

# Developing of Multiculturalism in the Pesantren: Study on KH Abdul Muhaimin and the Pesantren of Nurul Ummahaat

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## Abstract

*The article describes a case study on KH Abdul Muhaimin and his Pesantren of Nurul Ummahat who has a curious awareness and some real actions to growing up multiculturalism consciousness. The study results that Kyai recognizes a vision of the pesantren with three words: Modernity, Moderates, and Humanity, that viewed to respond any challenges and opportunities of the modernization and the globalization, including multiculturalism awareness. So, the Kyai elaborates about nationalism based on theological perspective, beside sociological and cultural. Theologically, the Kyai views that any human being must be recognized rightly at all, and do not depend on their position and entity. In this context, the Kyai and his Pesantren of Nurul Ummahat had done several actions, namely: academic discussions, dialogues among religious peoples, launching of FPUB, the Toya Mili movement, and the Palembang Consortium. The article intends become a solution for the government, especially in creating new policies to respond radicalism in the pesantrens.*

**Keywords:** Pesantren, Multiculturalism, Theology, Actions

## Abstrak

*Artikel ini memaparkan studi kasus Pesantren Nurul Ummahat, sebuah pesantren yang pengasuhnya, KH. Abdul Muhaimin, memiliki perhatian dan, sekaligus, aksi-aksi kongkrit dalam menumbuhkembangkan kesadaran multikultural. Dari hasil penelitian terungkap bahwa Kyai merumuskan visi pesantrennya dengan 3 M: Modern, Moderat, dan Manusiawi, demi merespon tantangan dan peluang arus modernisasi dan globalisasi, termasuk dalam pengembangan kesadaran multikulturalisme. Oleh sebab itu, Kyai mengelaborasi nasionalisme ini berdasarkan perspektif teologis, disamping sosiologis dan kultural. Secara teologis, Kyai memandang bahwa manusia itu apapun posisi dan entitasnya ia layak bahkan wajib dihormati. Dalam mengaplikasikan visi*

dan pandangan teologis tersebut, Kyai dan Pesantren Nurul Ummahat melakukan sejumlah aksi nyata, yaitu: menyelenggarakan diskusi-diskusi ilmiah, dialog dengan tokoh non-Muslim, pendirian FPUB, gerakan Toya Mili, dan Konsorsium Palem. Tulisan ini diharapkan memberikan solusi kepada pemerintah dalam upaya menghasilkan kebijakan baru untuk merespon fenomena eksklusivisme dan radikalisme di lingkungan pondok pesantren.

**Kata Kunci:** Pesantren, Multikulturalisme, Teologi, Aksi

## Introduction

Globalization results many dimensional changes, belong to religious affair, which in Indonesia context were triggered by Reformation Era since 1998. For Moslems, the reformation became a reason to articulate Islamic values in society.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, this articulation influenced to strained situations between formalist groups, who are imagine Islam as an ideology of the state and a formal religion of the state, and substantial groups, who reject this idea. Consequently, religious radicalisms and fundamentalisms became a phenomenon in early periods of the Reformation Era. The Phenomenon shocked to groups who had fought for creating reformations in this country. Off course, it was not expected and estimated before. It was, above all, bummed by more radical movements who used anarchism and terrorism manners.<sup>2</sup> This strained situation resulted spreading the anarchism and the terrorism in the name of religious interests, such as inspections of pubs, bombings, and religious conflicts. These anarchism, terrorism, and religious conflict caused a bad image of the Moslems and, especially, *pesantren* circle because of some actors of the bombings and the terrors who have a connection with certain *pesantrens* in Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, efforts to grow

<sup>1</sup> Islah Gusmian, "Langgam Politik Islam Indonesia dari Formalistik ke Substansialistik Pengantar Penyunting", in Bahtiar Effendy, *Masyarakat Agama dan Pluralisme Keagamaan* (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2001), vii.

<sup>2</sup> Titi Budi Hapsari (ed.), *Antologi Pemikiran Filsafat Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Badan Penerbit Filsafat, 2013), 149.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Asfar, "Agama, Islam, Pesantren Dan Terorisme", in Muhammad Asfar (ed.), *Islam Lunak Islam Radikal: Pesantren, Terorisme dan Bom Bali* (Surabaya: JP Press dan PusDeHAM, 2003). See Syarif Hidayatullah, "Pesantren And Religious Radicalism In Indonesia", in Frank Dhont, Tracy Wright Webster, dan Rommel A. Curaming (eds.), *Between the Mountain and the Sea: Positioning Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2013), 3-20.

and develop the multicultural awarness are certainty and necessity in Indonesia which has multi dimentional aspects. So, studies or researches on relationship between the multiculturalism and the *pesantren* is very interesting and relevant in contemporary Indonesia.

