

The Islamic View of Jesus and Its Implication for Muslim-Christian Harmony in Maluku

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the views of several lecturers at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Ambon towards Jesus. In the Maluku context, the encounter between Christianity and Islam shows the existence of a dynamic relationship, which is manifested not only in the form of harmony and peace but also in tension and conflict. In reality, Maluku faced conflict between Muslims and Christians in 1999–2004. The experience of conflict left behind trauma and residual hatred, which resulted in many insults, ridicule, and hate speech towards the central figures of each religion, such as Jesus and Muhammad. Research conducted through in-depth interviews with several IAIN Ambon lecturers shows that although there are substantial differences from Christian theological views, Islam's view of Jesus is very positive and can even become a meeting point for Islamic-Christian dialogue in Maluku. The article produces findings regarding three positive and constructive views of Jesus as *Ulil Azmi*, a rule model of love and humanity, and a prophet.

Keywords: Lecturer of IAIN Ambon; Islamic view of Jesus; Christian; Interreligious Dialogue

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pandangan beberapa dosen Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ambon, terhadap Yesus. Dalam konteks Maluku, pertemuan antara Kristen dan Islam menunjukkan adanya relasi yang dinamis, yang termanifestasi tidak hanya dalam bentuk kerukunan dan perdamaian melainkan juga ketegangan, dan konflik. Dalam kenyataan, Maluku pernah menghadapi konflik antar umat Islam dan Kristen pada tahun 1999-2004. Pengalaman konflik menyisahkan trauma dan residu kebencian yang berdampak pada banyaknya hujatan, ejekan, dan ujaran kebencian terhadap tokoh sentra masing-masing agama seperti Yesus dan Muhammad. Penelitian yang dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam beberapa dosen IAIN Ambon, menunjukkan bahwa meski terdapat perbedaan substansial dari pandangan teologi Kristen, pandangan Islam terhadap Yesus sangat positif, bahkan dapat menjadi titik-temu dialog Islam-Kristen di Maluku. Artikel menghasilkan temuan mengenai tiga pandangan positif dan konstruktif terhadap Yesus sebagai *Ulil Azmi*, teladan cinta kasih dan kemanusiaan, dan seorang nabi.

Kata-kata Kunci: Dosen IAIN Ambon, Pandang Islam tentang Yesus; Kristen; Dialog Antaragama



INTRODUCTION

Historically, encounters between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia have two opposing faces. On the one hand, the meeting between these two communities exists based on dialogue and collaboration. Still, on the other hand, their encounters were also full of tension and conflict, even violence. Specifically, conflict-based encounters generally occur as a result of political interests that use religious identity as their face. Then, it directly impacts the lousy relationship between Islam and Christianity in Indonesia, reflected in various forms of competition, conflict, and communal violence between these two religious groups.¹ At this point, according to Kimball,² religion, or religious people, tends to be evil. In other words, the tendency to turn religion into evil exists in all religions and religious groups.

In addition to political factors, other essential factors are certain religions' doctrines. Even though religious leaders argue that there is nothing problematic about religious doctrine but in religious adherents, religious doctrines still have some possibilities to drive people into conflict.³ This problem generally occurs in the dynamics of Islamic-Christian relations in Indonesia, such as the debate over Merry Christmas wishing for the Christian, which always appears annually, Muslim use of Christian attributes, etc. This debate, of course, shows that religious doctrine can encourage its adherents into conflict with other religions' adherents, even possibly leading its religious followers to commit acts of violence against the other.

Further, concerning doctrinal ones, one significant factor that can create friction in Muslim-Christian relations is the existence of stereotypes from one religion against another. According to Yunus,⁴ the emergence of stereotypes from one group against another is usually a trigger for conflict between religious adherents, which can create some acts of violence like attacking and killing each other, or various other destructive actions. For example, according to his findings in the last few decades, many adherents from different religions have stereotyped Muslims as radical, intolerant, and exclusively subjective in viewing the other religions. Meanwhile, Christians appear as aggressive and ambitious people who tend to dominate all aspects of life and try to spread the message of Jesus. These

¹ Jan S Aritonang, *Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen Dan Islam Di Indonesia*, Cetakan Ke (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006). ix-x

² Charles Kimball, "Kala Agama Jadi Bencana, Terj," *Nurhadi. Bandung: Mizan*, 2003.78-83

³ Kimball. xiii

⁴ Firdaus M Yunus, "Konflik Agama Di Indonesia Problem Dan Solusi Pemecahannya," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 2 (2014): 217–28. 217

various stereotypes indicate that the relationship between religions, in this case, between Islam and Christianity in Indonesia, is not going well, as in Maluku.

