience* is strongly related to the openness of integrity. People share their religious experience and spiritual riches and at the same time enrich one another through dialogue.

[40] Established on November 2000 by Husein Muhammad, Affandi Mokhtar, Marzuki Wahid and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir. Fahmina Institute is a non-profit and non-government organization active in the fields of religious studies, strengthening civil society and community empowerment in Cirebon. Reference was taken from Fahmina Institute, *Fahmina Profile,* retrieved from http://fahmina.or.id/en/profile/, accessed on 5 February 2017

[41] Haryono, "Dari Pertemuan Bulanan Sampai Dialektika Keragaman: Upaya Implementasi Pendidikan Interreligious"*, 7 September 2016, retrieved from pelitaperdamaian.org

[42] PELITA, "Profil PELITA*", retrieved from http://www.pelitaperdamaian.org/profil/tentang-pelita/, accessed on 5 February 2017

Although *dialog of theology* particularly addressed to scholars, based on prior research, such dialog between Christians and Muslims in Cirebon is not limited for intellectual people. People who came and participated were the people who wanted to learn and appreciate the other's existence regardless their academic background. Even grassroots who are less educated were involved.

Yet the problem is, during 7 months of field observation on prior research making in Fahmina Institute, ISIF (Institute Studi Islam of Fahmina), and PELITA on February-August 2013, there was a reluctancy of Christian Protestants to involve in inter-religious dialogues (*Dialogue of theology* and *Dialogue of religious experience*) in Cirebon. Until 2016, some times very few (one or two) Christians attended the monthly PELITA inter-religious dialogue. Other times it got worse as none of them came to join the inter-religious dialogue. Christian Protestant youngsters were actively participated only when the monthly meeting took place in their church. The numbers could be up to 8-10 Christian youngsters attended the dialogue. In routine discussion hold by Fahmina Institute such as workshops and seminars that are mostly held in ISIF (Institute Studi Islam Fahmina), Christians youth who attended and actively participated were very few compare to Muslims' participants, or sometimes even worse, none of them have attended such discussion.[43] It is not the problem of numbers of majority nor minority but the problem of excitement, willingness, and openness to have an inter-religious dialogue.

Mujiburrahman says that one of the factors that hinder inter-religious dialogue is that people who join in such dialogue are most likely the same person from time to time. In other words, there is no regeneration. Others who do not wanted to join are either ignore the dialogue or dissent from the understanding and urgency of inter-religious dialogue.[44] Meanwhile, the willingness to get involved is as important as the existence of the inter-religious dialogue itself. Volker Küster on explaining the theology of dialogue stated that those who are willing to cross borders are important in keeping these borders open and communicating inter-religious knowledge in both

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[43] Gloria W. Verdina and Rino F. Boer, "Membangun Demokrasi Melalui Pemahaman Pluralisme Beragama Berdasarkan Symbolic Convergence Theory", in *Masa Depan Komunikasi, Masa Depan Indonesia: Demokratisasi Masyarakat Plural,* 2014, Jakarta: Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia (ISKI), p. 88-113

[44] Mujiburrahman, "Meninjau Ulang Dialog Antar Agama di Indonesia", in Stanley Adi Prasetyo, *Pluralisme, Dialog dan Keadilan,* 2011, Yogyakarta: Interfidei, p. 185-196

directions.[45] However, in Cirebon context, why is it so difficult to engage in the dialogue, to cross the borders and keep it open? Why there is reluctancy to join the inter-religious dialogue?

Inter-religious dialogue requires an openness of others perspective and at the same time needs to have a clear commitment with his/her own conviction. Kees de Jong explains that dialogue as a communication means that people have to be aware of their private limits and of their cultural and religious differences, which separate them. Once they become aware of this situation, they will be able to respect one another, try to understand each other and eventually build a good society.[46] Moreover, people in a process of dialogue needs courage to be an open-minded person; to not wanted to inform and hope to change others but to learn and ready to be changed without losing his/her own conviction. However, to be an open-minded person in a society that full of prejudice towards members of out-group, is not easy yet possible. Their pre-perception and assumption of Islam become prominent factors in determining the willingness to join in an inter-religious dialogue. Although there is already a room for inter-religious dialogue in Cirebon, it is not easy to just involved in and ignore the pre-assumption, negative field of experience and stereotypes that already live within Christians and Muslims in Indonesia due to aforementioned conflicts.