The Multiculturalism, according to Baidhaw<sup>4</sup>, is a central issue not only in Indonesia but also in the entirely world. While, Zada views that the multiculturalism paradigm needs to develop inclusive and pluralistic theology in order to respond the religious and ethnical violence. Therefore, the *pesantren*, as a social entity, has a responsibility to develop the multicultural theology. The *pesantren* has having active and concrete roles in developing th multicultural theology and harmonizing among religions, cultures, ethnics, and societies in Indonesia.<sup>5</sup> In this context, there is an interesting example to be studied now, namely, KH Abdul Muhaimin and his roles in the *Pesantren of Nurul Ummahaat*, Kotagede, Yogyakarta in developing the multicultural awareness among his *santris* (religious students) and communities surroundings the *pesantren*.

Here, I focus on two discussions, namely: *firstly*, about theological views of KH Abdul Muhaimin to develop the multicultural awareness in the *Pesantren of Nurul Ummahaat*, and, *secondly*, KH Abdul Muhaimin and his practical actions with communities of the *Pesantren of Nurul Ummahaat* to develop the multicultural awareness.

### **KH Abdul Muhaimin and the *Pesantren of Nurul Ummahaat***

The *Nurul Ummahaat* is a *pondok pesantren* that was built in 1988 located in Prenggan Village, Kotagede Subdistrict, and Yogyakarta Province. The *Nurul Ummahaat* had brought up by KH Abdul Muhaimin and his wife, Nyai Umi As'adah.<sup>6</sup> The *Nurul Ummahaat* is a traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*) which does not apply commercial pattern, but it tends to

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<sup>4</sup> Zakiyuddin Baidhaw, *Pendidikan Agama Berwawasan Multikultural* (Jakarta: Penerbit Erlangga, 2005), v.

<sup>5</sup> Khamami Zada, "Tantangan Pesantren di Era Multikulturalisme," Oktober 2012, <http://sastra-indonesia.com/2012/05/tantangan-pesantren-di-era-multikulturalisme/>.

<sup>6</sup> Daryanto, "PP NURUL UMMAHAT Kembangkan Wawasan Kebangsaan dan Kerukunan Beragama," 6 April 2011, <http://ponpesnurulummahat.blogspot.com/>.

humanity relation pattern. So, the *santris* have no payment at all, and in fact they reputed by Kyai Muhaimin as his family. The *Nurul Ummahaat* only receives female *santri* because of his thinking to give chance for his wife and daughters who are as the *hafidzah* (people who learn by heart when recites the Quran). Meanwhile, the *Kyai* teaches his *santris* with recitation of several *kitab kuning*.<sup>7</sup> Beside as *santriwati* (female student), some of them are also studying at universities around the *pesantren*, such as UGM (*Universitas Gadjah Mada*), UIN (*Universitas Islam Negeri*) Sunan Kalijaga, UAD (*Universitas Ahmad Dahlan*), and UNCOK (*Universitas Cokroaminoto*).<sup>8</sup>

In addition to except the recitation, the *Kyai* has many another activities, namely: as a chief of the ICRP (*Indonesia Conference on Religion and Peace*), and as a member of the *Dewan Kebudayaan* (the council of culture) Yogyakarta, where he received the *patisara* or a certificate from Sultan Hamengku Buwono X because of his role as a guest teacher in the Yogyakarta Palace and, also, an award because of his role as a prominent figure of religionist and observer of the Yogyakarta culture simultaneously.<sup>9</sup> The *Kyai*, who was born in Kotagede, Yogyakarta, March, 13<sup>th</sup>, 1953 also committed to nationality insight and mixed up with a big moment when the NU received Pancasila as *Azas Tunggal* on the *Munas* (*National Meeting*) of the NU at Sitobundo on 1984. Because of his roles, the *Kyai*, and his *The Nurul Ummahaat*, then become a popular and as an icon of multiculturalism affairs in Yogyakarta.<sup>10</sup>

### **Multiculturalism and the *Pesantren***

One of the crucial problems that occasionally become “obstacle” in creating social harmony is a weakness of the multicultural awareness among people in social sphere. The people in the world are living together with

<sup>7</sup> The *kitab kuning* (yellow book) is the book commonly printed with yellow papers that contain about religious teachings, such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *usul fiqh* (foundations of Islamic jurisprudence), *hadits* (*Prophet Tradition*), *tafsir* (exegesis), *tauhid* (faith), *ethics*, *tasawuf* (mysticism), *nahwu* (syntax), *sharf* (morphology), and other branches of Islamic knowledge, such as: *tarikh* (history of Islam) and *balaghah* (a kind of literature).

<sup>8</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.



their various ethnicity and state. Any people was born with their own differences and uniquenesses, but, unfortunately, their disparities of culture, resources, and hopes expressed dissatisfaction and social conflict. Therefore, the differences of nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, social, and economics, oftentimes become a potency of extended and more bigger impacts.<sup>11</sup>

According to Tilaar,<sup>12</sup> the globalization triggers the multiculturalism trends in our life. Nowadays, the multiculturalism is not only about recognize and honesty to various culture in the world, but also it already become a demand from communities who have own culture. He said that education of the multiculturalism cannot postponed at all to create a newer Indonesia which more democratic and multicultural. Another scholar, Amin Abdullah,<sup>13</sup> views Islamic education also influenced by the multiculturalism trends to face modernity challenges. So, the Islamic education exactly needs to develop the multiculturalism values too.