In the context of Maluku, encounters between Christians and Muslims also appear in the same face. The experience of coexistence among people of different religions, especially Christians and Muslims, which has been going on for hundreds of years, is not free from conflict and rivalry. History records that the outbreak of religious conflict from 1999 to 2004 damaged Christian and Islamic relations, known for being peaceful and harmonious in Maluku. The peace and harmony that have been created based on local wisdom, such as *pela*, *gandong*, *salam-sarane*, *famili*, *makan patita*, *masohi*, etc., have not been able to prevent Maluku from the clutches of religious-based social conflict. Therefore, Muslim-Christian relations are vulnerable and can lead to conflict and violence, even in a society with high diversity awareness.

Based on the facts and data presented, this article aims to describe the views of the Islamic State Institute of Ambon (IAIN) lectures on Jesus. This effort was motivated by the observations of a phenomenon that emerged during the conflict, such as: mocking and insulting other religions, which was directed not only against the adherents of that religion but also against the central symbols and figures exalted by their religions. According to Al-Qurtuby,⁵ these harmful activities usually appear spontaneously and are often used amid an ongoing war.⁶ In this case, Jesus or Muhammad became the target of mockery to provoke the anger of Christians or Muslims. In the present context, even though the war has long been over, these stereotypes and negative utterances are still common in people's daily lives within their internal religious groups. This activity is dangerous because it can trigger new friction or open up the old wounds of conflict still lingering in society's collective memory. Therefore, without early prevention, it can directly disrupt the relations that have slowly improved after the conflict and disrupt post-conflict reconciliation efforts. Hence, this paper hopefully can rectify erroneous views of Jesus and provide an alternative contribution in the academic realm in building a shared understanding between Muslims and Christians in Maluku.

⁵ Sumanto Al Qurtuby, *Islam & Kristen: Dinamika Pascakonflik Dan Masa Depan Perdamaian Di Ambon* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018). 27

⁶ Al-Qurtuby noted that when facing each other, the Muslims wore white headbands, while the Christians wore red headbands. So since then, the terms for the two parties have become "white people" (for Muslims) and "red people" (for Christians). Later, the term Acang for Muslims (which is a play on "Hasan") and Obed for Christians (which stands for "Robert") later develop. See also Al Qurtuby., 56.

Topics and studies on the Muslim view of Jesus exist in many literatures. The first, written by Subandrijo in his book,⁷ discusses Christian and Muslim views toward Jesus in Indonesia. He says Muslims and Christians in Indonesia have different ideas about Allah and Jesus. This difference often creates critical misunderstandings that exacerbate doctrinal conflicts between the two and complicate their efforts to build harmonious relationships. Here, Jesus becomes the point of contention between the two. However, if we look further from the hymns of Christ in Colossians 1:15-20 and *QS Maryam* 19:16-40, it will be apparent that both of them worship the one God. Therefore, these two hymns can be a meeting point of the two religions' belief in Allah. Or at least, continued Subandrijo, starting from the messages of these two hymns, Muslims and Christians can reduce their doctrinal misunderstandings about God and Christ.⁸ Thus, Jesus is not only a point of contention but, at the same time, can be a meeting point for the two religions.

Further, Titing's⁹ research on Jesus' contribution to humanity from the Islamic perspective of Nahdatul Ulama, in her thesis she wrote in 2008. According to her study of Nahdatul Ulama's view of Jesus, she concluded that Islam's humanitarian mission stems from the teachings and struggles of Jesus for humanity and has even become a pattern for Muhammad SAW to continue it. That is why Jesus got his title *Ulil Azmi*, according to Titing. Furthermore, Titing's views align with Wolly's views.¹⁰ In his book *Saudaraku di Serambi Iman* (My Brothers in the faith's foyer) he invites churches and Christians in Indonesia to see and know Islam through its teachings. This invitation is motivated by Islam being part of the Indonesian context where the churches witness and serve. Therefore, the formulation of the ecclesiological presence of Christianity in Indonesia needs to consider knowledge and recognition of the Islamic context. After explaining how the Qur'an discusses the Trinity and Jesus, he concludes that the Lord Jesus is honored in the Qur'an with names and titles following his prophet-hood, apostolate, and messianic action. Thus, it means that Jesus cannot be rejected or criticized by the Qur'an.¹¹

⁷ Bambang Subandrijo, *Yesus Sang Titik Temu Dan Titik Tengkar : Sebuah Studi Tentang Pandangan Kristen Dan Muslim Di Indonesia Mengenai Yesus* (Jakarta: PT BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016). 15

⁸ Subandrijo.17

⁹ Leonora Titing, "Kontribusi Yesus Bagi Kemanusiaan Dalam Pandangan Islam Nahdatul Ulama" (Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku, 2008)., 188.

