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The Response of Christian Youth to Interfaith Scriptural Reasoning: A Descriptive Analysis from a Hospitality Perspective

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Abstract

The reading of Scripture is susceptible to interpretation and can offer constructive values, but it can also lead to selfexclusion and destructive actions. Traditionally, the reading and interpretation of Scripture have been an internal activity within each religious community. However, in Yogyakarta, Scriptural Reasoning activities are being organized by the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Indonesia, involving participants from diverse religious and belief backgrounds. This research examine the response of Christian Youth engaged in Scriptural Reasoning activities, specifically focusing on how they create a welcoming space for the presence of the other. The research will employ an analytical descriptive method, with data gathered through participatory observation, interviews with respondents selected via purposive sampling, and the collection of relevant literature and documents. Respondents will include organizers of Scriptural Reasoning activities and Christian participants. The data will be analyzed using Marianne Moyaert's concept of hermeneutic hospitality. This study highlights the significance of hermeneutic openness as an expression of hospitality within the Christian community and the importance of creating space for interreligious dialogue. Reading sacred texts can also help prevent potential conflicts of religious sentiments based on scriptural interpretation.

Keywords: scriptural reasoning, Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community, christian youth, hospitality

Introduction

In the past decade, Indonesia has grappled with persistent religious challenges, particularly blasphemy issues involving both Christian and Muslim figures, reflecting broader interfaith tensions. A notable case in 2023 centered on Rev. Saifuddin Ibrahim, previously imprisoned for blasphemy, who controversially proposed removing 300 Qur'anic verses and criticized Arabs for purportedly misleading Muslims about pork consumption. Other reported incidents included various forms of blasphemy against Islamic beliefs and symbols. These events highlight the complex dynamics of religious discourse in Indonesia's public sphere. Ibrahim's background as a former Islamic educator who converted from Islam in 2006 adds a significant dimension to these religious controversies, underscoring the intricate nature of interfaith relations in the country.¹

In 2019, a significant interfaith controversy emerged when Abdul Somad, a prominent Muslim figure, was reported to the Indonesian National Police for alleged blasphemy. The Indonesian Christian Students Movement (GMKI) filed the complaint after Somad associated the Christian cross with "infidel spirits". Despite Somad's assertion that his statement was made in a private, Muslim-only setting, the incident ignited widespread debate, highlighting the sensitive nature of religious discourse in Indonesia's pluralistic society. This shows that Christian youth also play an active role in responding to sensitive issues related to religion.² In 2022, the Pluralism-Loving Community (Komunitas Masyarakat Cinta Pluralisme) reported Yahya Waloni for allegedly committing blasphemy during a sermon in which he claimed that the Bible, the holy book of Christians, is false. Many viewed his sermon as inciting hatred and enmity between religious groups, particularly against Christians.³ In 2024, blasphemy issues reemerged with the involvement of Rev. Gilbert Lumoindong, who was accused in his sermon of offending Muslim worship practices, specifically concerning prayer and *zakat*, a form of almsgiving. This incident sparked both support and opposition within the community, leading to Pastor Gilbert being reported to the police on charges of blasphemy.⁴

The 2016 Ahok case exemplifies the complex interplay between religion and politics

¹ Muhammad Hafil, "Enam Kontroversi Pendeta Saifuddin Ibrahim, dari Hina Allah Hingga Babi Harum," [Six Controversies of Pastor Saifuddin Ibrahim, from Insulting Allah to Fragrant Pork] *Republika*, May 12, 2023, <https://khazanah.republika.co.id/berita/ruhzkz430/enam-kontroversi-pendeta-saifuddin-ibrahim-dari-hina-allah-hingga-babi-harum>.

² Devina Halim and Bayu Galih, "Ustaz Abdul Somad Dilaporkan ke Bareskrim Polri atas Dugaan Penistaan Agama," [Ustaz Abdul Somad Reported to the Indonesian National Police's Criminal Investigation Department (Bareskrim Polri) on Allegations of Religious Blasphemy] *Kompas.com*, August 19, 2019, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/08/19/20151921/ustaz-abdul-somad-dilaporkan-ke-bareskrim-polri-atas-dugaan-penistaan-agama>.

³ Tim detikcom, "Jejak Kasus Ujaran Kebencian SARA hingga Yahya Waloni Bebas dari Penjara," [The Timeline of Hate Speech Cases Involving SARA Issues Leading to Yahya Waloni's Release from Prison] *detiknews*, February 1, 2022, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5923458/jejak-kasus-ujaran-kebencian-sara-hingga-yahya-waloni-bebas-dari-penjara>.

⁴ Sabik Aji Taufan, "Akibat Khotbah Kontroversial, Pendeta Gilbert Dipolisikan Lagi Kasus Penistaan Agama," [Due to a Controversial Sermon, Pastor Gilbert Reported to the Police Again for Religious Blasphemy Case] *JawaPos.com*, April 26, 2024, <https://www.jawapos.com/kasuistika/014579974/akibat-khotbah-kontroversial-pendeta-gilbert-dipolisikan-lagi-kasus-penistaan-agama>.