The globalization already created religious adherents become aware about plurality of faith and culture in the world. But, there are many observers who view that the *pesantren* and the *santris* cannot absolutely receive modernization and innovations. According to me, the phenomenon of multicultural awareness is a customary thing in the *pesantren* circle. Abdurrahman Wahid mentioned the *pesantren* circle with “a subculture”, although he admitted that there is still big difficulty to identify the *pesantren* as “a subculture” generally. Besides, acknowledgment that the *pesantren* “a subculture” is actually not generally admitted by the *pesantren* circle itself.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Baidhawiy, *Pendidikan Agama Berwawasan Multikultural*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> H.A.R. Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme: Tantangan-Tantangan Global Masa Depan dalam Transformasi Pendidikan Nasional* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 2004), 73. Also, see Syarif Hidayatullah, “Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Berbasis Wawasan Multikulturalisme,” *PENAMAS Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat*, vol. XXIII, no. 3 (2010): 291.

<sup>13</sup> M. Amin Abdullah, *Pendidikan Agama Era Multikultural Multi Religius* (Jakarta: PSAP (Pusat Studi Agama dan Perdamaian) Muhammadiyah, 2005), 73–82. Also, see Syarif Hidayatullah, “Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Berbasis Wawasan Multikulturalisme,” *PENAMAS Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat*, vol. XXIII, no. 3 (2010): 292.

<sup>14</sup> “A subculture” means that existence of the *pesantren* always presents in certain culture scope. The *Santris* allowed learning any *kitab kuning*, even in various

According to him, dynamics of the multiculturalism in the *pesantren* have actually rooted on five philosophies of the *pesantren* system, namely: the *tawasuth* (moderate), the *tawazun* (balance), the *tasamuh* (tolerance), the *'adalah* (justice), and the *tasyawur* (deliberation).<sup>15</sup>

The *pesantren*, according to Faisal Ismail, has got a significant dynamics when it responds to modernity and change, either philosophy, management, learning system, or tools and infrastructure. Relationship between the paradigm of education and the *pesantren* is too relevant, because of existence of the *pesantren* hoped to giving significant contributions in social engineer and socio-culture transformation. Therefore, the *pesantren* have to explore its characters in renewal of cultural, educative, and social aspects.<sup>16</sup>

### Theology of the Multiculturalism Development

The *Nurul Ummahaat* is one of unique traditional *pesantren* of the NU. Its uniqueness is not only caused by location of the *pesantren* at the Kotagede Village, where recognized as basis of the Muhammadiyah movement, but also because of it is just a few of the *pesantrens* that concerns and fights to create the multiculturalism awareness and the religious pluralism in Indonesia. There are not too many religious people like KH Abdul Muhaimin, owner of the *Nurul Ummahaat*, who does not allergic in associate with non-Moslems people. For an example, in the *Forum Persaudaraan Umat Beriman* (Interfaith brotherhood Forum) or the FPUB, he often provides certain facilities for across religions activities among Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddha, Confucianism, and Hindu. According to him, Islam has a theological foundation, viz., "*Hablun min al-nas*" (human being relationship) that becomes a nucleus of morality and humanity until all people can met and interact together. Therefore, he messages to all people in

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*madzhab* (sects), and choosing one of them to be implemented in their daily life. See Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: Wahid Institut, 2007), 88-89.

<sup>15</sup> Anonim, "Belajar Multikulturalisme di Pesantren," Oktober 2012, <http://edukasi.kompasiana.com/2012/01/08/belajar-multikulturalisme-di-pesantren/>.

<sup>16</sup> Fathul Mufid, "Paradigma Pendidikan Multikultural Pesantren," *Jurnal Penelitian STAIN Kudus*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Juni 2008): 227-42.

order to stay away question something about theology when they are associating with others. Because, the certain question on their theology causes potentially mutual impeach heathen (*kafir*).<sup>17</sup>

Off course, his point of view triggered pro-contra among the *pesantren* circle. Some *ulama* (Moslem scholars) reject his cooperation with another religion. Even, they condemn his as a *murtad* (apostate). But, for him, nowadays as human being, we need and necessity togetherness and harmony.<sup>18</sup> Trough several humanity activities, he becomes a prominent figure who has a wide vision and extended mission. So, he efforts to make the harmony and the peace among religious adherents in the nation-state frame. His multiculturalism point of view has a relating with nationalism, based on means of culture, nation, tribe, and religion, either nominal or gradual, because of there are some of them already cosmopolitan, but the others still not cosmopolite yet. Here, he intends to string up the multiculturalism and the plurality in this country in order to still conserved and not precisely become conflict potential.<sup>19</sup>

The multiculturalism awareness in Indonesia, according to the *Kyai*, exactly found a longtime ago since the *Nusantara* Era. Unfortunately, there are several people who think with exclusively and individualism way in contemporary Indonesia. So, he views that there are still many homework for developing the multiculturalism awareness in Indonesia. He possesses moral commitment and social responsibility to develop the multiculturalism awareness, especially in *pesantren* milieu and his communities.