¹⁰ Nicolas J Woly, *Saudaraku Di Serambi Iman: Mengenal Pokok-Pokok Ajaran Agama Sesama Kita Kaum Muslimin* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011). 7.

¹¹Woly., 343.

Olaf H. Schumann conducted an in-depth study of *Al-masih*¹² or Jesus from the perspective of Muslim scholars by using religious studies approach.¹³ He combined some different views, beginning with the Qur'an,¹⁴ followed by the opinions of Christian scholars who converted to Islam,¹⁵ the views of a *Mu'tazilah*,¹⁶ and the views of the Sufis.¹⁷ According to him, in the Qur'an and later Islam, Jesus is called '*abd Allah*' (servant of Allah). Based on that title, Jesus is an honorable prophet in Islam. The reason is that in the conceptual idea of Islam, this title is the highest title for a human being. In this case, he continued, the Qur'an does not contradict the fundamental statements that the Bible makes about Jesus.¹⁸

Then, concerning conflict and peacebuilding, an article by Yunus,¹⁹ *Konflik Agama di Indonesia Problem dan Solusi Pemecahannya* (Religious Conflict in Indonesia Problems and Solutions) is quite a significant contribution. He places religion as a source of conflict by looking at the inter-religious conflict that occurred in the Moro Philippines (Muslim-Christians), the massacre of Rohingya Muslims by Buddhists in Myanmar, sectarian clashes in the city of Boda, Central African Republic involving Muslims and Christians and two cases in Indonesia, namely the conflict in Poso between Muslims and Christians and the Shiite conflict in East Java. According to him, these two cases in Indonesia can lead to conflict and violence, so efforts to resolve them require wisdom from all parties to bring Indonesia free from protracted religious disputes. Furthermore, the writings of Alfiani and Saputra,²⁰ *Blaspheming and Insulting on Social Media in the Perspective of Islamic Law*, can provide additional perspectives regarding religious conflicts and their resolution. This paper examines the phenomenon of blasphemy on social media, which is analyzed using an Islamic legal approach. Based on their analysis, the use of social media should be accompanied by legal and religious awareness so that users can continue to use social media in an orderly manner and not violate Islamic law, both in behavior and speech. A recent article relating to comparative theology between two religions is *Grounding Peace through*

¹² A Title for Jesus, means "savior"

¹³Olaf H Schuman, *Al-Masih Dalam Padandangan Pemikiran Muslim* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019).

¹⁴Schuman., 25–62.

¹⁵Schuman., 63–96.

¹⁶Schuman., 97–122.

¹⁷ Schuman., 151–203.

¹⁸ Schuman., 290.

¹⁹ Yunus, "Konflik Agama Di Indonesia Problem Dan Solusi Pemecahannya."

²⁰Arif Alfani and Hasep Saputra, "Menghujat Dan Menista Di Media Sosial Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Al-Istimbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 4, no. 1 (2019).

*the Word of God and Bearers of the Word: A Christian-Muslim Comparative Theology.*²¹

In this article, the author emphasizes that the right way to carry out comparative studies between Islam and Christianity is to understand Jesus and the Koran as the Word of God.

Hence, the Islamic Interpretation of Jesus has positive content through previous reviews. However, in contrast to previous studies, this research shows a particular locus to see and understand the views of IAIN Ambon lecturers towards Jesus with a specific contextual background, the socio-religious conflict that hit Ambon in 1999-2004. Hence, the main question is how IAIN lecturers view the figure of Jesus.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method, which means that this research intends to understand the phenomenon holistically experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, in the form of descriptive writing. The data collected from this study are primary data obtained directly from the research field, either through observation or through in-depth interviews with informants.²² Then, several interviews with four lecturers as informants willing to answer several research questions. This research occurred at the Islamic State Institute of Ambon, especially for Muslim lecturers or scholars. The Islamic State Institute of Ambon was chosen as the research location because it is one of the highest and largest Islamic academic centers in Maluku Province, where many Muslim thinkers and scholars certainly have in-depth knowledge about Islam. Thus, informants can provide enlightening and influential thoughts to rectify erroneous views of Jesus.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Through in-depth interviews, I found several views about Jesus by lecturers at the Islamic State Institute of Ambon²³ as a representation of Islamic thought about Jesus based on Qur'anic teaching.