in Indonesia. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), then-Governor of Jakarta, faced significant controversy over a remark involving a Quranic verse, sparking widespread criticism from Muslim communities. This incident highlighted the sensitivity surrounding scriptural interpretation in the public sphere and its potential to incite religious tensions.⁵ The case of religious blasphemy involving Ahok, which stemmed from a misinterpretation or misunderstanding of a verse from the Muslim holy scripture, underscores the importance of an open-minded approach to the interpretation of sacred texts. This incident highlights the heightened religious sentiment surrounding scriptural verses, which can lead to violence in the name of religion. The issue of blasphemy also elicited significant public response on social media in Indonesia, exemplified by the creation of memes expressing disapproval of those involved in the blasphemy case. Abdul Malik's writings illustrate how Indonesian society, particularly netizens, produced numerous memes specifically targeting Ahok, who was perceived as the perpetrator of religious blasphemy. The spread of these memes resulted in the emergence of both pro and contra-groups, with supporters engaging in meme wars that further exacerbated religious segregation.⁶ The Ahok incident illuminates the broader dynamics of religion-based conflicts in Indonesia, demonstrating how religious identity can be leveraged to mobilize public opinion and hate speech, particularly in political contexts. It emphasizes the need for careful management of interfaith relations and critical understanding of religious-political intersections in Indonesia's diverse society, where such issues can significantly impact social stability and cohesion.⁷

A parallel incident occurred during Indonesia's early New Order era with the case of Ki Pandji Kusmin. His short story, *Langit Makin Mendung* (The Sky is Growing Darker), published in 1968, was deemed blasphemous towards Islam for its portrayal of Prophet Muhammad. This sparked a significant backlash from the Muslim community, illustrating the tense intersection between literature, religion, and law. The case reflects the complexities of Indonesia's blasphemy laws and their implications for religious freedom, highlighting ongoing debates around human rights and legal interpretations of belief.⁸

During the COVID-19 pandemic, another case of religious blasphemy emerged involving Muhammad Kece, who released videos on YouTube that were perceived as targeting Islam and containing content insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Many Islamic groups protested against the video, which they considered blasphemous towards Muslims, leading to Kece's arrest by the Indonesian National Police's Criminal

⁵ "Kasus penistaan agama oleh Ahok hingga dibui 2 tahun" [The religious blasphemy case involving Ahok that led to a 2-year prison sentence] *Merdeka.com*, May 25, 2017, <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/kasus-penistaan-agama-oleh-ahok-hingga-dibui-2-tahun.html>.

⁶ Abdul Malik, "Meme dan Visualisasi Kebencian Netizen dalam Kasus Penistaan Agama," [Memes and Visualization of Netizen Hatred in the Blasphemy Case] *Rekam: Jurnal Fotografi, Televisi, Animasi* 13, no. 2 (2017): 67-84, <https://doi.org/10.24821/rekam.v13i2.1931>.

⁷ Winda Wana Utami, and Darmaiza Darmaiza, "Hate Speech, Agama, dan Kontestasi Politik di Indonesia," [Hate speech, religion, and political contestation in Indonesian] *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 2, no. 2 (2020): 113-28, <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijrs.v2i2.108>.

⁸ Syahril Siddik, "The Origin of the Indonesian Blasphemy Law and its Implication towards Religious Freedom in Indonesia," *Tebuireng: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society* 3, no. 1 (2022): 17-33, <https://doi.org/10.33752/tjiss.v3i1.3648>.

Investigation Department (Bareskrim Polri) in 2021. It was found that 400 videos existed, with 200 of them being used as evidence of religious blasphemy against Muslims. Two of the most controversial titles were *Kitab Kuning Membingungkan* and *"Sumber Segala Dosa" ("The Confusing Yellow Book" and "The Source of All Sin")*, uploaded on August 19, 2021, Kece attempted to flee but was captured in Bali on August 24, 2021.⁹ These cases illustrate that the issue of blasphemy in Indonesia is not merely a legal matter but also reflects the complex social dynamics among different religious groups, often impacting religious life and diversity in the country.

In discussing religious interpretation as a medium for mediation and reconciliation, examining cases of blasphemy is relevant, as they highlight conflicts that can arise from differing scriptural interpretations. Cases involving figures like Ahok, Abdul Somad, and Muhammad Kece illustrate the social impact of perceived misinterpretations or offenses toward other faiths. These events underscore the importance of fostering respectful interfaith dialogue and critical understanding, essential for conflict prevention and promoting harmonious coexistence through constructive scriptural reasoning, as practiced in SR.

This study examines how shared Christian youth SR participation fosters mutual understanding, potentially transforming interfaith dialogue into a space for acceptance, mediation, and peaceful interaction. The research also aims to explore how religious interpretation can function as a mediation and reconciliation space, preventing conflict and positively contributing to interfaith dialogue. It will focus on the responses of Christian youth engaged in SR activities, investigating how their involvement creates room for accepting "the other" and influences their experiences in sharing various scriptural interpretations within interfaith dialogue contexts.

Research Methods

This research will employ a qualitative method with descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis, which is a component of problem-solving procedures, involves depicting the current state of subjects and objects, such as individuals or organizations, based on observable facts. The characteristics of descriptive analysis focus on solving problems through stages such as participatory observation, literature data collection, and interviews with informants, followed by in-depth analysis and interpretation of meaning. The purpose of using this method is to address the issue of how SR activities for Christian youth can serve as a space for engaging with and interpreting their respective scriptures. This approach is expected to minimize religious sentiment provoked by misinterpretations of sacred texts among young people. Data collection through interviews was conducted from the first to the fourth week of May 2023. This study involved seven informants, aged 19-28, all of whom were youth members from various church denominations in Yogyakarta. Informants were carefully selected based on the research's data needs and representation across denomination, age, gender, and prior participation in peace camp and SR activities organized by YIPC Yogyakarta. The

⁹ Yaya Mulya Mantri, "Kasus Penistaan Agama Pada Berbagai Era Dan Media di Indonesia," [Blasphemy Cases in Various Eras and Media in Indonesia] *Definisi: Jurnal Agama dan Sosial Humaniora* 1, no. 3 (2022): 123-138, <https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/definisi/article/view/19582>.

participation of these informants, whether they were regularly involved in SR activities or were participating for the first time, served as a crucial foundation for the data collection and interview process. Each informant provided open and detailed insights pertinent to the research objectives. To ensure confidentiality, informants requested anonymity, which has been maintained throughout this study.