To articulate his vision and action, the *Kyai* elaborates the nationalism based on theological perspective, beside sociological and cultural. Theologically, he views that all human being, whatever their social position and entity, must be respected, based on Allah's statement "*walaqad karramnaa bani adam*" (and exactly we give descents of Adam a glorious). He

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<sup>17</sup> Wahid Institute Networks, "KH Abdul Muhaimin Kerap Shalat Di Katedral 2007," Oktober 2012,  
[http://www.wahidinstitute.org/Jaringan/Detail/?id=16/hl=id/KH\\_Abdul\\_Muhaimin\\_KerapShalat\\_Di\\_Katedral\\_2007](http://www.wahidinstitute.org/Jaringan/Detail/?id=16/hl=id/KH_Abdul_Muhaimin_KerapShalat_Di_Katedral_2007).

<sup>18</sup> "PP NURUL UMMAHAT Kembangkan Wawasan Kebangsaan dan Kerukunan Beragama."

<sup>19</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.

explains that “la” in “*walaqad*” sentence is *lam taukid*, “qa” is *harfu taukid*, and in “*karramnaa*” sentence there is its *tasydid* that is an *harfu tadrif*, therefore be interpreted with “sure, I really give descents of Adam a glorious”. Based on his theological view, he motivates other prominent figures to give their respond toward religious conflict and sectarianism that occurred in several regions such as at Situbondo, Tasikmalaya, Jakarta, and Kupang. The Disturbance and conflict caused fragile and decline the nation-state unity of Indonesia. So, they become worrying and restless about future of their country next.<sup>20</sup> They also afraid these conflicts almost influenced to Yogyakarta situation, whereas, Yogyakarta be familiar as the City of Tolerance. To anticipate these occurred, he initiated to collect about 78 prominent figured of all religions in Yogyakarta on February, 27<sup>th</sup>, 1997, in order to think and act practically for solutions and preventions of the social conflicts and creating the religious harmony.<sup>21</sup>

He divides religion in two dimensions, namely: *hablumminallah* (vertical relation with Allah SWT) and *hablumminnaas* (horizontal relation with Him)). For him, the *hablumminallah* contains about theology and rites that are not debated at all, because of Allah SWT stated “*lakum diinukum waliyyadiin*” (for you your religion, for me just my religion). Meanwhile, the *hablumminnaas* teaches us about the morality and the humanity, which all religions have similarities in prohibiting lie, thief, and adultery. Here, every religion obeys us to do mutual helping and avoid hostile. He suggested that any body does not discuss about theology and rites, but just about morality and humanity, when they are doing religious dialog.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Interview with KH Abdul Muhaimin on Desember, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. See Imam Machali, “Peace Education dan Deradikalisasi Agama,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Juni 2013): 57.

<sup>21</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012. On footnote number 15 of Imam Machali’s article mentioned that there were two versions on founding of the FPUB. The first version, the FPUB founded on 24 March 1997. The second version, it founded on 27 February 1997 (See Imam Machali, “Peace Education..... p. 52). But, according to me, the FPUB officially declared on 24 March 1997, while on 27 February 1997 is just an early meeting for planning declaration of the FPUB.

<sup>22</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.



So, he formulated the vision of The *Nurul Ummahaat* with “3 M”, viz.: *Moderrn* (Modernity), *Moderat* (Moderate), and *Manusiawi* (Humanity). Firstly, “the Modernity” means that the *santris* will be hoped to use their *kitab kuning* paradigm to responding the modernity. He expects them in order to respond modernity not only behavior aspect but also another aspects, like liberal and various thoughts. He believes that kinds of responds have a basis in the Quran and the *Hadits*.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, “the Moderate”, means that the *santris* expected become not extremist and reactive when they are facing the differences and, even, disagreements in their daily life. They don’t condemn others with *kafir*, *bidah*, etc. In contrast, they open and receive visitors who are being condemned and abused by others like the *Ahmadiyah* and the *Syiah* followers. Therefore, the *Nurul Ummahaat* willing accept the President of International *Ahmadiyah* and some prominent figures of the *Syiah*, including two professor of Qum University where very popular as a centre of the *Syiah* in Iran. Yes, since 1990s, the *Kyai* opened his *pesantren* for any religious people who will know more about Islam in Indonesia. Therefore, from the book of the guests, we can find several names from various adherents of Buddha, Catholic, Protestant, and Hindu, either domestic or international guests. Even, this *pesantren* was ever visited by agnostic and atheism student, such as Syuky Zhang, a Chinese student, who stayed there about 1, 5 month. Also, in 2000, Chika Yoshida, a Buddhist student of Chiba University, Japan, lived here around 1,5 month. This student, who is a Mitsuo Nakamura’s student, wrote her impression in the guest book that only the *pesantren* is one of Moslem communities which do not encroached by the globalization. Then, in 2003, a student and a pastor candidate in faculty of theology, California University, Berkeley, America, also lived in here around 1, 5 month. Besides, there were hundreds of foreign students and 2-10 persons of the Catholic nuns had ever lived in about 3 days. According to him, there are more than 70 countries already visited his *pesantren*, such as: India, China, Korea, Roma, Japan, Palestine, and America; especially some delegations of the USCRF (United State Commission on Religion and Freedom) and President of the IRF (International for Religion and Freedom) who delegated by President Obama. Generally, most of them impressed positively to what the *Kyai* and his *pesantren* of the *Nurul Ummahaat* done. The *Kyai* feel happy and thanks to God because his *santris* have no barriers either theologically or