A very substantial issue relates to this case is how they communicate with others. It is important to bear in mind that in communicating with others whom faith is different, the conversation is no longer debating merely about 'truth claims,' but also correlates with societal domains issues. This research then tries to find out how the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims in Cirebon communicate inter-religiously in order to increase the involvement of Christian Protestants particularly Chinese descent in inter-religious dialogue in Cirebon organized by many parties especially PELITA and / or Fahmina Institute. The way the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims' communicate to each other can be identified and interpreted in a group conversation where there is no easy separation can be made between theological understanding and social interaction. The communication process inside the group conversation has dynamic relationship and is able to show the multiple

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45 Volker Küster and Robert Setio, "Muslim Christian Relations Observed, Comparative Studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands", 2014, Germany: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, p. 338
46 Kees de Jong, "Dialog dan Proklamasi di Era Pluralisme", in *Gema Teologi,* No. 1, Vol. 33, 2009

dimensions of human theologically and socially. Therefore, this research describes and analyses how the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims communicate inter-religiously in Cirebon in group conversations where they, both as a group and as an individual, accommodate or not accommodate others as a response of some intolerance cases occurred in Cirebon.

This research applies Communication Accommodation Theory (henceforth CAT) Howard Giles as well as the theological foundations. It explores beyond the surface by paying more attention to the language people use to describe, label and think of others and how people adjust their communicative behaviours in focus group discussion. CAT is talking about the possibility of *accommodative* and *non-accommodative* climate in an intercultural, intergroup, and / or interpersonal communication context. Its assumptions deal with the *field of experience* each groups / personal have, perception, motivation, stereotypes, the impact of the language and in-group values, of Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims. An *accommodative climate* is one in which conversational partners listen to one another, take the other's perspectives and views into account and explain things that is agreeable to their partner. Pleasantness, politeness, and respect are embraced more compare to the non-accommodative conversation.[47] What Kees de Jong explained as inter-religious dialogue is so called *accommodative climate* in this theory.

One of the reasons why CAT is important in inter-religious dialogue is because that it aims at the communication process where inter-religious dialogue is about to be created. It mainly discovers how people behave communicatively (or in other words, communicate inter-religiously) and how they adjust their communication towards each other in order to reach either convergence or divergence. Both divergence and convergence condition disclose the factors that hinder or foster people's willingness to join the inter-religious dialogue.

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[47] Howard Giles, Daniel Linz, Doug Bonilla & Michelle Leah Gomez, "Police Stops of and Interactions with Latino and White (Non-Latino) Drivers: Extensive Policing and Communication Accommodation", in *Communication Monographs* Vol. 79, 4 (December 2012), p. 409

Many scholars and theologians have tried to bridge the inter-religious gaps through various approaches including hermeneutical approach,[48] thorough explanation on common vocabularies identical with certain religion,[49] mapping the inter-religious dialogue models of inter-religious dialogue,[50] explaining other's theological perspectives historically[51] and discussing about doctrines,[52] each with their own achievements. Yet there is still a room for communication theology to bridge the inter-religious gaps. Following the scholars and theologians footsteps, this research tries another approach on bridging the gaps by using CAT specifically to analyse the reluctancy of youth in Cirebon to join *Dialogue of Theology* and/or *Dialogue of Religious Experience.*

Government and NGOs also have provided inter-religious practical programmes for Christians and Muslims including forums, discussions, workshop, seminars, *live in,* and discussing similar themes between the two religions.[53] However, what if there is neither eagerness yet to understand other's scripture nor see things through other's perspective? Why there were few, or even worse, none participant joining the programme?

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[48] e.g., Volker Küster and Robert Setio, "Muslim Christian Relations Observed, Comparative Studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands"*,* 2014, Germany: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, p. 225-317; Karel Steenbrink, "Membaca Bersama Alkitab dan Al-Qur'an: Renungan Terhadap Beberapa Pengalaman di Indonesia dan Belanda"*,* in *Memahami Kebenaran Yang Lain Sebagai Upaya Pembaharuan Hidup Bersama,* 2010, Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen, p. 290-306;

[49] e.g., H.M. Nur Kholis Setiawan and Djaka Soetapa, "Meniti Kalam Kerukunan 2, Beberapa Istilah Kunci Dalam Islam dan Kristen", 2014, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia; Badru Kateregga and David Shenk, "Dialog Islam dan Kristen"*,* 2009, Semarang: Pustaka Muria