Literature Review

To begin the discussion on SR, it is essential to understand its origins and development. SR is an interfaith practice that emerged in the 1990s at the University of Cambridge, UK, bringing together individuals from different religious traditions—mainly Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—to collectively read and reflect on their sacred texts.¹⁰ The goal of SR is not to achieve consensus or change beliefs but to foster mutual understanding, respect, and friendship. Peter Ochs highlights that SR nurtures the habits of "listening to others" and "improving how others are heard," while also encouraging self-critique. This approach has since expanded beyond Cambridge, becoming a key tool for interfaith dialogue and academic religious studies, contributing to improved religious literacy and stronger intercommunal relationships globally.¹¹ In Indonesia, discussions about SR, particularly among Christian youth, remain relatively new and have not yet gained widespread recognition. Currently, the YIPC in Yogyakarta leads SR activities. YIPC's periodic SR sessions serve as a platform for interfaith interaction, rooted in a shared understanding of sacred texts such as the Bible and the Qur'an.

According to Gabriel J. Angkouw and Iky S.P. Prayitno, SR can serve as a foundation for a multicultural education model tailored for youth through its application. They argue that religion provides legitimacy for fostering dialogue and reinforcing a shared identity among youth, particularly between Christian and Muslim communities. In their article, Angkouw and Prayitno demonstrate that SR can function as an alternative model for multicultural education, specifically applied to Christian and Muslim youth, with the potential for broader implementation. They also emphasize that religious texts have the capacity to support interfaith dialogue and affirm shared identities, especially among youth from these two communities.¹²

Angkouw and Prayitno also show the concept of multicultural education, which highlights the importance of education based on multicultural values as a means to overcome ignorance, suspicion towards other religions, intolerance, fanaticism, and religious fundamentalism.¹³ Furthermore, Angkouw and Prayitno underscore the importance of contextual education that aligns with society's specific issues, such as conflicts between religious groups or interfaith communities. Their key idea serves as a

¹⁰ Constant J. Mews, "The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning - Edited by David F. Ford and C. C. Pecknold," *Journal of Religious History* 34, no. 1 (2010): 101-2, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9809.2009.00851.x>.

¹¹ Peter Ochs, *Religion Without Violence: The Practice and Philosophy of Scriptural Reasoning* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2019).

¹² Gabriel James Angkouw and Iky Sumarthina Putri Prayitno, "Scriptural Reasoning: Peran Kitab Keagamaan dalam Pendidikan Agama Multikultural di Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Indonesia," [Scriptural Reasoning: The Role of Religious Scriptures in Multicultural Religious Education at Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Indonesia] *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan dan Keagamaan* 15, no. 1 (2020): 69-91, <https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v15i01.410>.

¹³ Angkouw and Prayitno, "Scriptural Reasoning," 71.

foundational effort to address societal issues related to interreligious conflict through a multicultural and contextual educational approach. Angkouw and Prayitno illustrate that integrating multicultural education into SR activities is a central finding of their work.

A similar perspective is found in the writings of Gerry and Isakh, who emphasize that multicultural education can also be applied in informal contexts, such as those undertaken by the *Initiatives of Changes Indonesia* (IofC) through the Trust Building Camp program. This program aims to build trust through open dialogue involving youth from diverse identity backgrounds—cultural, religious, and belief systems—as an effort to foster mutual trust despite differing beliefs. Values such as healing and reconciliation are fundamental in every dialogue session, and these are essential prerequisites for participants of the Trust Building Camp. Through these values, participants can commit to learning about different religions, cultures, and belief systems, thereby forming a shared value—trust.¹⁴ The Trust Building Camp program illustrates the process of multicultural education that emerges through direct interaction among participants as they learn, ask questions, and clarify aspects of other religions that they may not fully understand.

The SR activities conducted by the YIPC community can also be seen as a form of fostering religious tolerance within the community. Mochammad J. A. Wicaksono asserts that SR is not about teaching the correct way to read or interpret sacred texts but rather about providing opportunities for mutual understanding. Wicaksono's research on fostering tolerance within the YIPC community through the SR method has shown its effectiveness in helping participants understand the differences and similarities between religions, thereby reducing negative biases against one another. This study, along with other studies in the literature, suggests that SR can serve as an effective tool as an interactive practice for people from different backgrounds to read and discuss short scripture texts together. This can provide a good picture for the future of interfaith relations in reducing religious extremism and instead, promoting peaceful coexistence.¹⁵

From Peter Ochs perspective, SR can also function as a tool for peacebuilding within an interreligious context. Peter highlights how SR, originally designed to understand differences between religions, has evolved into an important instrument for peacebuilding. Although SR can positively impact smaller groups, it requires time and a lengthy process to have a broader impact on society. Peter introduces the concept of Logic of Scriptural Reasoning (SRL) as a new analytical tool contributing to the mitigation of religious conflicts, along with the hearth-to-hearth (H2H) model, which offers a new practical approach to diagnosing and addressing conflicts in society. By identifying that

¹⁴ Gerry Nelwan and Isakh Oematan, "Trust Building Camp dan Pendidikan Multikultural: Sebuah Upaya Membangun Perdamaian di Yogyakarta," [Trust Building Camp and Multicultural Education: An Effort to Build Peace in Yogyakarta] in *Proceedings International Seminar 53rd Anniversary Of The Faculty Of Theology Satya Wacana Christian University*. (Salatiga: Satya Wacana University Press, 2022), 38-46.