<sup>23</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.

psychologically to accepting their guests.<sup>24</sup> And, *thirdly*, “the Humanity”, means that viewing and interacting with the others is based on our similarity as human being. Because, many conflicts currently occurred by our differences in theological concept, besides religions, like the *Ahmadiyah* and the *Syiah* cases. In this context, he believes that many religious conflicts caused often by only theological concept, not religion, especially on Messianic concept; with the result that they no more viewed as human, but as devil, mislead, and vandal who allowed to be killed. In the *Nurul Ummahaat*, they precisely received homey by the *santris* because their status as human who must be glorious and as the best creature of Allah SWT.<sup>25</sup>

By the visions of “3 M”, he believes that his *pesantren* ready to face the modernization and the globalization, either its challenge or opportunity. The Globalization, for him, is a necessity and a new dynamic that gives us benefits and facilities for life. However, the globalization also gives us negative consequences, such as social and political conflicts that endanger our multiculturalism affluences. It often produces political and economical injustices which created by the capitalism. About the Middle East conflicts, for an example, he views that the globalization made impacts of the conflicts which were spreading to several countries of the Moslems, including Indonesia. Because, information networks of the globalization able to influence someone will do heroic battle like in the Middle East, so it extends international conflicts, for an example, between *Sunni* and *Syiah*.<sup>26</sup>

According to the *Kyai*, the concept of educational system of the *Nurul Ummahaat* influenced by thoughts of the late KH Muslimin Imampuro, who was popular with “Mbah Lim”, a Leader of the Pesantren of *Al Muttaqin Pancasila Sakti*, Klaten. In spite of he had never become a *santri* there, he considers Mbah Lim as one of his teachers. He learned to Mbah Lim, including about the nationalism that Mbah Lim applied more than 100 percents since 1978. He gives an example, when Mbah Lim was just now come back from hospital and listened that today is an independent day of Indonesia that commemorated every year on 17 Augusts, he hurried up go to square of the sub district of Klaten and joins the ceremony, even he still sick. According

<sup>24</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 Desember 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

to him, the *Pesantren of Al Muttaqin Pancasila Sakti* is only one *pesantren* that every it's the *haflah* ceremony always sing an anthem of the *Indonesia Raya* and another nationalism and patriotism songs. Mbah Lim always enthusiastic sang the songs togetherness. The Campus of the *Pancasila Sakti* called by Mbah Lim as a campus of "Kader Bangsa Indonesia" and he, also built the "Pendopo Perdamaian Umat Sedunia".<sup>27</sup>

In the nationalism context, the *Kyai* said to General Joko Soyanto, a Ministry of Politics, Laws, and Human Rights of Indonesia, that nowadays there are fundamental problems about relationship between the religiosity, the nationalism, and the ethnicity. *Firstly*, there is diametrical relationship between the religiosity and the nationalism. So, when someone recognized as a nationalist, he doesn't automatically become a religious person. In contrast, he doesn't become a nationalist although he is a religious one. Even, there is a radical thinking that singing an anthem of *Indonesia Raya* and be respectful to *bendera merah putih* (the national flag) is not allowed (*haram*). Whereas, the *Kyai* reminds us, we find historically more than 90 percents of the national heroes of our independence day are Moslems heroes, like Bung Tomo who shouted with "Allahu Akbar" when he rip a blue fabric of the Netherland flag, than hoist it on the roof of Hotel Oranye as our national flag of "Merah Putih". The *Kyai* regretted and question that why there are still somebody prohibits being respectful to *bendera merah putih* and contrast between the nationalism and the religiosity. *Secondly*, is the ethnicity. Here, he reminds that it doesn't only entity, but also about norm and cultural ethnic. Unfortunately, the ethnicity nowadays becomes a pollutant for the religiosity. The Ethnicity also often contrasted with the nationalism, because we too stress genetic aspect than value. For him, if these fundamental problems can be solved, any problems of the nationalism in this country surely disappear.<sup>28</sup>

The third fundamental problem is about religiosity. He gives an example about fatwa of MUI (the Moslems Scholar Assembly of Indonesia) that refers to decisions of the OKI (Organization of Islamic Conference). But, in his opinion, they be decided politically with the result that it does not relevant in Indonesia context. He suggests that we are not influenced by