[50] e.g., JB Banawiratma, "Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation as Ecumenical Movement"*,* in Hope Antone et al, *Asian Handbook for Theological Education and Ecumenism,* 2013, Oxford: Regnum Books International, p. 261-269; Mujiburrahman, "Meninjau Ulang Dialog Antar Agama di Indonesia"*,* in Stanley Adi Prasetyo, *Pluralisme, Dialog dan Keadilan,* 2011, Yogyakarta: Interfidei, p. 185-196

[51] e.g., Hamim Ilyas and Aris Fauzan, "Islam-Kristen Indonesia: Menegakkan Payung Ibrahim"*,* in *Memahami Kebenaran Yang Lain Sebagai Upaya Pembaharuan Hidup Bersama,* 2010, Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen, p. 124-144; Alwi Shihab, "Membangun Jembatan Melalui Dialog Antaragama", in Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, *Mengelola Keragaman di Indonesia,* 2012, Yogyakarta: ICRS, p. 167-176

[52] e.g., Kees de Jong, "Pekabaran Injil Dalam Konteks Masyarakat Multikultural Pluralistik"*,* in *Memahami Kebenaran Yang Lain Sebagai Upaya Pembaharuan Hidup Bersama,* 2010, Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen, p. 334-355; Pieternella van doom-Harder et al, "Lima Titik Temu Agama-agama"*,* 2000, Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana Christian University Press; Olaf. H. Schuman, "Kristen dan Muslim: Antara Misi dan Dakwah dalam Situasi Dunia dan Lingkungan Hidup yang Berbeda"*,* in *Menghadapi Tantangan, Memperjuangkan Kerukunan,* 2009, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, p. 61-88

[53] For instances, (1) NTERFIDEI (national inter-religious dialogue group - http://interfidei.or.id/) often educates society through seminars, workshops or training classes that deal with inter-religious questions and peace building, as well as short courses in a forum on religions and society studies; (2) Fahmina Institute Cirebon organize similar programmes such as public seminars, forums and discussion. It also become a center for progressive Islamic teaching through Fahmina Institute for the Study of Islam (ISIF)

Bridging inter-religious gaps by providing various programmes are important but not enough. The emphasis needs to be on increasing willingness of people, who have experienced religious violences and probably have constructed negative assumptions and stereotypes towards other religions, to join such programmes. In Cirebon context as explained before, the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants youth are not even open yet and feel hesitate to join in the discussion of other's religious traditions or doctrines. It is uneasy to say but maybe they do not want to discuss about hermeneutical approaches or listening to a thorough explanation on common vocabularies identical with Islam yet since they did not want to come and join in the *dialogue of theology* and *dialogue of religious experience.* This is why we need to identify the reasons behind the reluctancy using CAT where societal domains is evaluated as well. CAT also supported the freedom of expression that help youth to speak up easily. It collects and analyses their field of experience, perception, the language and also the expectation indirectly. As millennial generation, the freedom of expression is an important factor due to their wide range of opinions, which is a lot more easier to collect and identify only with the involvement of communication theory.

Another reason why CAT is important is that this theory uncovers the meaning beneath the daily interactions, supported by its 4 main assumptions and its theological foundation. CAT helps to find out the stereotypes, negative perceptions and current preconceptions existed in the communication between the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims in Cirebon. The interconnected assumptions of CAT see the interaction between two parties, analyze their communicative behavior's adjustment - whether they decided to converge or diverge. When they reached the limit and are about to decide whether to be converged or diverged, they evaluate their inter-religious relations. Through this kind of evaluation in a conversation with others, people learn their own prejudices and discover new insights about their own faith and religious tradition. Through interaction and conversation in inter-religious dialogue designed based on CAT, differences could be explored socially and theologically. Thus, it most likely to provide answers on the reluctancy among youth in joining the inter-religious dialogue in Cirebon. In other words, this research also tries to find out to what extent CAT plays its role in bridging the inter-religious gaps in Cirebon.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How do the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims communicate inter-religiously in Cirebon?