¹⁵ Mochammad Jiva Agung Wicaksono, "Implementasi Pembinaan Toleransi Beragama Melalui Metode *Scriptural Reasoning* pada Komunitas Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community," [Implementation of Fostering Religious Tolerance Through the Scriptural Reasoning Method in The Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community] *TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2020): 21-40, <https://doi.org/10.17509/t.v7i1.23915>.

SR is effective in creating a peaceful environment in smaller contexts, there is a need to test the development of models like SRL and H2H in broader contexts.¹⁶

While numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of SR activities, further exploration is required to capture the distinct responses of Christian Youth participants, offering a more nuanced understanding of how SR engagement contributes to religious pluralism in Indonesia. This study addresses this gap by examining the particular ways SR shapes youth attitudes toward inclusivity and tolerance, building on prior research, such as that of Angkouw and Prayitno, which focused broadly on SR as a multicultural model for Youth.

Unlike previous research, which primarily emphasizes SR's general theoretical and social benefits, this study sheds light on its specific, personal impacts, particularly in fostering inclusive and respectful attitudes in interfaith contexts. By focusing on Marianne Moyaert's *hermeneutic hospitality* which emphasizes openness to multiple interpretations this research examines how SR cultivates both self-reflection and a welcoming mindset in Youth. This approach offers a fresh perspective by revealing SR's practical role in developing tolerance among Indonesian Christian Youth, thereby expanding current understandings of SR's impact on personal and interfaith engagement.

Results

Scriptural Reasoning in the Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community

Scriptural reading is a vital practice within religious communities, designed to instill positive values, but it can also lead to exclusivity when interpretations are narrow. This often creates monopolies within religious groups, limiting diverse perspectives and fostering interfaith segregation and social tension. In contrast, SR offers a collaborative approach to interfaith dialogue, centered on sacred texts. By focusing on specific scriptural passages, SR promotes the exploration of both shared values and differing interpretations, encouraging mutual understanding and reducing exclusivity through inclusive, text-based discussions.

In contrast, in Yogyakarta, the SR activities organized by the YIPC present a different narrative and offer an alternative approach. These activities involve participants from diverse religious and belief backgrounds, enabling joint and open reading and interpretation of sacred texts. This initiative not only provides a space for interfaith dialogue but also presents a unique challenge in terms of acceptance and recognition of the "with others".

In her research, Ninda D. Pramitasari found that the YIPC activities in Yogyakarta are influenced by two aspects: (1) the pluralistic and conflict-prone nature of the society and (2) the effort to cultivate youth as peace agents. YIPC Yogyakarta conducts several activities, including peace camps, regular meetings, interfaith dialogues, Scriptural Reasoning, and others. The participants are predominantly interfaith youth, aimed not

¹⁶ Peter Ochs, "Scriptural Reasoning and Peacebuilding," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Peace*, ed. Jolyon Mitchell, Suzanna R. Millar, Francesca Po, and Martyn Percy (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2022), 264–74, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119424420.ch22>.

only at fostering interfaith encounters but also at helping them understand the root causes of conflicts and how to minimize them to prevent violence.¹⁷

Specifically, YIPC Yogyakarta incorporates SR in its peace camp activities, involving participants from diverse religious backgrounds. SR contributes to the development of each participant's understanding and awareness, promoting mutual tolerance. Additionally, SR creates a space for exchanging views on prejudices among participants, including opportunities for clarification by each member.¹⁸ Each participant enjoys the SR activities because they can share and reflect with one another. For example, Z.N.T "provides understanding of Biblical readings to participants of other faiths, allowing them to offer personal interpretations of the text".¹⁹ Additionally, "the sharing that occurs during SR activities enriches interfaith perspectives on the readings, broadening participants' horizons and fostering a deeper understanding of other religions".²⁰

As written by Yesika Sinaga et al., SR activities involve reading texts from different religious scriptures, with participants including Christians, Muslims, Jews, and adherents of other faiths. Participants are given a short verse from a sacred text, which is read with the aim of mutual understanding and interpretation, rather than achieving a shared truth.²¹ Similarly, P. "understands that SR activities provide a space to affirm aspects that may still be confusing about other religions, and this can be directly addressed by hearing from practitioners of those religions".²² Specifically, "each participant can initiate more open dialogues to understand and explore the rituals and beliefs of each religion".²³

"An interesting observation in the implementation of SR is that Christian participants may become more aware of similar narratives in the Islamic scriptures, despite differences in interpretation or emphasis".²⁴ Additionally, "it is noted that prior to participating in SR, there was a sense of rigidity and sensitivity about meeting or

¹⁷ Ninda Devi Pramitasari, "Membangun Toleransi Melalui Pendidikan Damai Di Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Regional Yogyakarta," [Building Tolerance Through Peace Education at Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) Yogyakarta Regional] *Spektrum Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan* 8, no. 2 (2019): 87-93, <https://journal.student.uny.ac.id/sakp/article/view/15848>.