<sup>27</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

historical longing of global hostility the *Syiah* and the Sunni that cause appearance of the “fatwa MUI” which decided digression of the *Syiah* and the *Ahmadiyah* groups. The *Ahmadiyah*, for him, is not about differences between Islam and other religion, but it is about political conflicts and concept of the Messianic in same religion, that is, Islam, because they still do praying and fasting *Ramadhon* similarly with another Moslems. Here, he states that any religion or belief has own concept of the Messianic, such as “Avatara” in Hinduism, “Meitria” in Buddhism, “David” as a Savior in Jews, “Jesus the Christ” in Christianity, “*Satrio Piningit* and *Ratu Adil*” in Javanese, etc.<sup>29</sup> About the “fatwa MUI”, he ventured that him is a person who not absolutely obey the “fatwa MUI” which prohibited the pluralism and the liberalism in Indonesia. For him, the “fatwa MUI” on the pluralism and the liberalism was as a “recehan” (pennies) and “pesanan” (order) of certain group who infiltrated by radical views. The radical group guessed by him already infiltrated in the FKUB (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*). The “fatwa MUI” on misguided sects, according to him, can be neglected theologically. Because, for him, if someone already stated *syahadatain* (testimony that Allah is The One, and Muhammad is The Messenger of Allah), so he become a Moslem. His view based on story of a *Sahabat* (a companion of the Prophet) who killed in a war and before his death, he told the *syahadat*. But, the *Sahabat* decided absolutely to be killed because his *syahadat* regarded as a strategy for salvation. After the war, the Prophet Muhammad SAW heard this case, and then he commands to another *Sahabat* to pay for *kafarah* (fine). The *Kyai* also refers to Muhammad’s saying that “*Man qoola akhiro kalamihilailaha illa Allah, dakhala jannah*” (Man who has final speaking is ‘there is no God but Allah’, he will entered to heaven) and “*miftahul jannah lailahaillallah*” (the key of heaven is ‘*lailaha illa Allah*’).<sup>30</sup>

### **Actions of the Multiculturalism**

To apply his vision and theological views, the *Kyai* and the *Nurul Ummahaat* often hold dialog, seminar, and discussion forums that involving many interfaith figures. Those forums will be expected result mutual understanding and harmony among religions, in addition to adding a good

<sup>29</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.



horizon for the *santris*. The *Kyai* recognizes that his proactive to embrace non-Moslems figures actually based on the story of Prophet Muhammad PBUH who ever helped by a non-Moslem during his *hijrah* journey from Mecca to Medina, except based on religious plurality in Indonesia. He *thinks* that as Moslems, we must follow our Prophet Muhammad PBUH whom appreciates everyone although he is a non-Moslem. So, he asks that why do we think to hostile the others? His proactive showed by his initiative to invite and collect more than 70 prominent figures, consist of *kyai* (Moslem scholar), *pendeta* (protestant clergyman), pastor, *biksu* (monk) of Buddhism, *pandito* of Hinduism, or followers of *Aliran Kepercayaan* on 24 March 1997 in the *Nurul Ummahat* to declare the *Forum Persaudaraan Umat Beriman* (Interfaith brotherhood Forum) or FPUB. The FPUB aims to reduce religious conflicts and get solutions for social and religious conflicts. He explains that the *Nurul Ummahat* willing to become a place of the declaration of the FPUB because there is nobody who prepares it in this moment. The Declaration of the FPUB was conducted to respond disturbances in the name of religion that occurred frequently in Indonesia, like burning the Church in Situbondo in 1996.<sup>31</sup> Before the declaration, there were actually several meetings to reduce impacts of the disturbances and mutual suspicious among adherents of religions, like in the *Pesantren* of *al-Mahali* (Brajan, Bantul), the Church of Santho Yoshep, Banteng (Kaliurang, Sleman), and the temple of *Pura Jaganata* (Banguntapan, Bantul). The FPUB also spreads banner of peace massages and supporting to Sri Sultan HB X on streets in order to prevents Yogyakarta region from burning of the churches.

<sup>31</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012. Among prominent figures of the FPUB declaration were KH Abdul Muhaimin (Islam), Romo Suyatno Hadiatmaja (Catholic), Pendeta Bambang Subagyo (Protestant), Pante Pannavaro Maha Thera (Hindu), Bikhu Sasana Budha, Pandito Effendy (Buddha), Saptadaning Toto Baroto, Romo Sujono Woro (*Kejawen*), Haktso Tjhie Tjay Ing (Confucianism). According to the *Kyai*, behind the founding of the FPUB, there was an agreement reached between him and the late Pak Tono (a famous name of TH. Sumartana, PhD) namely, that Pak Tono, with his DIAN/ITERFIDEI, worked on elite groups, while the *Kyai*, with his FPUB, worked on grass rooted groups with creating dialog forums and practices actions. See Syarif Hidayatullah, *Dinamika Pluralisme Agama Wajah Toleransi Keagamaan di Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Badan Penerbit Filsafat, 2013), 76.