²¹ Yohanes Parihala, "Grounding Peace through the Word of God and Bearers of the Word: A Christian-Muslim Comparative Theology," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 7, no. 2 (2022): 101–8, <https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.15575/jw.v7i2.21650>.

²² Lexy J Moleong, "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Cetakan Ke-36, Bandung: PT," *Remaja Rosdakarya Offset* 6 (2017)., 6.

²³ The lecturers who can be interviewed are Dr. H.B.S, M.Fil.I; Dr. Y H.A. M. Fill. I; Dr. SE; and Dr. M. R, M. Thi. (At the request of these informants, their name is written only with initials)

Jesus as *Ulil Azmi*

Jesus in the Qur'an, known as Isa, is considered a prophet, meaning he is not God. This view also conveys that God is one because God has no son²⁴. Interestingly, Jesus/Isa and his mother, Mary, are mentioned more often than the prophet Muhammad. Further, similar to the conception of Jesus in the Bible, the story in the Qur'an places Jesus as a person who was born without a father, also categorized as a holy man. In this position, a fundamental difference between the Islamic and Christian conceptions of Jesus is the moment after his birth; Jesus was placed as the prominent prophet called *Ulil Azmi* among the other five main prophets such as Moses (Musa), Adam and David (Daud), and Muhammad SAW as the last prophet. As an ordinary human being, Jesus has different characteristics than other creatures of God. Based on the interview, a respondent believe that Jesus had miracles, such as; reviving the dead, healing the blind and lepers, etc. Jesus also had the advantage of asking for food directly from God, where Allah sent food from heaven for his followers, and in infancy, Jesus was able to speak and speak²⁵.

Then, about the concept of the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus, Islam rejects that idea based on their belief that Allah is the only God. This belief has been shown in several statements by respondents that Jesus is a Prophet in Islam; he is not God²⁶. One respondent explained that Muslims must respect the idea that Jesus is God in Christianity but not reject it internally. He also continued that the Trinity for the Qur'an is a belief that deviates from the monotheistic system because the Islamic monotheistic system rejects everything equal to God²⁷. Another respondent explained that even though the Qur'an mentions the Trinity twice, Muslims must abandon this concept. The respondent said:

"It is prohibited to talk about it; just leave the Trinity. Trinity is inappropriate because God can't have a son; Allah is one; only the disbelievers who say Allah is one of three persons. Just as the Qur'an rejects the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus, so do I. People who believe in the Trinity is syirik."²⁸

²⁴ Interview with YHA , august 25, 2020; MR, September 21 2020. See also:Subandrijo, *Yesus Sang Titik Temu Dan Titik Tengkar : Sebuah Studi Tentang Pandangan Kristen Dan Muslim Di Indonesia Mengenai Yesus.*, 80–82.;Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature* (Psychology Press, 2002)., 39.;Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (Simon and Schuster, 2014)., 16.

²⁵ Interview with HBS by Jenny Abrahams, August 25, 2020

²⁶ Interview with HBS by Jenny Abrahams, August 25, 2020

²⁷ Interview with HBS by Jenny Abrahams, August 25, 2020

²⁸ Interview with SE by Jenny Abrahams, August 24, 2020

Nonetheless, another respondent stated that Muslims still accept Jesus as a prophet. The Qur'an even encourages its believers to take Jesus as a prophet and follow every teaching and kindness of Jesus listed in the Qur'an.²⁹

Next, in the context of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Qur'an categorically rejects the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. My findings through in-depth interviews with respondents all agree that Jesus was never killed or crucified. According to an informant based on the story of Jesus' death in the Qur'an, God raised Jesus to Heaven and will return at the end of the world. Meanwhile, according to him, the crucified person was similar to Jesus (possibly Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples). Hence, it means that according to the Islamic view, the story of Jesus' death and resurrection is a story that is theologically rejected in Islam because it is considered the result of the falsification of the Scriptures.³⁰

However, I found a slightly different view from another informant that people mistakenly prejudiced against Jesus were generally motivated by conflicts between Muslims and Christians throughout history, such as the Ambon conflict in 1999, the Crusade, etc. The informant continued that it is for political reasons that the name of Jesus became an enemy. Whereas in Islam, it is an obligation to recite the name of Jesus (and all other prophets) accompanied by a prayer which reads: "*Alaihissalam*" that means "may peace and praise be upon him."³¹

Jesus is a role model of love and humanity.