¹⁸ Fadhilah Dwi P Aunillah and Hakimul Ikhwan, "Interfaith dialogue sebagai Sarana Pembangun Toleransi Beragama; Mengkaji Pendekatan Scriptural Reasoning dan Klarifikasi Prasangka dalam Peace Camp di Yogyakarta," [Interfaith dialogue as a Means of Building Religious Tolerance; Examining the Scriptural Reasoning and Prejudice Clarification Approaches in Peace Camp in Yogyakarta] (PhD diss., Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2018), <https://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/penelitian/detail/157108>.

¹⁹ Interview with Z.N.T, Yogyakarta May 29, 2023.

²⁰ Interview with R.E.S, Yogyakarta May 26, 2023.

²¹ Yesika Theresia Sinaga, Eri R. Hidayat, and Lukas Pamardi, "Upaya Pencegahan Radikalisme Lewat Sinergitas Jaringan Komunitas Perdamaian (Studi Kasus Komunitas Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Indonesia)," [Efforts To Prevent Radicalism Through The Synergy Of Peace Community Networks (Case Study Of The Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community Indonesia)] *Jurnal Damai dan Resolusi Konflik* 4, no. 1 (2020): 1-28, <https://archive.peacegen.id/app/uploads/2020/01/YESIKA-THERESIA-SINAGA-dkk.-EFFORTS-TO-PREVENT-RADICALISM-THROUGH-PEACE-COMMUNITY-SINERGITY-NETWORK-STUDY-CASE-YOUNG-INTERFAITH-PEACEMAKER-COMMUNITY-INDONESIA.pdf>.

²² Interview with P, Yogyakarta, May 25, 2023.

²³ Interview with K, Yogyakarta May 25, 2023.

²⁴ Interview with B.R.H, Yogyakarta May 26, 2023.

reading the scriptures of Muslim friends. However, during SR activities, there emerges a genuine interest in continuing dialogue and learning together with Muslim peers".²⁵

According to M. Royyan Wahab, the activities conducted by YIPC, including SR, represent an effort to disseminate counter-radicalism narratives among interfaith youth. The most significant contribution of these activities is producing interfaith youth as agents of peace. This is closely related to how SR activities broaden the perspectives of interfaith youth, transforming previously held prejudices and sensitivities into a deeper understanding of differences, which fosters mutual enrichment.²⁶

From the available data, it can be seen that SR implemented by YIPC in Yogyakarta represents an effort to introduce a different approach to fostering constructive interfaith meetings and dialogues. The practice of reading sacred texts, which often leads to potential conflicts and destructive actions due to narrow and exclusive interpretations, is addressed by SR in a novel way. SR by YIPC offers an approach that transcends religious boundaries and provides space for open and meaningful reading and interpretation of each religion's sacred texts. In the peace camp activities, SR plays a central role in promoting a deeper understanding among participants from various religious and belief backgrounds. This process not only promotes values of tolerance but also creates a space for exchanging views and clarifying interfaith prejudices that have previously existed. For example, Z.N.T. with states that,²⁷ "a participant, provides understanding of the Bible to participants of different religions and beliefs, allowing them to offer personal interpretations of the sacred text. This discussion enriches participants' understanding of other religions and broadens their perspectives on the meaning of the sacred texts".

Building on the understanding presented by the previous informants, P²⁸ and K²⁹ "emphasize that SR provides an important space for affirming and clarifying various aspects that may cause confusion about other religions". "SR offers participants the opportunity to hear direct explanations from practitioners about various issues, including religious rituals". Additionally, "it provides a chance to understand the nuances and contexts of religious rituals that participants from other religions may not have previously understood". "Thus, SR facilitates a more open and honest dialogue among participants regarding the rituals and beliefs of each religion". SR not only allows for questioning and gaining a deeper understanding of religious practices that might have previously seemed strange or difficult to comprehend but also contributes to broadening perspectives and fostering mutual respect while reducing prejudices.

Open and interactive dialogue becomes effective when each participant is able to build bridges of understanding between various religious communities. Participants can gain insight into the background, reasons, and meanings behind the rituals and beliefs of

²⁵ Interview with A.E.M K, Yogyakarta May 26, 2023.

²⁶ M. Royyan Nafis Fathul Wahab, "Kontribusi Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) dalam Menyebarkan Narasi Kontra Radikalisme," [The Contribution of Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) in Spreading Counter-Radicalism Narratives] *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama Sosial dan Budaya* 3, no. 2 (2020): 128-50, <https://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=1733165&val=14655&title=Kontribusi%20Young%20Interfaith%20Peacemaker%20Community%20YIPC%20dalam%20Menyebarkan%20Narasi%20Kontra%20Radikalisme>.

²⁷ Interview with Z.N.T, Yogyakarta May 29, 2023.

²⁸ Interview with P, Yogyakarta May 25, 2023.

²⁹ Interview with K, Yogyakarta May 25, 2023.

other religions, allowing them to identify shared values and develop empathy, rather than focusing on differences that may trigger conflicts. In this way, SR can serve as an effective tool for fostering harmony and understanding among religions, which is a crucial need for Indonesia's pluralistic society. SR also functions as a space for exchanging information and clarifying issues related to religious sentiments, thereby facilitating open and in-depth conversations about beliefs and religious rituals.