2. To what extent does the Communication Theology create a space for inter-religious dialogue among youth in Cirebon?

1.5. Research Objectives

This research aims to describe and analyses how the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestant and Cirebonese Muslims youth communicate inter-religiously and to discover the role of Communication Theology in creating a space for inter-religious dialogue among youth in Cirebon.

1.6. Research Significance

1.6.1. Academical Significance

It is to be hoped that the result of this research will be significant for future research either in theology, communication studies or in both contexts. Particularly in terms of inter-religious dialogue in Cirebon and Communication Accommodation Theory, this research hopefully will be useful as it provides contextual data and serve as an example of some relevancy of them two.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

Any parties who wanted to organize inter-religious dialogue in the matter of dialogue of theology and dialogue of religious experience, hopefully will benefit from this research since it shows the socio-cultural barriers in joining inter-religious dialogue. Specifically in Cirebon context, this research allows people to become more aware of the importance of inclusive ethnicity, religious pluralism and multiple dimensions of individual.

1.7. Scope and Delimitation

This research is limited to the dialogue of theology and dialogue of religious experience in Cirebon city. It has natural tendency as a qualitative research to be interpretive as well as subjective, hence it needs the scholars opinion to balance the subjectivity contained in this research.

1.8. Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the research's questions, I begin with inter-religious definition and scope, the development of inter-religious dialogue in Indonesia, explanation on intercultural barriers, followed by some common understanding of Christian theology of religions and at last, show the possible added value of communication particularly Communication Accommodation Theory by Howard Giles to the inter-religious dialogue problem in Cirebon context.

1.9. Research Methods

This research apply interpretive paradigm with qualitative approach. Qualitative research is actually not easy to define as it covers wide range of techniques and philosophies. Denzin and Lincoln,[54] stated that qualitative research involved interpretation of the phenomena and naturalistic approach to what is being researched. Therefore Hennink et al. concluded that qualitative researcher use natural setting to find out the basic argument logically and attempting to interpret the phenomenon with the meaning that people attach to it.[55]

Qualitative research tend to focus more on the understanding of meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, symbols and descriptions of something.[56] This research used qualitative approach in order to gained in-depth understanding of the issue by seeing through the informants' perspectives.

The research method applied to this research is *Focus Group Discussion* (henceforth FGD). The FGD creates a situation where people are informally 'interviewed' in a group-discussion setting. FGD topics might include public attitudes (such as race relations, equality) or personal behaviors towards specific issue. The moderator has to make sure that the discussion is an open discussion by all group members and prevent one person dominate the discussion. Its natural setting allows people to express opinions/ideas freely. FGD encourages open expression among members of marginalized social groups (or minorities, such as Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants).[57]

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[54] as cited in Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, "Qualitative Research Methods"*, 2011, London: SAGE Publications Ltd

[55] Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, "Qualitative Research Methods"*, 2011, London: SAGE Publications Ltd

[56] Bruce L. Berg, "Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences"*, 2007, Boston: Pearson Education, p.3

[57] W. Lawrence Neuman, *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approach,* 2nd ed, 2007, Boston: Pearson Edition, p. 300-301

In this research, FGD is going to be done in 3 groups. Each groups consist of 6 people. The first group consists of Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants. The second group consists of Cirebonese Muslims. The third group consists of Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims (mix group). However, the number of informants closely depends on data saturation. If at some point the information collected begins to repeat itself and pointed out that further data collection becomes redundant, then there is no need to recruit other informants. This is in a line with the principle of saturation by Hennink et. al. Nevertheless, due to the limitations of research's time, hopefully this 3 FGD will provide all the data that is needed. If it needs further explanation, then in-depth interviews hopefully will complete it. Informants were selected based on non-probability or non-random methods often known as purposive recruitment.[58]

Purposive recruitment or purposive sampling is considered suitable in this research as the research is an informative cases, in need of specific informants who fit the topic[59]. The informant is categorized as youngsters,[60] age 15-24 years old and not actively involved in inter-religious dialogues or similar activities. Previous research has shown that youngsters who is already and actively involved in inter-religious dialogues or similar activities has already eliminated stereotypes, pre-conceptions or pre-assumptions of other religions and is more open-minded person in terms of inter-religious relations.[61] Therefore, this research focuses on youth who is not familiar with such conversation.

The Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants in this research are specified to the youngsters who joined the aforementioned spiritual revival worship (KKR) by Rev. Stephen Tong on

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[58] Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, "Qualitative Research Methods", 2011, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 85

[59] There are three situations that considered as appropriate in using purposive sampling: (1) a researcher uses it to select unique cases that are especially informative; (2) a researcher may use purposive sampling to select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialized population; (3) when a researcher wants to identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation, in W. Lawrence Neuman, *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approach,* 2nd ed, 2007, Boston: Pearson Edition, p. 142-143

[60] United Nations, "Definition of Youth", retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf, accessed on 5 February 2017

[61] Gloria W. Verdina and Rino F. Boer, "Membangun Demokrasi Melalui Pemahaman Pluralisme Beragama Berdasarkan Symbolic Convergence Theory", in *Masa Depan Komunikasi, Masa Depan Indonesia: Demokratisasi Masyarakat Plural,* 2014, Jakarta: Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia (ISKI), p. 88-113

October 27th, 2016. While the Cirebonese Muslims is specified to the youngsters, who is living in Cirebon City, and is more general in terms of their understanding and preferences about Islam.

One of the limitations of FGD is that only one or few topics can be discussed and it produce fewer ideas than in individual interviews.[62] Therefore, data is also collected with in-depth semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews typically are used to understand people's own beliefs and gain insight from their personal experiences as well as if they are in a group. In-depth interviews are thus primarily used to gain in-depth information, to identify personal story, *field of experience t*o understand the context surrounding people's lives, *perception, evaluation* and *motivation.* It is also suitable when researching sensitive issues like theological understanding that correlates with ethnicity.

While secondary data is collected through the documentary sources particularly in written sources such as books, journals and other form of document which has a value for research. Secondary data in this research is a credible official statistics by local government and some factual reports concerning religious violences in Cirebon City. As mentioned before, books, journal and website become significant reference that needs to be assessed first in terms of relevancy and quality of information they contain.

1.10. Structure of the Thesis

In chapter 1, we discuss the urgency of the topic from national to local scope. It includes the list of inter-religious violences, theological problems that turns to be social interaction issues in which affect and being affected by societal domains such as the economical situation, politics, social life and culture. It also explains the ethnicity problems and ongoing Muslims and Christian Protestants fundamentalist competition movements in Cirebon. Two research questions are formulated at the end of the chapter.

In chapter 2, Theories, we take into account the inter-religious dialogue scope, history, its barriers, followed by some common understanding of Christian theology of religions. Later, the

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[62] W. Lawrence Neuman, "Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approach", 2nd ed, 2007, Boston: Pearson Edition, p. 301

added value of Communication Accommodation Theory by Howard Giles to the inter-religious dialogue in Cirebon context are explained, including the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3, namely Analysis. This is where the research questions are answered and analyzed based on theories and concepts in the preceding chapter, transcript from the FGD, in depth interview, and secondary data. It is priorly started with subject overview such as Cirebon city, the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims definition.

In chapter 4, Theology is Communication, the data that has been analyzed will be reflected theologically, considering the involvement of the church and christian values.

In chapter 5, the conclusion will be drawn based on analysis and theological reflections. This chapter also includes several suggestions for church, community in Cirebon and for the next relevant research either in theology, communication or in both context.

V. Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Conclusion

Although Cirebon as a 'Kota Wali' was built on Islamic principles and values at the beginning, its plurality in terms of ethnicity and religions have been sustaining and maintaining the harmony until nowadays. The existence of Chinese descent and the touch of Christianity in Cirebon were inseparable. Unfortunately, many negative stereotypes were addressed to certain religion and race due to globalization and the increased of radicalization. Labelings and the tendency to judge started to eliminate trust among youngsters. Daily life interaction is limited to the in group members (insiders). Suspiciousness aroused between race groups. The problems in social interaction were strongly correlates with societal domains and theological understanding.

Concurrently, inter-religious dialogue, as a place to unite the diversity, facing no-regeneration. People who join in such dialogue are most likely the same persons for years. While the senior get older, the youth is unwilling to join to take the place of. By aiming at the communication process where inter-religious dialogue is about to be created, this research disclose the factors that hinder and foster people's willingness to join the inter-religious dialogue and showed the multiple dimensions of human.