Individually, he consistently develops spirit of the multiculturalism. For an example, he was willing to be a board of advisors of the IMPULSE; a Catholic's NGO which concerns about the multiculturalism and the pluralism. He also became a chief of supervisor board of the SHEEP (Society Health Education Environment and Peace); a Foundation of Protestant group, which it participated in empowerment programs for victims of the Aceh Tsunami in years. In the ICRP (International Conference on Religion and Peace), he mixed up with it since Ministry of Religion, Tarmizi Thaher era till declaration of the ICRP by Djohan Effendy, as *Sekretaris Negara* (Secretary of the State) of President Abdurrahman Wahid, in 2000. There were many agenda of the ICRP which he joins them, among them are: courses or schools on contemporary religious issues that held by the ICRP regularly twice in year, like about Baha'ism, *Syiah*, and marriage among cross religions. About marriage among cross religions, he especially often facilitates some ceremonial process of the marriage. A certain ceremonial of the marriage process already made become a film documentary by CRCS UGM team, which received extended responds from International community. One of them is the English Moslems Association who interested to visit him in order to know more about the film.

Accompany with Lukman Sutrisno, Professor of UGM, he found the KKY (*Komisi Kemanusiaan Yogyakarta*/Humanity Commission of Yogyakarta) and collected hundreds of RT and RW entirely Yogyakarta at UGM. The KKY aims to identify disturbed around social and religious conflict regions around Yogyakarta that caused by sporadic riots in Indonesia. By the KKY, he organized peace movements for millions people of Yogyakarta, which reported by media as *Pisowanan Ageng* ceremony, a day around resignation of President Soeharto. The *Pisowanan Ageng*, that held in *Alun-alun Utara* square, created by groups who are opportunists toward the Sultan Hamengku Buwono X. Their strategy was a blowing up a news that the Sultan already willing to become president of Indonesia. His role in developing brotherhood among religious people appreciated by *Aliansi Jurnalis Independen* (AJI) who give him with a *Tasrif Award* in 2000. He eliminated 17 nominators and

become one of three winners, who categorized as a prominent figure in peace campaign in Indonesia.<sup>32</sup>

By his humanity activities, the *Kyai* did more extended mission to realize the peace among religions with various strategies and, but, still one frame of the State. For an example, during October till November 2010 of post-second Merapi eruption, he had visited about 93 refugees in 14 churches (13 Catholic churches and 1 Protestant Church), which are being treated by Front Jihad Islamiyah. His visiting to churches and refugees was one of his methods to vague the religious conflicts. He admits that his visiting to the Churches caused by rejecting refugees of the Merapi eruption from the Catholic Church of Ganjuran, Bantul, Yogyakarta, which it had done by a group who issued on Christianity methods toward the refuges and prohibited them whom are requesting protection from the Church. Nevertheless, he didn't see at all about the Christianity methods there. The rejecting and forbidden from the group caused the refugees' worrying and despondent. His visiting had done by him everyday in a mount. In the churches, he gave his sermons and, simultaneously, his gifts with 3 goats of the *Qurban*, sarong, *sajadah* (mat), and some books of al-Quran.<sup>33</sup>

The Merapi eruption resulted some homeworks of problems for us, for an example, we need to recontruction of water pipes and reforestation of the Merapi slopes where damaged by lava and hot clouds ("its called with 'Wedus Gembel"). To respond damages that caused by the Merapi eruption, he continuilly acts humanity mission to make a net the peace among pluralities. By his roles, the humanity mission become extendedly a tool of human brotherhood. In instalation of pipes program, which called by the *Kyai* with "*Gerakan Toya Mili* " (The *Toya Mili* movement), he invited some nuns to joint it, sepecially, in the Merapi region. He also coordinated with Mr. Yoseph Suyatno Hadiatmojo Pr, a Pastor of the Somohitan Church, Girikerto, Turi, Sleman, who simultaneously became a coordinator of peace campaign of FPUB and installed pipes of water in west side of Boyong river. The *Toya Mili* movement achieved to recontructs in 29 spots with using paralon pipes around 5000 meters and iron pipes around 2000 meters and involve some prominent figures and societies of the differ religions and use donation about

<sup>32</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

700 millions rupiahs.<sup>34</sup> Source of the donation for the pipes instalation came from several sympathizers who trust to him, including donation, firstly, from Chinese whom met the Kyai in a hotel in Yogyakarta and gave him amount of 50 millions rupiah and, *secondly*, donation from INTI (Indonesia Tiong hoa) of Makassar who met the Sultan HB X and prepared 5 tractors for reconstruction program of the post-Merapi eruption.

In the reforestation program, he designed planting trees of post-Merapi erupcion with accompanying the youths from various religions, including cooperation with Yayasan Budha Suci, which is an social organization of Buddhist followers, that planted millions of Mahoni tree, besides the distribution foods and the masses medicine treatment programs. The reforestation program succeded to planting more than 100 taushands of the tree in several locations, such as on slope of the Merapi Mount (about 140 thousands of the tree), 1000 trees on the Menoreh Mountain, 10.000 trees in Turi-Sleman, Piyungan, dan Bantul, which seeding of the tree of Mahoni prerapred by the Budha Suci community and, meanwhile, management of planting and its maintenance held by the Kyai who supported by Lakpesdam NU of Yogyakarta.