The analysis of the data above indicates that the practice of reading sacred texts within religious communities often serves as a foundation for establishing moral and ethical values. However, when interpretation is conducted in a narrow and exclusive manner, it can trigger exclusivist attitudes that potentially lead to destructive actions. As a response to this phenomenon, YIPC's SR activities provide an effective alternative. By involving participants from diverse religious and belief backgrounds, SR creates an environment where the reading and interpretation of sacred texts can be conducted collectively and inclusively, based on mutual trust and respect. Generally, the SR activities conducted by YIPC in Yogyakarta not only promote values of tolerance but also function as a platform for more inclusive and meaningful efforts in reading and interpreting sacred texts among participants.

Discussion

Integrating SR with Marianne Moyaert's Hermeneutic Hospitality

Having discussed earlier the SR approach within the YIPC community, which emphasizes mutual understanding of sacred texts from each religion as a means to minimize negative prejudices against adherents of other religions, this section aims to connect SR with the concept of Hospitality, specifically Hermeneutic Hospitality from Marianne Moyaert's perspective, to identify areas for complementary engagement. SR focuses on reading verses from religious texts, for example, a verse from the Bible by individuals from different religious backgrounds, and offering their respective interpretations of the verse. This approach creates a space where participants can provide responses and personal or communal reflections influenced by their religious experiences while emphasizing meaning.

Danang Kristiawan, in his writing, illustrates Moyaert's thought on hermeneutics and interreligious dialogue within the practice of SR, highlighting that the aim is not only to achieve mutual understanding of the differences that arise during text reading but also to emphasize respect and acceptance of those differences. This is realized when the identities of participants are brought into dialogue, rather than being treated as barriers or divisions. In small, intensive SR groups, *deep reasoning* occurs, involving a serious exploration of the history and dynamics of interpretation for each text chosen based on a specific theme. Although differences in interpretation are inevitable, this process allows participants to accept, learn from, and undergo personal transformation through interaction with diverse perspectives.³⁰

In principle, SR is an interfaith dialogue method that trains individuals to read

³⁰ Danang Kristiawan, "Merengkuh Yang Lain: Dialog Interreligius Dan Transformasi Diri Terhadap Yang Lain," [Embracing the Other: Interreligious Dialogue and the Transformation of the Self towards the Other] *Mitra Sriwijaya: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen* 1, no. 1 (2020): 58-76, <https://doi.org/10.46974/ms.v1i1.4>.

sacred texts from other religions. Typically conducted by groups including Jews, Christians, and Muslims, SR can also involve practitioners of other faiths in reading short verses from each religion's sacred texts.³¹ Building on Moyaert's principle of Hospitality, which acknowledges the inevitable consequences and dialogic tensions in interfaith dialogue, there are two forms of hospitality according to Moyaert: *hermeneutic openness* and *appreciative openness*. Hermeneutic openness concerns the extent to which individuals can understand each other's meanings, symbols, teachings, and religious rituals. Appreciative openness, on the other hand, emphasizes respect for the existence of each religion. This aspect is also examined by Gerry Nelwan and Gerald M. Siregar in the context of tolerance in Yogyakarta, particularly regarding the Ahmadiyah community as a space for interfaith dialogue.³²

According to Daniel Listijabudi, Marianne Moyaert's concept of hermeneutic hospitality should be understood as a hermeneutical hosting approach. This requires creating a space where others can express themselves and present their own perspectives.³³ Behind the acceptance and provision of space for the other, it is essential to recognize that there are consequences for the host. Moyaert fundamentally understands that hermeneutic openness involves being a partner in responding to one's own prejudices, which requires complete trust from all parties involved. Amid the various tensions and risks inherent in interfaith theological dialogue, what is needed is a stance of interreligious and hermeneutic hospitality as an effort to manage these tensions.³⁴

Discussing hermeneutic hospitality reflects the concept of hermeneutic openness proposed by Moyaert. According to Moyaert, hermeneutic openness requires partners to engage in dialogue based on attitudes of listening and attempting to understand others' viewpoints as representations of diversity and variety. A frequent point of contention in interfaith dialogue is differing understandings of salvation, which can hinder the potential for intratextual understanding and negatively impact the effectiveness of hermeneutic interfaith dialogue, leading to problems rather than constructive engagement.³⁵ The presence of hermeneutic openness does not merely address misunderstandings between religions, even though this is seen as a risk or limitation of hermeneutic openness itself. Rather, hermeneutic openness begins with the awareness of asymmetries or differences in information and ultimately leads to familiarity. Hermeneutic hospitality can also start by bearing the asymmetries without conflating them.³⁶

There is a notable connection between SR and the concept of Hermeneutic

³¹ Sinaga, Hidayat, and Pamardi, "Upaya Pencegahan Radikalisme," 28.

³² Gerry Nelwan and Gerald Moratua Siregar, "Beyond Religious Tolerance in Interfaith Dialogue Spaces in Yogyakarta: Reading from a Hospitality Perspective," *Proceeding of the 1st International Conference Cultures & Languages* 1, no. 1 (2022): 174-85, <https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/index.php/iccl/article/view/5764>.

³³ Daniel K Listijabudi, "Pembacaan Lintas Tekstual: Tantangan Ber-Hermeneutik Alkitab Asia (2)," [Cross-Textual Readings: The Challenge of Hermeneuticizing the Asian Bible (2)] *Gema Teologika: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual dan Filsafat Keilahian* 4, no. 1 (2019): 73-100, <https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2019.41.412>.

³⁴ Listijabudi, "Pembacaan Lintas Tekstual," 81.

³⁵ Marianne Moyaert, *Fragile Identities: Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality* (Currents of Encounter, 39) (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2011).