The range of perspectives of Chinese Indonesian Christian Protestants youth in Cirebon towards Cirebonese Muslims could be identified as following: from uncontextualized religion, forced Islamization, discriminator, unskilled / uneducated, to Islam as a religion which legitimates religious violence and terrorism. They still appreciate the ability, competence of, and kindness inside other human being whom faith is different only if the man is seen separated from his religion. Meanwhile, the Cirebonese Muslims developed positive opinions towards Christians such as kind, friendly, tolerable, have patience and diligent. However, when race is added to it, the opinion turns out to be negative. The deconstructive critics on the physical appearance, different economical level, religious traditions, social gap and the cynical word "Cina", all were used to identify the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants.

Yet the Chinese Indonesian Christian Protestants humbly respect Islam, and any other religion in terms of salvation. They believe that religious diversity is created by God. So every religion has its privilege to say that they all are the absolute truth. Some of them show consideration for Islam by saying that Islam might be the absolute truth. The pluralists, did not place themselves in the binary positions, to mention Islam or Christian Protestant is right and other is wrong. They were even able to criticize that not all of Christian Protestants is right and saved. The salvation will only obtainable if the Christians truly believe in Jesus Christ. In addition to that, they are open to many possibilities, even some of them were open to the further discussion on salvation. Other participants, classified as inclusivists, agreed that Muslims may be saved under God's mysterious will, because God himself created the plurality and love all of His creation hence there is potential salvation of all. For them, non-Christians may be saved yet, whether by a decision after death or by God's mysterious will, that a Christian understanding of the abundance and infinity of God's love allows Christians to hope for the potential salvation of all, or that whatever is found to be true and salvific in other traditions is ultimately the work of God in Christ.

Whilst for Cirebonese Muslims, the existence of Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants completed their religious views. Through the eyes of another, they are able to do self-reflection as a Muslims and enrich their understanding of Islam. Most of them believe that Islam is the right one to hold on to. Therefore, in a way, they really hope that one day Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants would convert to Islam. But this kind of wish is accompanied by great tolerance and respect to other's whom faith is different. They simply rejected forced Islamization in Cirebon, telling that such movement does not reflect Islam value of peace and freedom.

Since the negative stereotypes are addressed merely to the ethnicity and not to the Christian Protestant, they have some sort of dilemma in dealing with intolerant acts addressed to Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants which is done by Islamist hardliners in Cirebon. Although the forcing closure of churches in Cirebon is very alien to their life, nonetheless, they condemned the intolerant actions and religious violences. Each human being does not deserve to be treated violently and inter-religious dialogue is the proper way to deal with such case. Moreover, even

though they have lots of negative stereotypes addressed to the Chinese descent, they realized that at the end the Chinese descent being are very crucial as they are part of Cirebonese history.

In terms of inter-religious communication, the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims youth discussion reached an accommodation climate on straightening the misconception of Islam. However, when the ethnicity problem were discussed, the discussion turns out to be divergence.

The barriers of inter-religious dialogue between Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims appeared firstly from the wrong conception and perception of other's religion and ethnicity. It can be overcome by self disclosure and assertive statement in which person see the good thing in other's religion. Such pre-assumptions hindered the accommodative climate at the beginning. Later, right after the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants explained literally about the good of each religion and leave the violence to the bad human nature, Cirebonese Muslims accommodate the Chinese descent in the discussion and created an accommodative climate.

Secondly, different degrees of accommodation in social problems created insensitive feelings of other's misery. Due to lack of information about anti-Chinese riots in 1998, the Cirebonese Muslims are less sensitive to highly sensitive case for other's and their response did not meet the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants expectation. This is when the accommodative climate changed into divergence.

Whether they have reached convergence and/or divergence, they have evaluated their inter-religious relations. Through this kind of evaluation in a conversation with others, the youngsters are able to identify their own prejudices and discover new insights of their own faith and religious tradition.

Analysis and theological reflections further explained that human is a multi dimensional in his relations to others. Meanwhile, God's relations with human also has its multiplicity. Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants are good in daily social relations, although conversely they are

fanatic in their religion. Nonetheless, even though they are fanatic, they appreciate the salvation Islam has offered to its followers. The same way goes to the fact that Cirebonese Muslims could see the good in Christianity yet they formed negative assumptions on the Chinese descent. God's relations with human also has its multiple dimensions in which reflected in Jesus' life. When Jesus was on earth, he converged and diverged with humans by showing his multiple dimensions communicatively. Jesus considered the context and his speech and behavioral similarities and dissimilarities with his audience by paying more attention to other's field of experience, the language he used, and the degrees of accommodation. Whilst he diverged with the Scribes and the Pharisees most of the times using the power of silence, deprecating languages and immediate leaving. It is important to bear in mind that Jesus' divergence with the Scribes cannot be labeled as a limitless issue. At one point, Jesus appreciated the Scribes and thus created an accommodative stance (Mark 12:33).