In contrast to the divinity aspect, which is not theologically accepted by Islamic teachings, several other elements can be elaborated on, especially in the context of Jesus as a role model of love and humanity. Even though the Islamic perspective and belief in Jesus tend to differ from the Christian's view, their unique understanding does not reduce appreciation towards Jesus as a role model for every human being, especially Christians and Muslims. This view appears in several arguments by some informant who say that the way of life and teachings of Jesus placed him as an example for every human being.³² One informant explained that Muslims accept Jesus as a prophet, and the most inherent teaching

²⁹ Interview with MR by Jenny Abrahams, September 21, 2020

³⁰ Alfred Guillaume, *Islam* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books Ltd, 1954), 196.

³¹ Interview with SE by Jenny Abrahams, August 24, 2020

³² Interview with MR by Jenny Abrahams, September 21, 2020

from Jesus is love and compassion.³³ Apart from the teachings about compassion for fellow human beings, several other aspects that show the centrality of Jesus in human life are self-sacrifice and his courage to speak the truth even though he had to deal with authoritarianism.

Next, another respondent explained that the attitude of Jesus could be an example and role model, in addition to the fact that his life was simple and far from a materialistic-hedonistic lifestyle. These aspects concerning the teachings of Jesus' humanity can be a basis of interreligious dialogue, even becoming a meeting point between Christianity and Islam.³⁴ On the other hand, another respondent also explained that Muslims must highlight Jesus' essence and actions because Jesus was an obedient human being in his opinion.³⁵ Meanwhile, according to another respondent, the aspect of love taught and shown by Jesus should be appreciated by a Muslim, and this aspect can be an inspiration in carrying out social movement and development.³⁶ In conclusion, these are the values of goodness and humanity from Jesus, which can be a role model for Christians and Muslims.

Jesus as the Prophet

Observing the views of lecturers at the Islamic State Institute of Ambon, as stated above, both personal and opinions based on the Qur'an regarding the significance of Jesus, these views are mesmerizing. There are similarities between several Christian theological views. Muslims recognize Jesus as one of the prophets and apostles among other prophets, but He is not God or the Son of God. In this case, monotheism is more critical so that the incarnation of Jesus has no place in Islam. However, Jesus was known as an ordinary human born from Mary's womb without going through the marriage and natural insemination process. It means that Jesus is a holy human being. According to the interview, Jesus did not die nor was crucified, but instead was raised by God into heaven. In other words, Islamic thought emphasizes that Jesus deserves respect but not worship. Besides, Jesus' teachings about humanity and his lifestyle can be examples and role models for the rest of human beings.

Further, the similarity of views toward Jesus in Islamic thought is intriguing. This fact may indicate that the process of internalizing the teachings of the Qur'an in Islam is

³³ Interview with MR by Jenny Abrahams, September 21, 2020

³⁴ Interview with HBS by Jenny Abrahams, August 25, 2020

³⁵ Interview with YHA by Jenny Abrahams, August 25, 2020

³⁶ Interview with SE by Jenny Abrahams, August 24, 2020

straightforward, well-planned, and systematic, with, of course, paying attention to the contents of the unchanged teachings. The discussion about Jesus is only alluded to when discussing monotheism, Islam's fundamental doctrine. However, other factors can also cause the similarity of views. This factor is Islam itself. According to Federspiel³⁷ in an article, Islam itself as a religion has become an integrated factor for Muslims. It is embodied in the idea of *Ukhuwah Islamiyyah*, the concept of Islamic brotherhood. This idea has united Muslims in a joint effort to express their collective identity. Their adherents gain a vital position in the world by basing their collective identity on Islamic teachings. From this point, we can understand that solidity in Islam is firm. Empathy and solidarity towards fellow Muslims in other places quickly surge when disaster, injustice, or war occurs. *Ukhuwah Islamiyyah* manifests itself in advocacy, compassion, and solidarity.