³⁶ Moyaert *Fragile Identities*, 236.

Hospitality as proposed by Marianne Moyaert, which together reveal significant opportunities to explore and address gaps in interfaith dialogue. SR, as a dialogical method, emphasizes the joint reading of sacred texts from different religious traditions to minimize prejudice and foster mutual understanding. This approach aligns with Moyaert's efforts, as elaborated by Danang Kristiawan, to bridge the tension between particular identity (commitment) and the desire to build solidarity (openness) through the hermeneutic process in interreligious dialogue. In this context, dialogue is seen as an effort to understand the other as a text capable of transforming both personal and collective understanding. Kristiawan also notes that another model applying the hermeneutic method in interreligious dialogue is "*inter-religious hospitality*", which Moyaert developed from Ricoeur's concept of "*linguistic hospitality*". This process can be analogized to the translation of languages, where the foreign is translated into the familiar.³⁷ Furthermore, Moyaert's concept of hermeneutic hospitality underscores the importance of two forms of openness: hermeneutic openness, which involves striving to understand the meanings, symbols, teachings, and rituals of other religions, and appreciative openness, which emphasizes respect and acknowledgment of the existence of other religions as a reality that must be valued.

Hermeneutic hospitality emphasizes the role of the hermeneutical host, where SR participants are expected not only to listen but also to create space for others to present their views and interpretations. This requires full engagement, acknowledging the uncertainty and complexity inherent in theological dialogue, and a readiness to manage the emerging risks and tensions. In this context, hermeneutic hospitality involves not merely accepting differences but also accommodating and responding to them with respect and appreciation. Consequently, in the application of SR, Moyaert's concept of hermeneutic hospitality can serve as a framework for minimizing tensions arising from diverse interpretations of sacred texts. For instance, during SR sessions, participants are allowed to read and interpret verses from various religious texts, such as the Bible, the Quran, and other scriptures. This process necessitates an openness to different viewpoints and interpretations, which can lead to thought-provoking questions. Such openness is the core element of hermeneutic hospitality, allowing participants to share their views and interpretations while also listening to and learning from others. Moyaert also views SR as a practice aimed at enhancing understanding and cooperation among religions, without relinquishing individual traditions. This includes fostering interpretative hospitality, enabling participants to openly accept differing perspectives on the interpretation of sacred texts and equipping them with the skills to navigate religious diversity constructively.³⁸

Hermeneutic hospitality can effectively address the resistance and discomfort often encountered when engaging with texts from other religious traditions. By recognizing that everyone has distinct interpretations, understandings, and religious experiences, this approach fosters opportunities for open, honest, and constructive dialogue. Such a dialogical model promotes the acknowledgment of information asymmetries among

³⁷ Kristiawan, "Merengkuh Yang Lain," 63.

³⁸ Marianne Moyaert, "Scriptural Reasoning as a Ritualized Practice," in *Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries: Explorations in Interrituality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 87-106.

participants, which can be resolved through profound and meaningful conversations. Consequently, when integrated into SR (Religious Studies), hermeneutic hospitality not only enhances interfaith dialogue but also deepens the appreciation and respect for differences. This approach necessitates adopting the role of a hermeneutical host, who embraces differences as part of a collective learning process and exploration of meaning within diversity. Ultimately, hermeneutic hospitality transforms SR from a mere tolerance-based platform into one that promotes an appreciative understanding of the values, interpretations, and rituals of other religions.

In alignment with Moyaert's perspective, which regards SR as a practical exercise rather than a purely theoretical discussion, Moyaert's experience underscores that the learning process related to religious diversity often remains focused on theoretical aspects such as interfaith dialogue, religious theology, intercultural hermeneutics, and philosophy. These theoretical frameworks can sometimes impede the development of practical wisdom necessary for ensuring meaningful engagement and dialogue among individuals.³⁹

Scriptural Reasoning as an Alternative for Preventing Interreligious Conflict

SR is unique compared to other hermeneutical traditions because it directly centers on interfaith dialogue by focusing on specific religious texts, allowing participants to collaboratively explore diverse interpretations while maintaining respect for distinct religious identities. Unlike other inclusive traditions that may emphasize theoretical engagement or shared values, SR prioritizes text-based dialogue, fostering a structured environment for exchange. To ensure SR's relevance in Indonesia, adapting it with Marianne Moyaert's *Hermeneutic Hospitality* could enhance its local application by encouraging openness, respect, and a deepened mutual understanding among participants from varied religious backgrounds. In particular, Moyaert's framework could provide tools for managing the tensions of interpreting sacred texts, thus addressing the Indonesian context's need for respectful and constructive interfaith engagement.

In her writings, Moyaert suggests that in working towards a peaceful society, SR can indeed foster positive changes in the future relations among adherents of Abrahamic traditions—namely Jews, Christians, and Muslims—by enabling them to collaborate on humanitarian issues as a unified entity. SR can thus become more than merely a dialogue; it offers a new model for managing religious affairs within the public domain.⁴⁰ This idea indicates a shift from mere dialogue towards collaborative action, which can strengthen social cohesion and prevent conflict. Implementing SR practices could be a key recommendation for countering the rise of intolerance in Indonesia. This view is supported by Denni Saragih and colleagues, who argue that Indonesia's increasing intolerance requires more serious attention. To address this issue, interfaith dialogue

³⁹ Marianne Moyaert, "Interreligious Literacy and Scriptural Reasoning: Some Hermeneutical, Anthropological, Pedagogical, and Experiential Reflections," in *Teaching Interreligious Encounters*, ed. Marc A. Pugliese and Alex Y. Hwang (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴⁰ Marianne Moyaert, "Scriptural Reasoning as Inter-Religious Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (New Jersey: Wiley, 2013), 64-86, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118529911.ch5>.

using Cambridge Scriptural Reasoning (CSR) can be employed. According to Saragih, CSR can be applied in Christian campus contexts as part of a pedagogical approach to fostering positive interfaith relations and maintaining social harmony.⁴¹ However, they acknowledge the potential for tension that can arise if SR practices are not managed properly, particularly due to the sensitive nature of analyzing and interpreting sacred texts.