A significant point that needs to be emphasized is that a man has his multiple dimensions in communicating with others. If the relationship does not work out as it is supposed to be, then it needs to be seen as a part of communication process. On this account, inter-religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia cannot simply put the blame on the theological understanding in which commonly considered as the thing that is responsible and takes control of everything. The understanding of Christian's exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism as explained before in chapter 2, is thus a deductive depiction on how people are categorized. By using communication theory analysis, it is proved that people cannot be put in a certain box as they have various perspectives on many aspects. The multiple dimensions of human enable them to be open in one aspect and not for others, vice versa.

Communication theology has helped the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and Cirebonese Muslims participants to have courage to be an open minded person and embrace the multiple dimensions of human. Although the number of subjects of this research is very limited and cannot be counted as a representative of all Chinese-Indonesian and Cirebonese Muslims youngsters, they could be a typical sample for Christians-Muslims youth relations in Cirebon. The explanation of reluctancy and also the realms of possibility created through this research

hopefully have an impact in the future inter-religious dialogue among youth particularly in Cirebon context.

5.2. Suggestions
5.2.1. Academic Suggestions

Further research is needed to investigate whether this issue has grown into a communal issue between youngster in Cirebon. A larger scope of research is required to prevent and/or straighten misconception socially and theologically. It is to be hoped that there will be future researches combining communication and theology, aiming at the multiple dimensions of people and the communication process before, during and/or after inter-religious dialogue in order to stop conflicts, find a common ground between religions, and act as a medium to achieve common interests.

5.2.2. Practical Suggestions

On the basis of the result of this research, there is a need to increase the trust and religious pluralism awareness among youth in Cirebon, supported by the local Church. It is obvious that the restricted interaction which is limited to domestic affairs with Muslims (with their domestic workers, drivers, unskilled manual workers, and staff) is root of the problem. Earlier chapter on analysis delineated the fact that the Chinese descent have been raised in a family who does not allow them to be open and build relationship with the non-Chinese. Whilst the Cirebonese Muslims were raised in different situation, but still have some prejudices left against Chinese descent. This, resulted in an insiders-outsiders boundary created by both parties. Inter-religious dialogue, regardless its types, would be the solution that fit for Cirebonese Muslims to straighten their paradigm towards Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants and to evaluate the use of cynical word 'Cina'. And for the Chinese-Indonesian Christian Protestants, it is important to understand the implication of the past wounds that correlates in their higher social and economic status.

The church should create a room for communication theology as a living space. The church needs to take into consideration the multiple dimensions of people and other Churches in its communication context, hence will be able to move together through joint programs regardless

their commonly known different theological understandings. A room for ecumenical and also inter-religious dialogue.

Old fashioned inter-religious dialogue in which normatively done should be changed immediately. The interlocutors are not interested in joining the inter-religious dialogue or any similar forums due to some reasons explained before. Thus, it is time to open and create a space for dialogue in more practical way. It can be done when both parties involved in activities or event which are organised by church, consistently for some period of time. The consistency of such things is inline with the Indonesian value *gotong royong*. For instances, cleaning up the neighbourhood together and help voluntarily victims of natural disaster, etc. The church should review the diakonia concept it has as its true intention is not to show off the member's wealth but to show the true love of God. If it is to be done based on the intention to show God's true love, then it should be acceptable if the activities are done together with others whom faith is different and leave the church identity behind. Because the main reason of this practical dialogue is to create a space for discussion. When the room is open and the dialogue occur, the prejudices will gradually decrease and will reach the true meaning of dialogue.

Social media campaign targeting the millennials can be counted as a way to create a joint program in order to increase the trust and religious pluralism awareness among youth in Cirebon. As one of the medium of communication, the encounter in social media nowadays has a huge impact in changing the way people see each other. In interpersonal, intergroup and among institutions, social media could gathered people regardless their religions in one place and thus become the prefect place to spread the religious pluralism awareness through its unique features.

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