Then, Bambang Subandrijo³⁸ also stated the similarity of Muslim opinions about Jesus. According to his argument, it is not easy for us to get an overview of the views of Muslims in Indonesia towards Jesus because they do not have a systematic teaching or doctrine that talks explicitly about Jesus. This doctrine does not seem to be a central issue in Islam. The discussion about Jesus is only alluded to with the principle of monotheism (oneness of Allah) as a fundamental doctrine in Islam. He emphasized that even though the Muslim community in Indonesia is not monolithic but consists of several variants, both in terms of traditions, schools (*mazhab*), organizations, and movements, their doctrine of God (including their understanding of Jesus) has never contradicted one another. Even if there are differences of opinion, it only concerns mystical principles regarding the unity of being (*wahdat al-wujūd*) of Allah.³⁹

Indeed, in many ways, belief about Jesus in the Christian's thought, including the Christological titles given to Jesus, is not accepted by Islam, as can be seen from the previously described opinions. This principle can be understood from the perspective of the Al-Qur'an as the basis of thought. Following that fact, it is interesting to look further at a

³⁷ Howard M Federspiel, "Contemporary South-East Asian Muslim Intellectuals," in *Islam in the Era of Globalization: Muslim Attitude towards Modernity and Identity*, ed. Meuleman Johan (New York, London: Routledge Curzon, 2001), 345.

³⁸ Subandrijo, *Yesus Sang Titik Temu Dan Titik Tengkar : Sebuah Studi Tentang Pandangan Kristen Dan Muslim Di Indonesia Mengenai Yesus*.

³⁹ Subandrijo. 79. It can be noted here that the informants from the Islamic State Institute of Ambon came from the Nahdatul Ulama and Jamaah Tabligh organizations. It can also be added that Clifford Geertz's classification of Islam in Indonesia, especially in Java, for *Priyayi*, *Santri* and *Abangan* Islam can also be included in this conversation.

study conducted by Woly⁴⁰ on the names and titles of Jesus in the Qur'an. He mentions Jesus in the Qur'an, both directly and indirectly, in several places scattered over 14 surahs. In several of these verses, Jesus was recorded in various ways, both as a personal name and title. These names and titles include Isa, Son of Maryam, *Al-Masih* (Messiah), Servant (of God), Prophet, Apostle, *Kalimah*, and Spirit of God (Holy Spirit).

Looking at those eight names and titles in the Qur'an, the most prominent title is the prophet and apostle, followed by other titles, while *Al-Masih* and *Kalimah* are not mentioned in the Qur'an. These findings show that what Qur'an says about Jesus is broader than the understanding of the everyday life of those who understand him. Therefore, a more complete and comprehensive picture of Jesus in the Qur'an can only be obtained by reading and studying the Al-Qur'an. This idea is essential for Muslims and Christians, so interreligious dialogue can directly impact mutual understanding based on the Qur'anic teaching.

Through this presentation, it is clear that based on the views of respondents and in the Al-Qur'an itself, there are no negative titles or designations for Jesus. In this case, no insulted labels toward Jesus; on the contrary, these titles are a tribute to Jesus. The title servant of God or *abd Allah*, for example, is a title that describes Jesus' relationship with God as an obedient human being, even until his last day on earth. It aligns with Olaf Schumann's argument that here, people remember something significant for Muslims and related to the obedience of a human being to God, unconditional and unlimited obedience of a human being to God (although in Islam, the death of Christ on the cross is not recognized). This perfect and faithful obedience is manifested as the ideal foundation of Islam, a total submission to God⁴¹. So, when in the Qur'an and later in Islam, Jesus is called the man of God and is honored, it is not an insult to Jesus. According to Muslim beliefs, this title is the highest on a human being. And it is clear that in this respect, the Qur'an does not contradict the fundamental statements that the Bible makes about Jesus.⁴²

In addition, the title *Kalimah* pinned on Jesus, explained as *kalimatullah* (Word of Allah) in the Qur'an, is a specific designation for Jesus Christ. It means that it is Jesus

⁴⁰ Woly, *Saudaraku Di Serambi Iman: Mengenal Pokok-Pokok Ajaran Agama Sesama Kita Kaum Muslimin*.

⁴¹ Schuman, *Al-Masih Dalam Padandangan Pemikiran Muslim*.

⁴² Schuman., 290.

himself who is mentioned in the Qur'an as the Word of Allah (QS Ali Imran 45).⁴³ Of course, this title is in line with the Christian's acknowledgment of Jesus as the Word (*firman*) as can be read in the Gospel of John.