Another program, it's called with as "Konsorsium Palem" (the Palem Consortium), the Kyai and his volunteers achieved the reforestation on the slope of Merapi Mount with around 150 thaushands of the Palem tree in some regions of Dukun, Magelang, till on Deles di Boyolali. The *Toya Mili* movement and the Palem Consortium had effectively done by creating a certain community whom called with SALAMAN (*Silaturahmi Alim Ulama dan Tokoh Masyarakat untuk Perdamaian*) and conceived by the Kyai. The SALAMAN community, the Kyai said, orgainized twice meetings in Pondok Pesantren of Pandanaran, Kaliurang, Sleman, where formulated ethics for community empowerment and reconstruction in the Merapi Slope. In this context, he analogies organizationally with the NU till the SALAMAN as a *Syuriyah* (Steering Commite) and The *Toya Mili* movement and the Palem Consortium as a *Tanfidliyah* (Organizing Commite).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Interviewing with KH Abdul Muhaimin on 2 December 2012.



His thoughtfulness on problems that caused by difference of religions pushed him to do radical actions till get critics from others, including his friends. One of critics is about his visiting and speaking in Christmas Celebration. For him, his visiting and speaking in the Christmas Celebration cannot reduce or, even, negate his quality of Islam and he does not think that he already follows the Christian rites. He shows an example, in 2011, he invited by a certain government institution to give his speech in the Christmas Celebration. Uniquely, after speaking he goes to do prayer of Jumat in a mosque. Nevertheless, except criticism, his seriousness and openness in creating peace among religions results brotherhood of various groups and religions in the world. He claims that he prefers to visit and speech to grass root groups in several villages where it's most citizen are non Moslems, than elite groups. In his activities of religious dialog, he often does *shalat* in non Moslems's place of praying, like the Church, the Pura, the Vihara, etc. In this context, he argues with the Prophet Muhammad SAW 's saying that "*Ju'ilat al-ardhu masjidan* (anywhere of the Earth became as a praying places). He stated that when he stays overnight in Cathedral, so he did *shalat* anyplace of the Cathedral, except altar.

As his efforts of preservation of multicultural view, the *Kyai* often recruits many young men in religious dialog events, either as committee or participants. For him, the youths able to reserve fully toward multicultural views. The *Kyai* also employs them in SULUH, a multiculturalism magazine which published per 2 moons regularly since 1999. The SULUH built based on informal discussion between him and Romo Mangun who at that time just came back Australia and donated his honorarium as speaker to publish The SULUH. The youths also motivated to create some activities, for an example, by cooperation with KORDISKA UIN Sunan Kalijaga, where the *Kyai* oftentimes became a speaker there. The *Kyai*, with his FPUB, ever organized The Youth Camp of the entirely Indonesia twice and The Youth Camp of the entirely Asia Pacific that held by joint program between the FPUB and the Religion Youth Service.

## Conclusion

The *Pesantren*, historically, has an urgent role in community empowerment and progress of the nation-state. The *Pesantren*, in the context

of developing multiculturalism awareness, is a significant agent. Because, most of the *pesantrens* in Indonesia, the *Kyai* accounts there are more than 90 percents, have opened mind to receive newer thing if they are better than older. Just, most of them not yet having a unit which they concern about the multiculturalism especially, in the same manner as the *Kyai* has it with the *Nurul Ummahaat*. Even, he claims that the *Nurul Ummahaat* is the first *pesantren* of Indonesia that concerns to develop to the multiculturalism awareness and practical activities involved across religious adherents, such as social movement of disaster respond, reforestation, set tubes of irrigations, food distribution, medicinal treatment freely, seminar and workshop on religious dialog, brochure and street banner on pluralism, and publishing across religion magazine of the SULUH regularly.

These social movements of the *Kyai* and the *Pesantren* of *Nurul Ummahaat* are able to create harmonization among religious adherents and decline radical discourses in Indonesia. Influence of the *Nurul Ummahaat* is really bigger than the influence of others, including activists, NGOs, universities, such as: the Dialog Center of UIN Yogyakarta, CRCS-UGM, the REALINO of Universitas Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta, and Dian INTERFIDEI. The *Kyai* believes that they will not exceed the role and influence of the *pesantren* because Indonesia community who still highly loyal to *Kyai* as their role model and charismatic figure.

Gradually, the *Kyai* and the *Nurul Ummahaat*'s pioneering efforts gave effects to other *pesantrens* in Yogyakarta in developing the multiculturalism. For an example, the *Pesantren* of Mlangi in Sleman which has mono cultural perspective before, but nowadays be more inclusive and open mind to the multiculturalism, so willing to accept foreign guests, although non-Moslems, who stay in the *pesantren*. Another examples, there are the *Pesantren* of Pandanaran in Kaliurang and several *pesantrens* in Central Java, which have followed same trail of the *Kyai* and the *Nurul Ummahaat*. Finally, some outsiders of the *pesantren* interested to know more about the *Kyai* and his *pesantren*'s role in developing multiculturalism awareness, especially researchers, academics, professionals, and students who are writing a thesis of undergraduate (S1), and graduate (S2, and S3) program from several universities such as UGM, UIN, and Sanata Dharma.

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