In the context of societies vulnerable to interfaith conflict, SR practices offer a valuable space for clarifying prejudices often rooted in narrow and exclusive religious interpretations. Through an open process of in-depth theological dialogue, SR provides an opportunity for participants to understand and appreciate diverse beliefs, values, and religious rituals, thereby minimizing suspicions that could lead to conflict. The SR practice conducted by YIPC in Yogyakarta can be further enhanced by incorporating hermeneutical hospitality, as described by Marianne Moyaert. This requires an openness to accepting and listening to interpretations from other religions without attempting to dominate or judge.

Specifically, this method presents a significant opportunity for Christian youth involved in SR activities to become peace agents starting within their own communities or churches. By adopting the SR approach complemented by the concept of hermeneutical hospitality, it is hoped that Christian youth will not only gain broader insights into other religions but also develop the ability to interact and engage in positive, constructive, and productive dialogue. This effort signifies a meaningful shift in their attitudes and understanding, contributing to broader social harmony. The integration of SR with Marianne Moyaert's concept of hermeneutical hospitality extends beyond mere conflict mitigation, emerging as a robust mechanism for fostering an inclusive and peaceful society. SR, which involves collaborative reading and interpretation of sacred texts across religious traditions, provides a framework for open and constructive dialogue. When coupled with hermeneutical hospitality, this approach becomes even more powerful. Hermeneutical hospitality emphasizes creating a welcoming space where diverse religious perspectives are heard and valued.

The combined approach of SR and hermeneutical hospitality requires creating an environment conducive to open dialogue, where participants engage with mutual respect and a genuine willingness to understand each other's perspectives. This approach emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and valuing diverse religious traditions and their unique contributions to the dialogue. By fostering a setting that encourages the constructive exchange of ideas and interpretations, it aims to address underlying intolerance issues and reduce prejudices.

In the context of Indonesia, a nation characterized by significant religious diversity and frequent social tensions, this method holds particular relevance. The pluralistic nature of Indonesian society means that different religious communities often interact in complex ways, making it essential to address conflicts and promote understanding. SR,

⁴¹ Denni Saragih, Yanny Mokorowu, and Prasasti Peranginangin, "The Use of Cambridge Scriptural Reasoning (CSR) Texts for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Classroom: Some Pedagogical Proposals." *SHS Web of Conferences* 59, no. 01008 (2018): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20185901008>.

coupled with hermeneutical hospitality, provides a framework for managing these interactions constructively. SR offers a structured method for engaging with religious texts across different traditions, while hermeneutical hospitality, as described by Marianne Moyaert, introduces a dimension of openness and respect for diverse interpretations. This combined approach contributes to managing conflicts by promoting empathy and understanding. It encourages participants to listen actively and appreciate the nuances of different religious beliefs, thereby reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and fostering a more harmonious coexistence. By embracing both SR and hermeneutical hospitality, communities can build stronger interfaith relationships, support peaceful interactions, and advance social cohesion. The approach's contribution is significant in enhancing social harmony within diverse communities. It helps mitigate intolerance by providing a platform for respectful dialogue and collaborative interpretation of religious texts. This process not only aids in resolving conflicts but also strengthens the fabric of society by fostering inclusivity and mutual respect. In essence, SR and hermeneutical hospitality together create a robust framework for addressing the challenges of religious diversity, contributing to a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Conclusion

The dynamics of religious sentiment in Indonesia over the past two decades have become a pressing issue, particularly highlighted by the social polarization following the 2016 Ahok case. The importance of open interpretation of religious texts is underscored by the fact that narrow interpretations can be one factor in exacerbating social tensions and contributing to interfaith conflict. In this context, the practice of SR conducted by the YIPC in Yogyakarta has provided a valuable space for interfaith dialogue and promoted tolerance. SR has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing prejudices and enhancing interfaith understanding among young people through open, inclusive, and productive dialogue. Integrating Marianne Moyaert's concept of hermeneutical hospitality with SR can further deepen interfaith dialogue, fostering openness, respect, and acknowledgment of diverse religious interpretations. This integration aims to build an inclusive and tolerant society, preventing interfaith conflicts.

Additionally, incorporating hermeneutical hospitality principles into SR practices can enhance the depth of dialogue and interfaith awareness. The foundational principles of openness and appreciation are crucial for every encounter, dialogue, and interpretation of sacred texts. By addressing gaps identified in previous research, this study seeks to provide a deeper contribution to SR practices, especially in shaping inclusive attitudes among christian youth and offers broader insights by integrating hermeneutical hospitality concepts into interfaith dialogue in Indonesia.

However, this study primarily focuses on the benefits of SR and its integration with hermeneutical hospitality, particularly from the perspective of christian youth. Many aspects remain unexplored and unexamined in different contexts. It is hoped that this research will yield new, relevant findings.

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