Further, concerning the prophet's title for Jesus, I found that Jesus was not only called the Prophet but the main Prophet, *Ulil Azmi*. It aligns with a study conducted on Nahdatul Ulama's view of Jesus. The study's results stated that the Islamic humanitarian mission originates from the teachings and struggles of Jesus for humanity and has even become a pattern for Muhammad SAW to continue. That is why Jesus becomes a Prophet.⁴⁴ So here, we can find the intersection of Islamic and Christian views of Jesus in many ways that we can reflect on.

Therefore, based on the in-depth explanation above, I found several reflective notes, which can be stated as follows: The teaching of the Trinity is a teaching that is unique to Christianity. In this regard, Jesus has a place as the Son of God with a fundamental role in God's work for humanity, as clearly stated in the Christian Creed. Although Jesus and his position in the Trinity as the Son of God are not accepted in Islam, this is not the end of the Islamic view of the figure of Jesus. We still get other opinions about Jesus or the titles given to Jesus that can be a meeting point and a common ground for Muslims and Christians in understanding Jesus. If Subandrijo sees that the meeting point lies in the Hymn of Christ in Colossians 1:15-20 and QS Maryam 19:16-40, we find another issue that can enrich our knowledge about Jesus. The title of Jesus as a prophet is taught in Christian dogma. Christian Dogmatic views have led that Jesus' eschatological work appears in terms of his position as a Prophet, Priest, and King⁴⁵. These three things are not only taught but also sung in Christian services. The lyrics of the Spiritual Songs of the Congregational Song 141 verse 1: "Jesus Lord, you are the Messiah, anointed with the Divine Spirit; you are our King's Priest Prophet, the perfect and sincere Son of God."⁴⁶

Another meeting point is in the Christological formulation resulting from the decision of the Council in Chalcedon in 451 AD. The Christological debate at the council ended with the conclusion that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly human. Jesus Christ is a true God and, indeed, man. In the formulation of the council, it is written that:

⁴³ Woly, *Saudaraku Di Serambi Iman: Mengenal Pokok-Pokok Ajaran Agama Sesama Kita Kaum Muslimin*.

⁴⁴ Titing, "Kontribusi Yesus Bagi Kemanusiaan Dalam Pandangan Islam Nahdatul Ulama."

⁴⁵ Harun Hadiwijono, *Iman Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2007).

⁴⁶ Yamuger, *Mazmur Dan Kidung Jemaat* (Jakarta: CV Anggrek Kreasi Utama, 1988).

Therefore, following the devout fathers of the Church, we all preach with one voice the confessions of the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: who is equal in divinity and perfect in humanity, true God and true man, who has a soul of mind and body, is consubstantial with the Father as far as His divinity is concerned and is consubstantial with us as far as His humanity is concerned.⁴⁷

This aspect of Jesus' humanity can become a meeting point between Islam and Christianity because, in Islam, Jesus is just an ordinary human being, not God. So the human aspect of Jesus must be put forward in the encounter with Islam while keeping the acknowledgment of His divinity in the space of Christianity's internal exclusivity. Jesus, a true and perfect man in Islam, is the same as Jesus, a true and ideal man in Christianity.

Islamic Conception of Jesus in Moslem-Christian Dialogue in Maluku

Islam and Christianity in Maluku have been known as *salam-sarani*, a local and meaningful term in the culture of the Maluku people. Maluku's culture has a lot of local wisdom full of love, compassion, and solidarity. These local wisdom in Maluku include *pela*, *gandong*, *famili*, *masohi*, *badati*, *maano*, *sasi*, *makan patita*, and many others.⁴⁸ If we explore the local wisdom of the Maluku people, we will find many values used to maintain and develop a peaceful atmosphere for siblinghood.⁴⁹ These values are love, mutual help, respect, appreciation, and self-sacrifice. The values of life emanating from local wisdom align with Christian and Islamic values. As Moh Rahanyamtel said, the attitude and teachings of Jesus can be an example and role model. We can draw this conclusion if we start from the assumption that God in Jesus has already worked in the culture, history, and religion of a cultural society for the good of that society.⁵⁰ According to Baco Sarluf,⁵¹ the

⁴⁷ Norman P Tanner, *Konsili-Konsili Gereja Sebuah Sejarah Singkat*, ed. Willie Koen and J Drost (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2003), 43; see also. Groenen C Ofim, *Sejarah Dogma Kristologi* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1988), 166; Bernhard Loshe, *Pengantar Sejarah Dogma Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015), 117.

⁴⁸ Alpha Amirrachman, *Revitalisasi Kearifan Lokal* (Jakarta: ICIIP, 2007), 163–73.

⁴⁹ Yola Permani Lalopua and Rachel Iwamony, "TEOLOGI PELA: Studi Teologi Kontekstual Di Negeri Abubu Dan Negeri Tengah-Tengah," *ARUMBAE: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi Dan Studi Agama*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.37429/arumbae.v1i1.183>; Eklefina Pattinama, "IDENTITAS MULTIKULTURAL SALAM –SARANI DI MALUKU SEBAGAI MODEL MEMELIHARA INTEGRASI BANGSA," *ARUMBAE: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi Dan Studi Agama*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.37429/arumbae.v2i1.413>; Nofry Puttileihalat, "Sesama Beda Agama (Islam-Kristen) Sebelum Dan Sesudah Konflik Sosial Di Kota Masohi," *ARUMBAE: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi Dan Studi Agama* 2, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.37429/arumbae.v2i2.491>.

⁵⁰ Eben Nuban Timo, *Sidik Jari Allah Dalam Budaya* (Maumere: Ledalero, 2005), vi.

⁵¹ Beatrix Joan Maureen Salenussa, "Bahan Belajar PAK PERDAMAIAN BERBASIS KEARIFAN LOKAL DI MALUKU," n.d., 3

teachings of humanity that Jesus has applied also exist and are attached to the people of Maluku and their culture. In other words, Jesus' teachings about love can be a meeting point for the two religions and can be applied in practices that align with the values of love.

The love of Jesus, according to Saidin Ernas, can be an inspiration in carrying out social development through a culture of life values and an example for living together by binding and strengthening everyone's relationships in the *pela gandong* bond. *Pela gandong* has existed in Maluku for a long time and usually consists of two villages with different religions (Islam and Christianity). The ability to bond between *pela* and *gandong* does not only have the power to deal with the tensions and problems of life in the past. The conflict between people in Maluku that occurred in 1999 also showed the ability of the *pela-gandong* bond to place people in a bind at peace with one another.

The commandment to love God and other human beings is not two rules but one. Love for God and love for fellow human beings are two parts of one whole, and "naturally," the two commandments are related. If we say that we love God, but do not love fellow human beings, then we do not love God because God loves and pleases humans. Whoever loves God must also love humans made in God's image. Then, whoever says that he loves humans but does not love God, means that he does not love humans. God is the only source of true love; without God, there is no love because God is love.

Loving each other in the cultural tradition of Maluku is an example of living together in a siblinghood relationship reflected in the social relations of the people in Maluku. So, it means that God and Jesus exist in the Maluku culture, in its local wisdom. Celebrating Maluku's local wisdom means encountering God and Jesus in togetherness and, simultaneously, engaging Islamic and Christian values that form a religious attitude of life full of tolerance, mutual help, and harmony with one another. That is why, in various efforts to achieve true reconciliation in Maluku, local wisdom has its rightful place and, therefore, cannot be ignored.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that even though the views of Islamic State Institute's lecturers towards Jesus have some substantial differences with Christian ideas or teachings, there is not the slightest note of ridicule, blasphemy, or condescension towards Jesus. Through an honest and open presentation by placing the Qur'an as the primary foundation, the Islamic

view of Jesus is positive and respects Jesus. Jesus is appropriately placed and valued as a prophet and apostle who were primarily respected but not superior to God in his position.

It shows that through in-depth analysis, we find a meeting point that can reconcile and even bring the two religions closer together in acceptance and mutual understanding. The meeting points referred to not only come from the views or teachings about Jesus in both beliefs nor the attitudes and actions of Jesus for humanity but also from the local wisdom of Maluku in which the two religious communities live together, interact, and build peace. It is what is called the meeting point in the context of Maluku.

Religions have a security role in both the state and society. Religions are concerned not only with spiritual matters but also material matters. That is why the two religions work hand in hand in maintaining peace and justice. Especially in Maluku, it seems essential to carry out a joint study of the key titles for Jesus in Islam and Christianity and explain them in detail. According to my analysis, this is essential because having a shared space to discuss theological similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity can preserve our hope that forming shared awareness can undoubtedly build a more positive interfaith solidarity and collaboration in the future.

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